



**Halifax Centre Board of Directors - Minutes of Meeting  
5 October 2019  
SMU, Sobeys Building, Room SB153 (10:30 AM – 1:00 PM)**

**Present:** Charles White, Judy Black, Pat Kelly, Gregg Dill, Tom Crosman, Peter Hurley, Paul Gray.

**Regrets:** Paul Heath, John Read, Mary Lou Whitehorne.

**Guests:** Connor Gray, Dave Chapman

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

Charles White welcomed members at 10:40 AM. Quorum had been met. Judy requested that "RASC 2020 Calendars" be added to the agenda under New Business.

**191005MN-Mot01**

It was moved by Gregg Dill and seconded by Pat Kelly to approve the October 5, 2019 Board of Directors meeting agenda with the amendment.

CARRIED.

The Action Lists were reviewed.

a) February 2019

**Actions 3** closed. An agenda item for this meeting will deal with the recommendations regarding box purchases required.

b) March 2019

**Actions 8, 11** closed. Nominating Committee will be formed next month to determine slate of Board members for the AGM. Gregg Dill has clarified the cost of insurance for SCO with Dr. Roy Bishop.

c) April 2019

**Action 3** closed. The relationship with the Discovery Centre will be clarified following this afternoon's session in the Dome and Centre tour.

**Actions 8 & 12** remain open.

**Action 13** is closed as it will be addressed in Agenda Item #10 of this meeting.

c) May 2019

**Actions 2:** remains open

**Actions 4 & 5:** Closed. Judy Black has booked spaces for the October, November and December Board and Members' meetings. Suggested revisions were made to the Halifax brochure.

d) June 2019

**Action 1:** remains open.

**Action 2:** Closed. Judy Black submitted the Nova East article for the June edition and an article/report will be forwarded to Charles White for inclusion in the next edition.

**Actions 3 & 4:** Closed. Members were informed at the Members' Meeting and via the Announce list. A clean-up at SCO was conducted.

**Action 5:** Closed. Nominating Committee will be formed next month to determine slate of Board members for the AGM.

**Action 6:** Closed. "Budget" has been added to Board Agenda September through to December as a standing item.

**Action 7:** Closed. Judy Black confirmed she had ten Explore the Universe Guides (ETUG) that were purchased and invoiced. Pat Kelly brought back 15 from the RASC GA; an invoice has yet to be received.

**Action 8:** Closed. Tony Schellinck attended the Parks Canada meeting on our behalf.

**Action 9:** Closed. The edits were made and John Read printed them at SMU; copies are now with Paul Heath.

The minutes of the June 1, 2019 Board of Directors meeting were reviewed.

#### **191005MN-Mot02**

It was moved by Gregg Dill and seconded by Tom Crosman to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2019 Board of Directors meeting.

CARRIED.

## **ONGOING ITEMS**

### **2. Upcoming Meeting Dates & Guest Speakers**

#### *a) Meeting Dates:*

Upcoming meeting dates are November 2 and the AGM on December 7.

#### *b) SMU Room Bookings:*

Judy contacted Dan Snyder in September to cancel meeting spaces (due to Hurricane Dorian) and to confirm room bookings for October to December.

#### *c) Guest Speakers:*

The Members' Meeting today was being held at *The Discovery Centre*. The suggested speakers for the November 2 meeting are:

- Blair MacDonald – Urban Imaging
- Paul Grey – Starmus 2019
- Pat Kelly – Quito Astronomical Observatory in Ecuador
- Judy Black – Nova East 2019
- Dave Chapman – Dark-Sky Weekend at Kejimikujik National Park

#### **191005MN-Act01**

Judy Black is to contact Blair MacDonald, Paul Grey, Pat Kelly and Dave Chapman requested a 2-3 sentence descriptor of their presentations for use in promoting the November 2 Halifax Centre meeting.

#### *d) Ideas for Future Meetings:*

The following were suggestions for subsequent meetings:

- Dave Lane – Use of the BGO (how-tos)
- Luigi Gallo – X-Ray Astronomy (perhaps in the fall)
- Paul Gray – equipment maintenance and collimation
- Dr. Rob Thacker
- Speaker re: status/progress of Jupiter's GRS (if still relevant)

Provided the new version of the Halifax Centre website is up and running, it should be showcased at the December AGM.

### **3. Report from National Council Representative**

There are major changes coming to SkyNews, as per Chris Gainor's recent note to all members.

Randy Attwood is stepping down as Executive Director after five years. Philip Groff is Randy's replacement. There are also two new faces at the Society office: Eric Wickham looking after communications and marketing, and Adela Zyfi replacing Madison Chilvers as the membership coordinator and office administrator.

The Board has decided not to take a stand one way or the other on the current status of the Thirty-Metre Telescope in Hawaii. The Board made the decision after the National Council meeting and announced it to the Council list.

Eric Briggs is starting on a proposed project for a central place for posting all centre meetings, etc. so that members who are travelling can go to events in other centres. If Centres post their events on Facebook, if our Facebook Admin asks The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada Facebook page to co-host those events that will put them on the national Facebook page event calendar as well. A list of upcoming meetings has recently been sent to the RASCals list.

The Fundraising Committee is currently working on another major bequest.

The 2020 GA is being hosted by the Vancouver Centre from June 5-7 in Coquitlam. The last issue of the Bulletin contained a survey to try to see how many are coming to help them finalize details.

A reminder that the deadline for submitting nominations for national awards is December 31. The next meeting will be on Sunday, December 1.

#### **4. Communications Plan**

Our Centre's Communications Strategy was first developed by Dave Chapman then revisited by Melody Hamilton and Judy Black in 2018. It can be found in the Reference Manual for Directors (2019) in Appendix C: RASC Halifax Centre Board Communications Plan & Board Responsibilities.

As of late, there have been several emails on the national RASC Discussion List regarding how best to advertise Centre meetings, everything from Centre and national's Facebook pages to newspapers. In light of the national discussions plus some concerns regarding advertisement of meetings using various forms of electronic communications, the strategy needs to be revisited.

Judy Black proposed that one to two other Board members join me to review our current strategy and determine how best to address communications within and outside our Centre. Members agreed the review should be postponed until National RASC configures the method for meeting notices. The Board needs to determine who currently updates the Facebook page.

#### **5. Outreach Requests**

Paul Heath was not present to report requests.

#### **6. Update: RASC-Halifax Centre**

Jerry Black has asked Dave Lane to set up an environment for the new Joomla-based site. Jerry is waiting for a response and consequent discussion. Pat Kelly noted that the Centre's current website had been moved to another server in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian.

### **FOCUS: BUDGET**

#### **7. Budget**

Gregg Dill presented a draft budget to the Board that provided comparisons for the 2016/2017, 2017/2018, and 2018/2019 budget years and the proposed 2019/2020 budget. Gregg confirmed with members that "merchandise" referred to the RASC Calendars and to the Explore the Universe Guides.

##### **191005MN-Act02**

Judy Black is to email Gregg Dill to confirm the number of Explore the Universe Guides shipped earlier this summer.

The expenses related to printing and mailing of Nova Notes was discussed. Given the current numbers of requests for mailing of the print version, members agreed the mail-out service would be increased to \$20.00

##### **191005MN-Act03**

Judy Black is to contact national RASC to inform them of the increase to the mailout service fees, effective immediately.

During the lengthy discussion, the following amendments were made to the proposed document:

- a- Income:
  - 1. Interest income increased from \$100 to \$200
  - 2. Membership fees increased from \$2500 to \$3000
- b- Expenses:
  - 1. Newsletter production & mailing decreased from \$500 to \$200
  - 2. Observatory: Capital decreased from \$400 to \$200

Members questioned the source of funds currently held in the GICs. Three occasions when funds accrued were noted: a surplus of funds raised to build the St. Croix Observatory; a large amount raised consequent to the Auction held at Nova East; and selling of the RASC Observer's handbook in bookstores.

**191005MN-Mot03**

It was moved by Gregg Dill and seconded by Pat Kelly to approve the budget as revised.  
CARRIED unanimously.

**AGM REQUIREMENTS**

**8. Nominations Committee**

In light of the time of year, formation of the Nominations Committee will occur within the month of October to establish a slate of Board nominees for 2020.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**9. 2020 RASC Calendars**

Judy Black picked up 40 copies of the 2020 RASC Calendars for the Centre as well as a box for Paul Gray to hand out to Calendar volunteers. Upon review of the costs associated with obtaining the calendars, members agreed to a sale price of \$20.00 per calendar. Members also agreed that a complimentary copy be given to Helen Dolan at the Discovery Centre as a thank you for the Dome and Centre tours.

**191005MN-Act04**

Judy Black is to advise members of the arrival of the 2020 RASC calendar via the Announce List.

**10. Cleaning & Inventory at SCO**

In June, a 3-person work crew conducted a spring cleanup of the Warm Room and Observatory. On September 14, 2019, a 5-person work crew cleaned, scrubbed and inventoried the Warm Room contents, vacuumed the observatory, and conducted yard work (weeding, cutting shrubbery beneath the roll-off and between the pads and the pond shoreline). As well, an initial cleanup in the Washroom/Storage room made for a clean-enough-to-use compost toilet. On September 21st, the Washroom/Storage room was cleaned out, removing all contents from the shelves, vacuuming ants and detritus off the shelves, conducting an inventory of contents then reorganized the shelves. One corner remains to be cleaned.

In conducting this cleaning, it became apparent there is equipment and other "stuff" that perhaps the Centre could sell, auction or determine another means of getting rid of some of the unused or unwanted pieces of furniture or equipment. It also became apparent that a more frequent cleaning of the premises is required given the intrusions of ants, squirrels and whatever other critters are making nests and leaving excrement in the storeroom contents.

Consequent to these activities, Judy Black proposed the following recommendations:

***Recommendation #1:***

It is recommended that:

- a- A work party be struck in April-May for spring cleanout in preparation for summer use
- b- A work party be struck in September/October for cleanout in preparation for winter
- c- Inventory of equipment and other contents of the three buildings be conducted during the April-May clean-out.

***Recommendation #2:***

A Task Team comprising 2-4 Halifax Centre members (not necessarily Board members) be formed:  
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- a- To review what is at SCO
- b- Determine what can be done with the contents that are not in use or serve no useful purpose in the Observatory, the Warm Room and the Storage Room
- c- Determine what, if any maintenance and/or repairs is required
- d- Provide a report to the Board containing recommendations regarding the contents.

It was noted that turtle nests are located in the gravel area near the telescope pads, and discussion was held regarding our responsibilities as tenants of the property. It was also determined that a landfill in Scotch Village would be available to bring garbage from the clean-out as well as the BBQ still there.

**191005MN-Mot04**

It was moved by Paul Grey and seconded by Pat Kelly to approve the recommendations regarding SCO cleanout, inventory and maintenance as cited in two recommendations.  
CARRIED unanimously.

A report would be presented at the November 2, 2019 meeting.

**11. Kejimikujik-RASC Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Agreement**

Dave Chapman joined the Board as a guest at 12:30 PM to discuss the agreement with the Board. He noted that some clarification surrounding intellectual property was required, and that insurance coverage by both Parks Canada and RASC national was clarified and accepted.

It was noted that RASC Halifax Centre has *Policy B: Terms of Reference - Ordinary Committees of RASC Halifax Centre* that contains the Dark-Sky Preserve Committee terms of reference (posted on Halifax Centre *About Us* page <https://halifax.rasc.ca/documents/B2-Committees.pdf> ). Rather than coming to the Board with every change made to the agreement, he was requesting that the Committee be formed and that the Chair have the official capacity to be the signatory of the agreement.

**191005MN-Mot05**

It was moved by Paul Grey and seconded by Peter Hurley that a Dark-Sky Preserve Committee be formed with three members, and that the Chair of the Dark-Sky Preserve Committee be authorized to act as signatory of the RASC-Parks Canada agreement on behalf of the Board of Directors of Halifax Centre.  
CARRIED unanimously.

Dave Chapman and Peter Hurley agreed to be members of the DSP Committee. Dave Chapman will ask Tony Schellinck to participate as well. Paul Grey offered to be a member if Tony did not volunteer.

**12. SCO Burner**

It was noted at the September 20, 2019 SCO BBQ that the furnace burner was not working. Blair MacDonald reported that the pilot light was working but the main heater will not turn on with the thermostat. It seems there was no current to the thermostat. He took a meter out on September 27 to check; the output to the thermocouple measured at 0.4 Volts.

**191005MN-Act05**

Judy Black is to contact John McPhee to contact Superior Propane to service the burner.

Judy noted that she and Jerry Black would be willing to go to SCO if John could not be present during the Superior Propane service call.

Dave Chapman noted that John Liddard, who recently has rejoined RASC and was a former SCO Manager, had offered to once more be involved. Members also noted that John McPhee had also requested a replacement.

**191005MN-Act06**

Judy Black is to contact John McPhee to determine if he wishes to step down as SCO Manager.

**191005MN-Act07**

Should John McPhee agree to step down as SCO Manager, Judy Black will contact John Liddard to determine his willingness to serve as SCO Manager.

### **13. SCO BBQ**

Judy Black reported that she and Chris Young co-lead the planning of the September 20, 2019 event. Hot food was available at 6:30 PM and a presentation of a plaque was made to June and Alfred Howard for their generous donation of a telescope and accessories. Twenty-nine members attended. Blair MacDonald set up and demonstrated the use of the equipment, with photos taken that evening being sent to the Howards. An article was printed in the latest edition of the RASC Bulletin.

It was also recommended that the SCO BBQ be moved from its usual June timeframe to September – no flies, night comes earlier, and there is no conflict with year-end school activities. Members agreed to the change in month for the BBQ. This will be discussed at a later meeting when 2020 Board and Members meeting dates are determined.

### **DEFERRED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

#### **14. Update: Sale of ETU Guides** (deferred from February 2, 2019)

Judy Black confirmed 10 copies of the Explore the Universe Guides (ETUGs) were received via mail, and that Pat Kelly had picked up 15 more copies of the Guide while at the RASC GA. Tony Schellinck will determine the number of copies he would require for SCANS later this fall. Members agreed the ETUGs should be sold for \$20.00 per copy, and that sales should be promoted at members meetings.

#### **191005MN-Act08**

Judy Black will notify members of the availability and price of the Explore the Universe Guides via the Announce List.

#### **15. Photo Release Form** (deferred from March 2/19)

#### **16. RASC Laminated ID tags** (deferred from April 4/19)

These items were deferred to the next meeting.

### **UPDATES / REPORTS**

#### **17. REPORT: Nova East**

Judy Black reported that given the Nova East Wrap-Up Meeting was held last evening, the final report would be presented at the November 2, 2019 meeting.

#### **18. UPDATE: Drying of the Vanderburg Eyepieces After Use** (deferred from June 1, 2019)

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

#### **19. UPDATE: Posting of Board Minutes**

Judy Black reported that all 'approved' Board of Directors (BoD) meeting minutes (December 2015 to present) and the AGM minutes (2015-2018) have been posted by Pat Kelly. Now that they have been approved, the June BoD meeting minutes will also be posted.

#### **191005MN-Act09**

Judy Black will forward the PDF version of the approved June 1, 2019 Board of Directors meeting minutes to Pat Kelly.

#### **191005MN-Act10**

Pat Kelly will post the June 1, 2019 Board of Directors meeting minutes of meeting on the RASC Halifax Centre website.

### **Adjournment**

#### **190601MN-Mot06**

It was moved by Pat Kelly to adjourn.

Adjournment at 1:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judy Black, Secretary

Approved November 2, 2019