



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES
Saturday, November 2, 2024 :: 9:45 AM :: Ocotillo Lodge Clubhouse

Attendees

Members Carol Munro, Larry Johnson, Mike Faulkner, Tony Vardaro, Michele Johnson, Tom Eich, Jeff Hoffman, David Carlson, Eric Chiel, Michael Acabdo, Colleen Clark, David Ross, Vivian Chiel, Casey Cornwell, Tom DeSimone, Denny Downs, Brad Armistead, Hung Fan, Michael Feldman, Roger Gendron, Virginia Giokaris, Terry Johnson, Kristen Layman, Marilyn Mersereau, Matthew Lieberman, Janice Lieberman, Paul Rafill, Tai Rencus, Lucien Rizzo, Paul Stevens, Ron Weaver, Curtis Veal, Barbara Gay, Andy Rohrer.

Guests J.R. Roberts

Welcome

Carol Munro welcomed everyone. She thanked the Ocotillo Lodge for hosting us.

The meeting was called to order by Carol Munro at 10:18 AM. She welcomed everyone to our general membership meeting, especially all the new people who are joining us for the first time.

Approval of Minutes (emailed in advance)

There was a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2024 General Membership Meeting. **The minutes were approved.**

Introductions

Carol asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Presentation, Keynote Speaker, JR Roberts

Carol Munro introduced our Speaker, JR Roberts. Mr. Roberts is a former resident of Twin Palms. He restored a house on Apache which he lived in for many years.

Mr. Roberts gave a brief history of the Plaza Theatre since its opening in 1936. It was a movie theatre for most of its existence, including hosting many movie premiers. The Palm Springs Follies ran as a live show for 23 years until it closed in 2014. It then fell into disrepair. He was asked several years ago if he would oversee the Plaza Theatre restoration, and he accepted the challenge.

When the restoration is completed in about a year, it will be returned to how it looked in 1936, but with all the necessary updates to make it a state-of-the-art theatre. It will be accessible and the performer and audience experience will be elevated. He said original blue-prints were discovered, allowing for the perfect replication of the theatre.

The Theatre is being designed to host both live shows and movies. The economic impact is projected to be about \$40 million per year in tourism, with about \$4 million in revenue for the City of Palm Springs.

Mr. Roberts outlined the success of fundraising to date. He mentioned that during COVID when things looked bleak, TV mogul David Lee made a \$5 million donation which jump-started fundraising efforts. He then recounted the formation of the Plaza Theatre Foundation which now conducts the ongoing fund development activities and will oversee theatre operations when it opens. John Bolton has been hired to lead the Foundation as General Manager. Mr. Roberts shared a video featuring Mr. Bolton describing the progress to date and the plans for the next steps.

For more information, he encouraged people to visit their website SaveThePlazaTheatrePS.org.

The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer period. Carol thanked Mr. Roberts for his leadership of this important community effort, and thanked him for sharing with us today.

Accomplishments Since Last General Membership Meeting (April 2024)

Carol Munro highlighted our major organizational accomplishments since our last General Membership Annual meeting in April 2024.

Dedication Event for Little Free Library

The dedication for the Little Free Library was held on May 14, 2024. Over 50 people attended. Since then, it has been receiving rave reviews, both from residents and visitors to the neighborhood. Many residents have been donating books and picking up books to read. Laura Miller was thanked for her efforts to manage the library on a daily basis and make sure it is well stocked and orderly.

Community Grant for PSMC for the Beam Program

A \$2,500 Community Grant was made in April to the Palm Springs Modern Committee for its BEAM Program. This architectural education program provides local students with the tools to understand and appreciate the benefits of great design, planning, and how these things are a part of our heritage in the Coachella Valley.

Neighborhood Guided Tours for residents in October

Local resident Eric Chiel was thanked for providing another free guided Twin Palms tour to residents of the neighborhood. Around 20 people took the tour and learned about the history of Twin Palms since the 1950's. Several people in the audience who took the tour said it was very informative and fun.

Presentation, Eric Chiel “Twin Palms Lost/Twin Palms Fund, Part 2”

Eric presented the last two items from his new four-part series regarding recent discoveries about our neighborhood. He said that some of the most fascinating moments in our early neighborhood history are forgotten, overlooked, or incompletely documented.

Eric’s presentation focused on the history of the Ocotillo Lodge and its ownership changes over the decades. The former restaurant area operated under a variety of names and themes as a restaurant, bar and entertainment venue. Eric shared the timeline and the fascinating names of all these operations. The most well know was the original Candlewood Room, a very elegant restaurant and bar.

In 1963 Gene Autry took over the ownership of the Ocotillo Lodge. This began a long series of architectural modifications to the Lodge. He enclosed an open-air atrium to create a second bar area, originally called the Maverick Room with a western theme to highlight some of his memorabilia as “The Singing Cowboy.”

In 1968, Jerry Buss acquired ownership of the Ocotillo Lodge and made numerous changes. Over the next several decades the name and theme of the restaurant and bar changed many times.

In the early 1990’s, ownership changed hands three more times. In 1995 it was converted in the current condo configuration.

Larry shared that both Eric’s and J.R.’s PowerPoints will be posted in full on our website www.TwinPalmsPS.org.

The floor was then opened to a Q & A period. Eric was thanked for his myth-busting presentation, and his dedication to uncovering and sharing the rich tapestry of our neighborhood’s history.

Ongoing Activities

Financial Report

Larry Johnson gave a brief financial report. He noted that a copy of the current 11-2-24 report is on each table and will be on our website next week. He said he would be happy to speak one on one with anyone who wants further information.

2024 TPNO Membership Campaign

Larry said that we are still accepting \$25 voluntary membership dues for 2024. The membership form is available today or online at our website.

Update on William Krisel’s Twin Palms Exhibit

It was noted that Tom Eich has taken over lead responsibility for the exhibition and maintenance of the Krisel Exhibit. Eric Chiel will continue to be involved in the Exhibit’s content.

Twin Palms Social Media accounts

Michael Faulkner provided an update on our social media accounts. In addition to our website, he highlighted our Instagram account and encouraged everyone to share with him photos to use on the site. He said that he is also responsible as Communications Officer for managing our email contact list and for all the postings on our accounts related to meetings and special events. Carol thanked him for doing a great job.

Status of Application for Federal Tax Exemption

Board member Jeff Hoffman has taken the lead this year for application to the IRS to obtain 501(c)4 status for TPNO. This will ensure that we are exempt from paying taxes on income. Unlike the non-profit 501(c)3 status, donations to TPNO will not be tax exempt.

The review process has taken longer than anticipated after the application was submitted earlier this year. Hopefully, we will get approval in the next few months. Carol thanked Jeff for all his efforts to draft the application and to monitor the Federal review process.

ONE-PS Update

The ONE-PS organization meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 4:30 PM at 200 S. Civic Drive. All are encouraged to attend.

Planned Activities

Upcoming Events Calendar

Carol reported on upcoming events. The next General Membership social meeting will be on January 9, 2025 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Ocotillo Lodge. Tony Vardaro introduced the agenda. The featured speakers will be Sven Kirsten and Peter Moruzzi, authors of the new book "Palm Springs Tiki." They will address the impact of the Tiki style on Palm Springs.

Tony also mentioned the Ocotillo Lodge's February 16, 2025 Modernism Week event lecture and tour, "Renovating Ocotillo Lodge." He added that the Ocotillo community was flattered to be approached by Atomic Ranch magazine with the idea and they will be hosting the event.

Planning for 2025 Twin Palms Modernism Tour

Carol said that planning for our Modernism Tour is a year-round activity. We will have six homes on the 2025 tour on February 17, 2024. We sold over 120 tickets on November 1st, the first day of ticket sales.

Volunteer Engagement Opportunities

Michael Faulkner, and Michele Johnson, said there are lots of opportunities for residents who want to volunteer their time. He noted that Volunteer Interest Forms are on each table and on our website. There is a place to indicate your interest in volunteering for Modernism Week as well as other volunteer opportunities.

Grants and Initiatives

Carol briefly shared with members about the process to apply for future grants or suggest Community Initiatives. For more information about eligibility requirements or the application process, she suggested speaking with Larry Johnson, our volunteer Grants Coordinator.

Open Membership Discussion

Carol Munro then opened the floor for questions/comments. The only comments were that this was a fun and informative meeting.

Adjournment

Carol Munro thanked everyone for attending today. She encouraged everyone to stay and finish the refreshments and take the opportunity to interact with their neighbors.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

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