

American Dahlia Society
Minutes – Executive Committee Meeting
January 12, 2025

Present: Mark Oldenkamp, Linda Holmes-Cook, Alli Richards, Ken Jensen, Charles Miehm, Terry Schroeder, Brad Freeman, Harry Risetto, Jerry Landerholm, Ron Miner, and Jeff Miner.

The meeting was opened at 3:03 pm PST.

Terry shared the executive committee minutes from the February 5, 2025. One correction was made where Dr. Harkess was talking about the four papers that Zach would be publishing. It was felt the second topic was dahlia breeding.

Mark explained the purpose of today's follow-up discussion is to get direction on a couple of areas. One is that we were made aware of the need to fund an additional half a year of Zach's work for about \$20,000. We won't need it for a couple of years. We need to approve authorizing Kristine to do fund raising for that amount. **Harry Risetto moved and Jerry Landerholm seconded to approve Kristine raising funds for Zach Meharg to complete his current work on the genome project.** It was mentioned that if there was a little additional needed, there is some money in the Tony Evangelista memorial fund that could be used toward this project as Tony was a supporter of dahlia and genomic research. **The motion passed.**

There were a couple emails that went out following the February 5 meeting. Brad suggested asking the membership if they want to contribute financially to the next phase using a survey. The next phase would be using a post-doctorate person to continue the genome project. Harry Risetto responded that questions would be difficult for responders to answer without a frame of reference. There is a lot of dahlia genetic research going on; Hudson is just one player. He searched under dahlia cytology (study of dahlia cells) and was surprised at the information he found.

Mark talked with Ron and he felt that pursuing partnerships with legal involvement would be something he felt we should look harder at. He felt that raising \$300,000 without a partnership could be a big challenge.

Linda felt there would be some advantage to pursuing partnerships so the fundraising doesn't fall solely on the ADS. Remembering that Dr. Harkess has an infrastructure that he is working within where he attends conferences and has access to possible business partners. We are already overextended when it comes to asking our members for additional money. It is important to remember that Dr. Harkess has an understanding of what has taken place with this project.

Charles stated he was interested in what Harry sent. If there are others researching, we need to see what is available. The idea of getting a partner is a good idea; he feels trying to raise \$300,000 on our own would be difficult. We need to remember we already have a fundraising effort for the national show endowment fund.

Jerry asked if when Zach completes his work and is published, are we going to get acknowledgement for our support in this endeavor? Ron stated he believes we will but there is no guarantee. Should there be a letter of understanding that indicates we would

get some recognition for our support? Harry stated that in looking at the Hudson website, they are in the business of selling Dr. Harkess's products. There may be a conflict of interest between Hudson's and ADS's goals with respect to who will be involved in the future extension of Dr. Harkess's research. Mark feels that Dr. Harkess is willing to try to figure out how to keep us in the loop if we stay as partners. Ron feels that Harry's concern reinforces the need to retain legal representation. The cost would be \$10,000 to \$20,000 for an initial engagement. Harry states the cost would depend on how narrow the question is; the narrower the question, the easier it is to answer. Thoughts need to be given on what we would be asking the attorney to keep it a narrower discussion.

Mark brought out that Dr. Harkess stated the ADS provides something every year that no one else can provide and that is our national show with thousands of blooms of all different types. It might be possible to have a conversation with a partner to have access to those blooms and they might be willing to contribute a sponsorship to help fund the national show endowment or the ongoing genome research. It is felt a letter of understanding for what we are currently committed to may not be a good idea. However, a letter of understanding would be essential if we negotiate anything further. We don't want to do anything that would create distrust in what we are currently involved in. Approaching Dr. Harkess with a question as to what he sees us doing that would help facilitate all of our interests.

The original objective was knowledge about the genome relating to the dahlia properties and being able to control them. Initially we would be getting the genome of the dahlia. The challenge is understanding how much more work is needed to learn what specific genes provide what specific outcome.

Next Steps

One step is to determine what other genetic research is out there. It was felt we should ask Dr. Harkess what else is out there that he is aware of but to not limit it to just Dr. Harkess and Hudson. It might be worth asking if Dr. Pappu is aware of other genomic research. Ron said he would ask Dr. Pappu if he is aware of other areas where there is genome research being done. Another thought is a conversation as to whether there are plans to have the ADS have some recognition of their support. There is an opportunity when we are in Chicago, the home of Ball Seed and to think about how to start deciding the menu that is on the plate and how to get the invitation out to be there. On the Monday tour at the national show there is a tour to Ball going to their "helix" where they do their scientific research and to the seed storage/preparation area. It's felt that at this time we aren't ready to do a survey of members to raise additional money.

Mark will start to develop a paper as to what a partnership would look like to the ADS. One of the things that would include would be how the national show as a laboratory for dahlias and dahlia research.

There was a question as to whether we will proceed with legal representation. Ron has identified an attorney that would help in these kinds of discussion and would like to get back to him as to our thoughts. It was suggested to let him know we will be meeting in March, discussing the genome research, and get back to him after that.

Spring Planning Meeting

Please send to Mark any topics or suggested agenda items for that meeting. A few items he has thought about are the membership project, google, the genome research. We need to know how we are going to interface with the local group and is there going to be a judging. A couple other items is discussion ways to improve or enhance our publications. A second is Dahlia University and whether those items are up to date. Another agenda item that should be discussed is the criteria for the Boeke award, so that the criteria is published. Charles will send out the information in the Boeke bequest as well as the consensus that was agreed to in 2021. It's felt that the issues that have come up are due to the differences in how awards are given.

We have purchased an owl camera and laptop and are working on getting that set up. Mark is looking at a projector. Mark plans to bring the equipment to New Mexico. There is a new entry on the treasurer's report for assets. There is an entry in that category for AV equipment and that is the owl and the laptop. The CPA who did our review informed Charles that if we purchased that equipment it should be listed as an asset. It was also recommended to include our store inventory as an asset.

Trial Garden

Marilyn Walton has stated that she is not going to continue as trial garden chair. Heidi Zierdt and her father Jerry Zierdt have agreed to take on that responsibility. He wanted to get the executive committee to proceed with announcing that to the board. There was consensus to do so.

Store Inventory

Mark and Dan, ADS Store Manager, took an inventory of publications. There are several hundred older items that are no longer needed to keep in the inventory. Mark would like approval to authorize disposal of items that there is no reason to keep on the shelves. Inventory that is left over from the previous year be provided to the publication committee decides on the number of classification books so they can use that in the decision. Mark can guide the store manager on how much inventory we need to keep.

Jerry Landerholm reported many people in the Illinois area didn't receive their *Bulletin* until early January. It's felt that the mailing list sent to Colin should be able to be provided by Elva. It's felt that the communication regarding these issues needs to be given to the full committee so we can get an idea of the scope of the situation. There is concern about what the original mailing list looks like. Mark is encouraged by the work that is being done as the membership tracking system as far as helping to automate that process. At the spring planning meeting, we will be looking at a lot of ideas as to what is possible in that area.

There was some discussion about when they were mapping the dahlia, Edna C, that they might determine how a dahlia originated over 50 years ago continues to win and have a high petal count. It was felt that the genome project would provide some information as to what makes a healthy dahlia plant that will continue to grow vigorously.

The next meeting will be February 2 at 1:00 pm PST.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 pm PST.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Schroeder, Secretary

DRAFT