

SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2024

Via Zoom

7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Russ Pinizzotto, Mike Simmons, David Gay, Jeremy Wright, Bob Dodge and Rob Burgess. Also in attendance were members Anne Dobriko and Dean Ostergaard. A quorum was present

The minutes of the September 18, 2024 meeting were approved.

Follow-Up on Action Items and Committee Reports:

Program Committee: Russ

Russ reviewed scheduled speakers:

- November 7 – Don Pensack – YouTube Content Creator on eyepieces
- December 5 – Fe McBride, Professor of Astronomy, Bowdoin College – multi-messenger observing
- January 2 – member short talks on observing tips for those new to astronomy. **ACTION ITEM:** Topics and speakers have yet to be identified
- Anne reported that our events are posted on Facebook where we have 60 followers. Carson posts our events on Reddit.

Survey Results: Carson

Carson reported that 31 surveys were received. Top areas of interest were Astrophotography, AL programs, Beginner help, Solar observing and Citizen Science participation. Jeremy inquired if we could set up email subgroups for those who wanted to participate. **ACTION ITEM:** Selection “champions” for each of these categories who would be responsible for organizing and administering the groups. Russ volunteered to lead AL Observing Programs.

Outreach Committee: Carson, Mike and Anne Dobriko

- September 21 at Bug Light was cancelled due to weather
- Sept 28 - Stars Over Katahdin: Rob reported on the event with about 150 people attending various aspects of the program, including members of several of Maine’s Abenaki tribes and rangers from the National Park Service and 5-6 amateur astronomers with equipment. Given the promotional power of Friends of KWW and DSM Rob recommended SMA participate in future years.
- October 5/6 – Mitchell Field, Harpswell – Harpswell Heritage Land Trust – Carson reported that with help from Howie Marshall, Steve Tondreau, Mike Simmons, Russ Pinizzotto and others about 50 attendees had an enjoyable night observing. Howie preached the dark sky gospel. HHLT would like to do more of these per year.
- October 19 – Club Open House, Neptune Dr.

- October 23-25 – Maine Space Conference 2030 - Holiday Inn, Portland – Rob would attend and set up an information table as well as be a panelist on one of the afternoon breakout sessions on light pollution and astro-tourism. Carson and Rob would offer telescope views at the conference dinner venue of Halo, at Thompson’s Point.
- November 16/23 – planets – Eastern Prom, Kettle Cove, Bug Light (TBD) – 6 pm. Carson will contact Hohn Haley at the Planetarium to see about co-hosting and greasing the skids of the city bureaucracy.
- **Clare Harrington – MSAD 51 (Cumb./No Yar)** – April 2025 based on discussion with Carson
- **Carried Over ACTION ITEM for October Meeting:** Report on Proposed Club Policy on responding to requests for private star parties - Paul, Russ and Mike. This will be addressed at the November meeting.
- Paul and Rob designed a 33”x81” banner for SMA that will be used at the Maine Space 2030 Conference and future events as part of our outreach efforts.

Dark Sky Committee: Rob, Howie, Jeremy

- Rob reported that he and Jon Silverman of CMAS were invited to join the board of DSM and have done so. DSM is expanding its board to up to 9 as it seeks to become more action oriented and eventually become the Maine chapter of DSI.
- Rob, and members of DSM, attended the Surry, ME Planning Board meeting on 9/25 via Zoom. The Board is working on a revised and comprehensive lighting ordinance for the town. The input was well received by the Board. Whatever is adopted may serve as a good template for small towns in Maine.
- As noted above, Rob participated as a panelist in a concurrent afternoon break-out session on dark skies and astro-tourism. About 25 conferees attended the session. That evening Rob and Carson delighted about 100 conference dinner guests with views of Saturn, double stars and some M objects through their telescopes at the Halo restaurant venue at Thompson’s Point. Heavily lit, it help demonstrate the effects of light pollution.

Membership Committee: Dave

- **ACTION ITEM:** Last month Paul raised the idea of again offering club swag. Paul agreed to report back on possible sources for offering club logo’d clothing.
- **ACTION ITEM:** A new member inquiry as to a multi-year membership option was briefly discussed but will be followed up at the next meeting.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Membership chair was asked to report on membership address information to facilitate member interaction within their vicinity.
- There was extensive discussion about seeking to raise the number of women members in the club. Of the 22 former members who were moved to inactive status (non-renewals in 2024) five were women. The club has improved its female demographic considerably since 2018 but attrition continues. Russ suggested we amend our mission statement to include an affirmative commitment to grow female membership, and become nationally recognized for our expansion efforts. Given New England’s rich history of women astronomers we have a platform to build on.

Equipment Committee: Jeremy and Dean

- Jeremy agreed to Chair this committee, and Dean offered to assist. Jeremy established a Square account allowing for credit card payment options for Saturday.
- The Open House will be Saturday, October 19. The forecast is for great weather, reducing complications relating to set up and display. Details of who can attend and assist were discussed at length and were as outlined in the meeting agenda.
ACTION ITEM: Discuss how to handle requests from non-members for telescope help, especially when seeking house calls.

Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee: Bob

- Bob reported our rent has gone up another 5%, which is simply a pass through of the rent increase experienced by Teens to Trails. It is hoped that with inflation reduced similar rent increases in future years will not be of this magnitude. The club had no increased from year one to year two.
- Account balance was \$7,915.87, after payment of the new banner, the 4th quarter rent, and certain expense reimbursements. The endowment fund was at \$10,220.62.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mike offered his expertise as an investment advisor at our next meeting to discuss investment options for our endowment funds.

Executive Committee: Rob, Bob, Russ

- Rob will reach out to the membership for any who would be interested in filling two vacant positions on the Board.
ACTION ITEM: Committee assignments on the Board.

The meeting ended about 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by
Rob Burgess

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

- **Nov 20**
- **Dec 18**
- **Jan 15**
- **Feb 19**
- **Mar 19**