

SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes
July 17, 2024
Via Zoom
7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Bob Dodge, Russ Pinizzotto, Paul Howell, Mike Simmons, Jeremy Wright, David Gay, Howie Marshall, Carson Hanrahan and Rob Burgess and club members Dean Ostergaard, George Bokinsky and Bonnie Lee. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the June 19, 2024 meeting were approved.

Follow-Up on Action Items and Committee Reports:

Program Committee: Russ

- A schedule of speakers for the coming months was being worked out. Russ and Paul were to obtain a speaker for our August 1 meeting. Speakers for the fall would be easier to obtain as a number of those previously approached offered to do fall programs. Several club members, such as Greg Shanos and Brian Perkins have offered their services. Don Pensack, a well-known internet commentator on eyepieces, will speak at our November meeting.
- 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:** Program Committee recommendations on frequency and topics for meetings aimed at beginning astronomy.
- **ACTION ITEM:** follow up on Mike's suggestion to develop a formalized mentor program based on AL Observing Programs, where small groups come together to locate the programs' targets. Rob to provide initial oversight to try to get groups together and to identify mentors to lead the groups.
- **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

- July 20/27- Globular Cluster Observing – Kettle Cove, Cape Elizabeth
- July 21 – Full Moon campfire – MCHT and Teens to Trails – Woodward Point, Brunswick
- [August 9/11 – Maine State Star Party in Cobscook Bay]
- August 5 – SMA presentation to Brunswick Rotary Club
- August 10/11 - Perseid Meteor Shower Star Party with BTLT, CSF, Brunswick
- August 19 - Full Moon campfire – MCHT and Teens to Trails – Woodward Point, Brunswick
- August 24 - Cumberland Library Star Party -Twin Brooks – 8 pm
- **Sept 7 – Open House?**
- 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
- 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**
- **Requests for private star parties:** After discussion Paul, Russ and Mike agreed to meet to develop a policy, and pricing, for the club to respond to requests for private star parties (typically, for corporate outings), to include minimum charges, cancellation policy, liability coverage, brochure, indoor program (if overcast), etc.
- Rob reported on a thoughtful exchange with Jon Wallace and Carson on the location and content of star parties and how it differed from what had been the model developed two years ago when star parties were centered on Neptune Drive. Jon lamented the departure from that model; reasons for the change, including our member survey, were explained. The Board concurred that people attend star parties primarily to look through telescopes, and learn from that experience, rather than expecting a lecture-type presentation. Moreover, more diverse venues for star parties did not provide the facilities for such talks. For Neptune Drive star parties we could continue to provide a talk component as long as it was short and did not hold attendees captive.

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.
- Rob reported that the Brunswick Planning Department was still working through the recommendations made by him on new lighting standards on May 28.
- Rob reported that the Committee establishing policies for use of the new 260-acre parcel in East Brunswick has officially included star gazing as one of the activities it will seek to encourage. The Committee is interested in exploring a Dark Sky International designation for the site.
- Rob reported LUPC has closed the record on comments on its proposed new lighting standards for its jurisdictional area in rural Maine. SMA and Dark Sky Maine submitted joint comments.

Webpage redevelopment: Paul

Paul made a presentation on the revised webpage for the club on the Wix platform and solicited testing and comments on the beta model. The beta model is expected to go live shortly with certain less-critical components of the site added afterwards. Paul was heartily thanked for all his efforts in revamping the site. It will now be easier for committee chairs and others to edit blog-like sections of the webpage to keep it completely up-to-date.

Membership Committee: Dave and Kevin

- Dave is recuperating from his recent surgery and is getting up to speed on all relating membership issues, especially with AL reporting and recordkeeping. Dave was warmly welcomed back!

Equipment Committee: Kevin

- Rob reported that Jeremy and Carson had provided advice on pricing the items we had to sell. Rob recommended pushing the Open House into September, allowing time for proper notice to be given to members first.
- **Original date of Sept 20 conflicted with club star party; Sept 28 conflicts with Stars Over Katahdin; Oct 5 conflicts with Harpswell star party; Sept 14 conflicts with solar viewing in Brunswick – therefore we must default to Sept 7 or consider a Sunday event?**
- **Open House/ 20th Anniversary** – Sept 7 to allow at least two weeks of exposure to club members/ other clubs; Program:
 - Set up 9:30-11: Tents if necessary; equipment from shed; prices/labels (**20% discount for club members**); tables/chairs; displays (radio astronomy, meteorites?)
 - 11-12:30 club members coffee/refreshments; inspections and equipment sales; socializing;
 - 1-3 general public; equipment sales; telescope help; Talks: telescope basics, observing, SMA membership; dark skies; other thoughts
 - 3-4 close up
 - 4 pm -Flight Deck
 - Volunteers needed: 6-8 for set up (esp if tents)
 - Parking lot lay out for tables, sale items, tents
 - Deck for discussions, demos
 - Program for public open house: telescope help requires more volunteers; short program on SkyMaps? Basic telescope set up? Observing tips? SMA mission and activities? Need presenters for all
 - Publicity – newspapers, local radio, News Center, Maine Public Comm Calendar, Facebook page; select Brunswick Landing neighbors
- Jeremy recommended we promote the sale of equipment among members but then allow inspections during the Open House with purchases then being made.
- 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 receipts of \$111 in new memberships, and expenses of \$348 for the Wix site, AL dues of \$632, and third quarter rent of \$486.

Executive Committee: Rob, Bob, Russ

Rob reported that Ara reluctantly tendered his resignation from the Board due to workload and other commitments. Rob asked the Board to consider candidates for replacing Ara. The Board has authority to appoint members to vacant board positions.

The meeting ended about 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by
Rob Burgess

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

- **Aug 21**
- **Sep 18**
- **Oct 16**
- **Nov 20**
- **Dec 18**