

SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023

Via Zoom

7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Bob Dodge, Al DiSabatino, Carson Hanrahan, Russ Pinizzotto, Maame Andoh, Howie Marshall, Ara Jerahian, Kevin Kane and Rob Burgess and club members David Gay and George Bokinsky. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the October 25, 2023 meeting were approved.

Follow-Up on Action Items and Committee Reports:

Program Committee: Russ and Maame

- Dec 7 -Dr. James O'Brian, Springfield College, re Modifications to Newtonian Dynamics
- Jan 4 – Dr. George Bokinsky continuing with Part 3 of his Astrobiology lectures.
- Feb 1 – McKenna Wood, Grad student at MIT– details TBD
- Mar 7 – Ara Jerahian – unpacking the data acquisition and post-processing of an astrophotograph
- April 4 and beyond: Spirit Aero Systems (ME company building heat shields); Dr. James Beletic, Teledyne Imaging for JWST; Harvard's "Computers"

Outreach Committee: Carson

- After discussion, and in light of poor attendance at prior club star parties under inclement weather, and the forecast for Nov 18, it was decided to postpone the November star party to December 16, at 6 pm.
- The membership survey on attendance at star parties, developed by Carson, was discussed and approved for issuance in early December. Survey Monkey will be utilized. The survey is short and will be limited to attendance issues. Keeping it short and focused will ensure a much better response rate.
- **ACTION ITEM:** The Outreach Committee will contact all organizations requesting star parties this year that we could not accommodate to thank them and invite them to work with us in 2024 to conduct joint star parties.
- Rob reached out to Teens to Trails about the star party prize won by the Greeley HS Outing Club to try to schedule a star party in November but did not receive a response. Carson reached out to the Portland HS astronomy teacher about SMA's making a presentation but has not heard back. It appears that a speaker at the Maine Space 2030 Conference may have satisfied the request.
- The club hosted an Exhibitor's table at the Maine Space 2030 Conference in Portland, Nov 5-7, along with 16 other exhibitors. More than 300 people attended the conference. Rob, Al and Bob managed the table over the two-day conference. Many contacts were made that may yield dividends in the future as the Maine Space Corporation program develops.
- Other outreach events scheduled by or through the club:
 - Adaptive Outdoor Education Center – light pollution talk – mid Jan – Rob
 - Freeport Women's Club – winter stargazing – Jan 19, 2 pm – Russ

- Maine Senior College Winter Wisdom program – Light Pollution – Feb 14 - Rob

Dark Sky Committee: Rob, Howie, Jeremy and Paul Howell

- The Club submitted a 3-page comment to the Land Use Planning Commission on the Pickett Mountain rezoning application. The applicant is seeking to rezone 700 acres to allow for metals mining within 6 miles of the KWW National Monument, an IDA Dark Sky Sanctuary. Since there was no photometric information on how the project might have been lit the club took a neutral position on the application but urged the Commission to impose robust dark sky lighting standards on any approval. The club plans to participate in a LUPC-initiated review of its lighting standards for the 10.4 million acres of unorganized territory the Commission oversees. Its lighting standards have not been reviewed in twenty years. LUPC expects the review to take approximately 10 months during 2024.
- Howie reported he will attend a Harpswell Selectboard meeting to stress that any electrification of a currently abandoned building on the Mitchell Field complex observe dark sky lighting standards.

Membership Committee: Al and Kevin

- Membership per the NSN roster is now at 98.
- Renewal notices will be going out in early December. Rob will work with Al on the contents of the notice.
- Ara amended the membership form on Strikingly to include a question on the applicant's home town so that the club could have better demographic information on our membership.
- There was discussion about a buddy system for new members as a way to reduce membership attrition. There was reluctance to create a new, formal program that would require more volunteer input. There was discussion around an alternative of holding club only star parties. A consensus emerged around inviting members to come to club-scheduled star parties early to socialize and to again host an Open House in the spring to which all members would be invited. This could also be a venue for selling excess equipment.
- Additional mailing lists – Rob sought advice on managing names of people just seeking “more information” about SMA but who were neither members nor GG participants. It was suggested that all such persons would be invited to join GG and they would be instructed to set their mail preferences if they were concerned about excessive email.
- Upon a motion and second the Board reviewed and approved the proposed bylaws change that allows for proration of dues for new members based on when they joined the club. The proposed changes were publicized to the entire membership more than 14 days in advance of the Board's consideration, as required by the bylaws.

Equipment Committee: Ara & Kevin

- The club continues to receive donations of equipment from various sources. Most recently Kevin retrieved a C-6 and a C-11 from a couple in Harpswell. He is in the process of testing the equipment. With this surfeit of used equipment it was decided that if the club had no use of it (or insufficient space to store it) that it would be offered for sale through channels like Cloudy Nights or Astromart. It was also recommended that such equipment could be sold at an Open House in the spring of 2024. Equipment that could not be sold might then be donated to area

schools. It was suggested that the Challenger Learning Center in Bangor, or the Maine School for Math and Science in Limestone, be approached to see if they could use the equipment.

- The use of the EAA scope was discussed at the last meeting with Russ cautioning that any decision to sell the equipment should be carefully reviewed given it was acquired by donated funds. The better course may be to find creative ways to use the equipment at star parties and get club members trained in its use. **ACTION ITEM:** The Equipment Committee should present its recommendations to the Board in the next month or two.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Photograph items available for the club's equipment lending program.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Install the dew rings on the C-8 and C-11, perhaps before the 11/18 star party.

Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee: Bob

- Bob reported that as of 11/15/23 the club had \$16,986.15 in its account. Rent is paid through year end and no other major expenditures are expected. Dues from recent new memberships has not been received from Strikingly yet. Funds on hand will increase as 2024 membership renewals are received.
- Rob reported that he learned of the Perloff Family Foundation from an exhibitor at the Maine Space 2030 conference. Mr. Perloff is a successful businessman with a summer home in Kennebunkport who is fond of Maine, and science related projects. It was suggested we approach the foundation with any specific project we are seeking funding for.

Executive Committee: Rob, Ara, Bob, Russ

- **CARRY OVER ACTION ITEM:** A picture of one director is awaited. We can then post a complete list of directors on our website.
- Rob reported that Al has decided to step down as a director at the end of his term in April. This will leave the board with two vacancies. Rob encouraged directors to have conversations with any members they think might be willing to serve so that we can have a full complement of directors in April.

Other: Jeremy reported by email that the Astrobin page he created for SMA members has four users.

ACTION ITEM: Determine how this opportunity can be promoted within the club and linked to our webpage.

The meeting ended about 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by
Rob Burgess

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

- **Dec 20**
- **Jan 17**
- **Feb 21**
- **Mar 20**
- **Club Annual Meeting (April 4)**