

## SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes

June 19, 2024

Via Zoom

7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Bob Dodge, Russ Pinizzotto, Paul Howell, Mike Simmons, Jeremy Wright and Rob Burgess and club members Anne Dobrisko, Dwight Lanpher, Dean Ostergaard and Steve Tondreau. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the May 15, 2024 meeting were approved.

### Follow-Up on Action Items and Committee Reports:

#### Program Committee: Russ

- There was extended discussion on the perennial question of meeting content when trying to cater to a wide variety of knowledge levels in the club. Russ reported that he and Carson determined that trying to cover multiple topics with short presentations is harder to staff and may not provide enough information to be helpful. They therefore recommended that certain club meetings should be devoted to newbie topics, with a single topic being covered. Rob expressed concern that it would take too long (several years at two meetings per year) to give new members exposure to the variety of issues they face in starting out with astronomy. Paul mentioned SMA's past practice with club member Joan Chamberlin providing a basic astronomy talk a half hour before each meeting as a possible way to reach new members. Some expressed reluctance to give up the socializing-half hour before each meeting. Jeremy suggested surveying attendees on their sense of the complexity of the talk and if it was helpful. Consensus emerged that our meetings should include basic, intermediate and advanced topics, equally spaced throughout the year. Rob asked Russ to present to the Board his recommendation on such a schedule for the coming twelve months as a template for the club to seek out topics and speakers.
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- Mike suggested a formalized mentor program based on AL Observing Programs, where small groups come together to locate the programs' targets. Such an effort would build connections within the club and move toward a club goal of getting more members participating in AL Observing programs. There was strong support for Mike's idea. Anne suggested encouraging small teams to take on citizen science projects under the Galaxy Zoo program as another way to engage and educate members. Russ suggested that Rob provide initial oversight to try to get groups together and to identify mentors to lead the groups.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Rob will reach out to Spirit Aero Systems in Biddeford to discuss their role in supplying heat resistant materials for planetary missions.
- **It was decided to cancel the July meeting since it fell on the 4<sup>th</sup> and to encourage members to get out and observe!**

### **Outreach Committee: Carson, Mike and Anne Dobriko**

- Anne reported on both the Family Fun Day activities at Ft Williams on June 8 and the Bug Light star party on June 15. Carson had previously provided an email report on Bug Light, thanking SMA members who attended and describing the event. Ann said about 30 people enjoyed solar observing on an iffy day that ended early with rain and that about 50 attended the star party.
- Paul asked members to send star party pictures to be added to the website.
- Rob confirmed that the club would co-host a Perseid star party with the BTLT on August 10/11 and that a star party with the Cumberland Library was set for August 24. Other dates and locations were set forth in the June meeting agenda.

### **Dark Sky Committee: Rob, Howie, Jeremy**

- **ACTION ITEM:** Paul will now work with Jeremy and others to get the Google Map of our recommended star gazing sites up on our webpage. See below re webpage..
- **ACTION ITEM:** Rob will put together some dark sky advice for our webpage from the DSI website that can guide people on their choices for outdoor lighting needs. We will also provide links to DSI, Dark Sky Maine and other resources. See below re webpage.
- Rob reported that the Brunswick Planning Board held its first workshop on May 28 on lighting amendments to its zoning ordinance and that an additional workshop or two may be required to refine what gets recommended to the Town Council.
- Efforts to modernize DSM's organizational structure, including to eventually seek chapter status by Dark Sky International, continue. Rob is representing SMA in those efforts but he welcomes others' participation.

### **Webpage redevelopment: Paul**

- Paul reported many frustrating hours attempting to edit our page on the Strikingly platform. He noted it was a "scrolling single page" format with limited dropdown menu functionality. After review he recommended we switch to Wix.com which has achieved great reviews for its easier webpage building. It is code free. It can process payments as does Strikingly. Wix is a later generation webpage-building platform that has improved over what Strikingly offered several years ago. There will be some cost as a new subscriber. Paul will report back with those details.

### **Membership Committee: Dave and Kevin**

- Al and Dave are working on transitioning all responsibilities related to membership. Dave also indicated he would assume the responsibility of reporting to Night Sky Network to keep us current with that platform.

### **Equipment Committee: Ara & Kevin**

- Jeremy and Carson have developed a price list for equipment to be sold. Jeremy will share it with the board for its reaction and then we will provide notice to club members about the equipment sale. It was decided to offer a 20% discount off of published prices for club

members. We would then notify other clubs of the equipment. Unsold equipment would then be offered at would then be offered the Open House.

- A list of all equipment to be sold was set forth in the May Directors' minutes.
- **The June 19 agenda identified volunteer roles for the Open House. It now appears that August 3 or August 17 might be the best days for the event.**

### **Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee: Bob**

- Bob reported that as of 5/15/24 the club had \$9,474 in its operating account. Rent has been prepaid through September 30. The club also has a \$10,000 in a 15-month CD at Bangor Savings with a yield of 3.82%, with a current account balance of \$10,092.63. Russ asked Dwight if he knew of any other club with an endowment fund. He said no, except perhaps for ATMOB.

### **Executive Committee: Rob, Ara, Bob, Russ**

Rob thanked Paul for getting the directors' photos and bios up on the beta-version webpage.

The meeting ended about 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by  
Rob Burgess

### **Next Directors' Meetings (all on Wednesdays at 7p.m. via Zoom):**

- **Jul 17**
- **Aug 21**
- **Sep 18**
- **Oct 16**
- **Nov 20**
- **Dec 18**