

SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes
August 21, 2024
Via Zoom
7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Bob Dodge, Russ Pinizzotto, Paul Howell, Mike Simmons, Jeremy Wright, David Gay, Howie Marshall, and Rob Burgess and club members George Bokinsky, Anne Dobriko, Mike Green and Dave Crocker. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the July 17, 2024 meeting were approved.

Follow-Up on Action Items and Committee Reports:

Program Committee: Russ

- Sept 5 – Matt Penn, National Solar Observatory, Tucson, AZ – the April eclipse and the Dynamic Eclipse Broadcast Initiative and citizen science
- October 3 – Julie from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- November 7 – Don Pensack – YouTube Content Creator on eyepieces
- December 5 – Fe McBride, Professor of Astronomy, Bowdoin College
- January 2 – member short talks on observing tips for those new to astronomy
- Russ could use another hand on the Program Committee. Club members and directors were asked to consider joining Russ to provide this essential service.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mike provided an update on the member survey being prepared seeking to determine if there was interest to form smaller groups of specialized interest in such topics as visual observing, astrophotography, book clubs, radio astronomy, etc. Mike said he and Carson received several suggestions for additional topics to include in the survey and he thanked the board for its input. After discussion it was agreed this would go out to members only under a cover announcement from Rob. It would be later shared with the entire GG list to show them what the club was doing and demonstrate the value of membership.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Rob will reach out to Spirit Aero Systems in Biddeford to discuss their role in supplying heat resistant materials for planetary missions.

Outreach Committee: Carson, Mike and Anne Dobriko

- August 24 - Cumberland Library Star Party -Twin Brooks – 8 pm
- Sept 14 – Solar Observing, Brunswick Mall, part of BDA's Community BBQ 10 – 2 pm
- September 21 – Clusters and planets – Bug Light park, So Portland 7 pm
- Sept 28 - Stars Over Katahdin (Dwight & Rob)
- October 5/6 – Mitchell Field, Harpswell – Harpswell Heritage Land Trust – 6 pm
- October 19 – Club Open House, Neptune Dr.
- October 23-25 – Maine Space Conference 2030 - Holiday Inn, Portland
- November 16/23 – planets – Eastern Prom, Kettle Cove, Bug Light (TBD) – 6 pm
- **Clare Harrington – MSAD 51 (Cumb./No Yar) – fall 2024 (180 students) – Carson to follow up**

- **ACTION ITEM:** Report on Proposed Club Policy on responding to requests for private star parties - Paul, Russ and Mike

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.

Webpage redevelopment: Paul

Paul posed a webpage design question as to whether the “Members Only” section needed to remain. It creates a lot of design challenges as well as member burdens by requiring additional User IDs and Passwords. Bylaws, Directors’ Meeting minutes and video recordings of meetings were what was hidden. It was decided to eliminate this provision and allow all content on the site to be visible to anyone with an interest.

Paul requested content for items to be posted such as for speakers at meetings and upcoming events. He also requested pictures from our star parties or other events.

Membership Committee: Dave and Kevin

- Dave reported that membership is currently at 95 and GG participation is north of 225 participants.
- Paul raised the idea of again offering club swag. Brief discussion explained why we stopped with LL Bean (too many restrictions). Other sources were Geiger Brothers, 4 Imprint, etc and Paul would report back on the possibility of these sources.
- A new member inquiry as to a multi-year membership option was briefly discussed but will be followed up at the next meeting.
- Dave Crocker found our membership information disappointing in that there was no way of knowing where other members lived, denying the opportunity for some impromptu observing, mentoring on equipment, etc. The new and renewing membership process now asks for town of residence but it is not clear how many people are answering the question. Rob has indicated in the past his frustration with this missing information as it impairs the club’s ability to organize regional events, among other things. **ACTION ITEM:** Dave, please report on how much we know about our members’ residences and how we might improve on that.

Equipment Committee: Kevin

- After discussion and reviewing September club commitments it was decided to reschedule the Open House to Saturday, October 19, following the schedule proposed in the meeting agenda. Rob asked for a show of hands on attendance and most responded affirmatively.

- It was decided others could sell their equipment as well, on their own tables and separate from club offerings.
- Products would be sold as follows:
 - At the members only portion of the Open House equipment could be inspected and sales would need to be completed prior to the public portion of the event. Members would get a 20% discount from the established prices.
 - Unsold items would be offered to the public in a silent auction-type format with a “buy now” price (the club-established) price and a reserve price. The reserve price was not discussed; it is recommended it be a 10% discount off the established price. Follow-on bids would need to be at least \$10 greater. A buyer willing to pay the club-established price could immediately buy the item and remove it from the silent auction.
 - Once club members are notified other clubs in Maine and the public will be notified of the equipment sale. Dwight will provide the information to other clubs and Anne will coordinate public advertising on FB and other such platforms.
 - For other activities during the open house Russ has three short movies he has made that could be shown in the conference room. Other activities could include radio astronomy, Jon’s meteorite display, how to use SkyMaps, solar observing.
 - Jeremy will also look into a card reader for a cell phone to allow credit card purchases. An alternative would have buyers make a cash donation through the website, or writing a check.

Treasurer’s Report/Finance Committee: Bob

- Bob reported that Ara was able to obtain a partial refund of our subscription to Strikingly after we switched to Wix. This was not expected, so thanks to Ara. The club has \$8,792.82 in its operating account and \$10,155.91 in its endowment account.
- Paul’s recommended discussion of an investment strategy for our endowment was deferred due to time. Mike offered his expertise as an investment advisor at our next meeting.

Executive Committee: Rob, Bob, Russ

- Rob asked the Board to consider candidates for replacing Ara. The Board has authority to appoint members to vacant board positions. The Board also can appoint a director to a vacant officer position (the club Secretary officer position is vacant). Suggestions or self nominations are welcomed.
- The Director committee assignments discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting ended about 8:40 p.m.

Submitted by
Rob Burgess

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

- **Sep 18**
- **Oct 16**
- **Nov 20**
- **Dec 18**