

SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes  
September 18, 2024  
Via Zoom  
7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Russ Pinizzotto, Paul Howell, Mike Simmons, David Gay, Carson Hanrahan, and Rob Burgess. Howie Marshall joined the meeting at about 8:30. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the August 21, 2024 meeting were approved.

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

### **Program Committee: Russ**

- October 3 – Sarah Kerns, NASA liaison - Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- 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
- Other ideas: James Kemmerly re Music and Astronomy; Spirit Aerosystems
- Russ could use another hand on the Program Committee. Club members and directors were asked to consider joining Russ to provide this essential service.
- Carson reported on the membership survey seeking input from members on the type of smaller interest groups that could be formed to focus on those specialties. So far 17 responses have been received. Carson will send a follow-up reminder to complete the survey. Surveys went out to Google Groups participants although most of them are not members.

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

- September 21 – Clusters and planets – Bug Light park, So Portland 7 pm
- Sept 28 - Stars Over Katahdin (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)** – April 2025 based on discussion with Carson
- **ACTION ITEM for October Meeting:** Report on Proposed Club Policy on responding to requests for private star parties - Paul, Russ and Mike

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

- Paul, working with Jeremy, updated our webpage to now include recommended star gazing sites in our footprint. The tab is “Dark Skies.”

- Rob reported that he continues to meet with Dark Sky Maine and work on its reorganization efforts. A representative of Dark Sky International attended DSM's last meeting on Zoom and was very encouraging about DSM becoming an official chapter.
- Rob reported on the Land Use Planning Commission's adoption of a revised lighting ordinance governing its 10.4 million acres jurisdiction. SMA submitted comments in support of what was adopted.
- Rob will attend via Zoom the Surry, ME Planning Board meeting on 9/25 considering the adoption of a revised and comprehensive lighting ordinance for the town, along with members of DSM.
- Rob submitted a proposal for star gazing events at the Fitzgerald Recreation Area in east Brunswick to the Town Committee exploring recreational use opportunities at the site. Combined with a recently donated 162 adjacent acres to the Town by Crooker Construction, the new enlarged, but still undeveloped, site offers many recreational opportunities. Rob was asked by a town councilor and member of the Committee to submit a formal proposal.

### **Webpage redevelopment: Paul**

Paul again proposed to eliminate the "Members Only" section of the webpage. It was discussed at the last meeting and agreed to do so. It was confirmed again in this meeting. This will simplify design and management of the site and simplify member access. Paul continues to need content for posting speaker information and event postings.

He also requested pictures from our star parties or other events.

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

- Dave reported that he was working to confirm membership numbers finding conflicts in our own data on when members renewed. Rob agreed to work with Dave, and solicit input from Al DiSabatino (last membership chair) to clear up any inaccuracies.
- **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.

### **Equipment Committee: Kevin**

- The Committee needs a new chair.
- Rob reported that PFAS entered the pond behind the building but that there is no concern as to its continuing presence for harm to those visiting 179 Neptune Drive.
- The Open House will be Saturday, October 19. Based on responses at the last meeting most directors indicated they would attend. Rob emphasized the need for many hands in that equipment from various locations needed to be collected and brought to Neptune Drive for the

event; needed to be set up and organized and priced. Plans were also needed on storing the equipment in the event it is not sold.

- To serve as a reminder, the following minutes of the prior meeting are repeated  
“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**

- There was no treasurer’s report as Bob was absent.
- **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**

- Pursuant to §5.1(f) of the bylaws the Board voted unanimously to remove Kevin Kane as a director due to his failure to attend more than three consecutive directors’ meetings and non-responsiveness to email, text or phone communications. The Board regretted having to take this action and hopes that Kevin is otherwise well.
- 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 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by  
Rob Burgess

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

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