

## SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes

July 19, 2023

Via Zoom

7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Bob Dodge, Kevin Kane, Jeremy Wright, Al DiSabatino, Howie Marshall, Ara Jerahian, Carson Hanrahan and Rob Burgess and members David Gay and Paul Howell. Russ Pinizzotto was ill, Kerry Kertes was traveling and Maame Andoh was traveling for a summer job assignment. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the June 21, 2023 meeting were approved.

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

#### Program Committee: Russ and Maame

- With both members of the Program Committee unable to attend there was no further update on speakers for our fall meetings beyond what was previously reported: Dr. Heidi DeBlock for August, Professor from St. Michael's College in September, MIT Professor in October. Rob offered to try to get a speaker on the Psyche Mission that is scheduled to launch in October for our November or December meeting.
- **Follow up ACTION ITEM:** There was no update on efforts to add links to the webpage with telescope buying advice. At the June meeting Carson, Jeremy and Kevin offered to work on this project. A report will be presented at the August meeting.

#### Outreach Committee: Kerry & Carson

##### Freeport

July 22 Goodfire Brewing "Sun and Suds", 2-4 pm – Solar

##### Brunswick

August 13 8-10pm – joint Perseid Event with Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust; also, Maine State Star Party at Cobscook Bay St Park

August 19 8-10pm – Club/Public star party at Neptune Dr

Sept 16 7-9 Neptune Dr

October 21 7-9 Neptune Dr

November 18 7-9 Neptune Dr

##### Cumberland

August 16 8-10pm – joint event with Southworth Planetarium and Prince Mem Library

##### Staceyville

October 14 Stars Over Katahdin – Partial Solar Eclipse – Stargazing – Friends of KWW

- **ACTION ITEM** from last meeting: It was agreed to add a full-season list of scheduled outreach events, rather than just showcasing the next event. Kevin and Carson offered to update our webpage with a Google Calendar. This would facilitate volunteer recruitment of both club

events and for events requested of us by outside organizations to determine if we could support them.

- In June Kerry reported he is following up with all organizations that have requested SMA star parties to get more details to determine if they are something we can accommodate, but in his absence there was no update at this meeting. **Carried-over ACTION ITEM: report at next meeting on discussions and commitments with Maine's First Ship, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Harpswell Historical Society and Dark Sky Maine (re: Common Ground Fair).** Priority should be given to organizations in other communities than Brunswick to diversify our event locations.
- **Carried-over ACTION ITEM: Please review Rob's comments and send him any thoughts on the original program and proposed revisions to the PowerPoint slide program about the club prepared by the Scarborough HS student.**
- 2024 Total Eclipse – An impromptu zoom meeting was held on July 18. Those invited included about a dozen club members interested in eclipse planning that were inspired by our July meeting presentation by Greg Shanos. However, only three members (Bob, Greg Shanos and Rob) attended the meeting so no action was taken. At the Board meeting extensive discussion ensued. It was agreed that with Maine being so close to the centerline of the April 8, 2024 total eclipse most board members intended to travel to experience totality, at various localities such as Jackman, Rangeley, Houlton, etc. It was agreed that we would post those places where members intended to go so that other members seeking to join them could do so. All locations will be dependent upon weather forecasts. As to local events outside of totality, a request has been made of SMA by the Southworth Planetarium to partner for eclipse viewing in the Portland area. It was agreed that we could not yet commit to supporting this request at this time but would continue to promote the idea among club members who may not be able to travel to totality. It was further agreed that we would work with local libraries and media as a “trusted advisor” prior to the eclipse to provide useful information about it and how to observe it. **ACTION ITEM: Continue to informally plan for the eclipse even in the absence of an eclipse “committee” so that we can play our desired role as the eclipse date approached. Report back to the Board at each subsequent meeting on developments.**
- **Follow-Up ACTION ITEM: Rob has not yet followed up with Shay Bellas of Navitour on her program on providing outdoor experiences with persons with disabilities to see if it can fit into our programs.**

### **Dark Sky Committee: Rob, Howie, Jeremy Wright and Paul Howell**

Rob reported that he, Jeremy and Paul met on July 17 via zoom to discuss dark sky issues. The committee agreed that while we would be supportive of some other form of statewide legislation it was beyond our capacity to lead that effort. The experience of LD 1845 has been highly instructive and the Committee will use analyses of that effort to guide future involvement.

The committee agreed that acting locally should be its focus in the short term. To that end information gathering needed to occur on the level of streetlight conversion in our footprint, and a further review of local codes and ordinances. [In follow-up by Howie of RealTerm Energy, the company reported that every major town except Ellsworth has already converted their streetlights to LEDs, several with smart fixtures, but most without, and most at 3000K or less. There is no ground left to plow. The remaining frontier is commercial activity of new developments, new parking lots, and conversions of existing commercial lighting to LEDs, all of which would be regulated (or not) by local ordinances. Therefore, a review of local ordinances, although time-consuming, is needed. It was suggested that a meeting should

be arranged with Maine Municipal Association to get their perspective on how these developments are being addressed by Maine towns.]

Rob reported that Bath recently decided to go with 2700K lighting. While this was not what advocate and SMA member Russell Clark wanted (preferring the 2200K standard adopted by Harpswell) it was still a decent outcome.

Finally, the committee determined that as part of its local focus it would explore opportunities to obtain Urban Dark Sky Place designations from IDA for Mitchell Field in Harpswell, Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick and Winslow Park in Freeport. Paul will get some SQM readings in Harpswell, Howie will bring the idea to his Mitchell Field connections in Harpswell, Jeremy will re-initiate discussion with Freeport town officials and Rob will pursue programmatic questions with IDA.

### **Membership Committee: Al and Kevin**

- **CARRY OVER ACTION ITEM:** Membership Committee to consider and propose ideas for a new member buddy system. Al was asked to come back to the Board at the next meeting with consideration of how this might work, recognizing the level of existing contact with new members. Al will also present a by-laws amendment to pro-rate dues on a quarterly basis. It is surmised that it might be inhibiting new members rejoining the following year (and being asked to pay \$35 twice in less than a year), leading to membership attrition.

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

- Ara updated the Board on the Questar sale with the buyer now seeking a refund of \$250 of the purchase price for defects he alleges exist. Bob, Rob and Ara will fashion a response to the
- Howie will install the red rope lights on the stairs leading behind the building.
- The building maintenance folks have mowed more of the grass behind the building making more space for star parties.
- There were no updates on the Maine Coast Waldorf School observatory proposal; with school out follow up has lagged.
- Rob reported that he, Bob and Kevin met at the shed on June 24 and sorted through all cables and accessories, matching them with scopes, to facilitate their use at future star parties. Locking wheels were also installed on the base of the 15" Dob to make it easier to move from the shed for use at star parties. The scope was also rebalanced. Unneeded boxes were removed from the shed, opening up a little more floor space.

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

There was no formal Treasurer's report because Rob failed to ask for it. There will be an update in August. Al reported that we have not had a new member since late May/early June, which is unusual compared to the last few years. This appears consistent with the theory that as COVID wanes people are returning to prior pastimes and not exploring new hobbies like astronomy.

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

- **CARRY OVER ACTION ITEM:** Directors' pictures and bios are needed for the website. Bios and picture from four directors remain outstanding.

## **Other**

The meeting ended about 9:10 p.m.

Submitted by  
Rob Burgess

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

- **August 16**
- **Sept 20**
- **Oct 18**
- **Nov 15**
- **Dec 20**