



**Members' Meeting on Requisition regarding SCO Upgrade & Financing  
October 24, 2020: 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM  
Held via Zoom (Meeting ID #948 4882 4454)**

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome (Judy Black)
  - A. Welcome members
  - B. Purpose of the Members' Meeting on Requisition<sup>1</sup>
    - i. To inform the membership of the plan and financial requirements for SCO electrification
    - ii. To acquire members' approval of the plan
    - iii. To determine the method of financing the plan
2. Introduction of Speakers
  - A. Dr. Roy Bishop
  - B. Gregg Dill (Treasurer)
  - C. Paul Gray (Vice-President)
  - D. John Liddard (SCO Manager)
3. Background Information:
  - A. SCO History (Dr. Roy Bishop)
  - B. How did we get to today's Meeting? (Judy Black, John Liddard, Dr. Roy Bishop)
    - i. Board Decisions (Judy)
    - ii. 2020: Why upgrade SCO electrical capabilities now for the future? (John)
    - iii. Project Description: (John)
  - C. RASC Halifax Centre Finances (Gregg Dill)
4. Q&A AND GOING FORWARD
5. Actions Required Going Forward
6. Adjournment

**Attendance:**

A total of 28 RASC Halifax Centre members registered for the Zoom meeting and 26 attended (including the host).

**RASC Halifax Centre**

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<sup>1</sup> Purpose defined in letter sent to Members, September 24, 2020

**Minutes of Members' Meeting on Requisition regarding SCO Upgrade & Financing**  
**October 24, 2020: 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM**  
**Held via Zoom (Meeting ID #948 4882 4454)**

**1. Welcome**

Judy Black, Halifax Centre President and the Zoom meeting host, called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM, and welcomed members. Judy explained the purpose of the Members' Meeting on Requisition: 1) to inform the membership of the plan and financial requirements to upgrade the electrical service to the St. Croix Observatory (SCO); 2) to acquire members' approval of the plan; and 3) to determine the method of financing the plan. She explained procedures to be followed to conduct the meeting, and that there was a mechanism within the meeting to conduct a poll, to facilitate a vote. There were no questions regarding procedures.

**2. Introduction of Speakers**

Judy Black introduced each of the speakers for the meeting and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

- 1) Dr. Roy Bishop
- 2) Gregg Dill (Halifax Centre Treasurer)
- 3) Paul Gray (Halifax Centre Vice-President)
- 4) John Liddard (SCO manager)

**3. Background Information**

A) **SCO History** (Dr. Roy Bishop)

Dr. Roy Bishop reviewed the criteria that the observatory search committee had used to select a site for a permanent Halifax Centre observatory and indicated how SCO meets those criteria.

1. Within a one-hour drive from Halifax (Highway 101 now twinned past exit 4, 3km on Highway 1 paved, gravel part short and well maintained)
2. Dark southern horizon
3. Minimal light pollution (SQM readings often 21.3-4)
4. Not near the coast, to minimize fog
5. Not in a low-lying area, to minimize fog
6. Protected from the wind (not on a hill)
7. All-season road access (road past SCO driveway maintained and plowed by Minas Energy)
8. Protected from future light encroachment (located within Minas Energy watershed)
9. Secure location (water on 3 sides, Minas Energy staff drives past every day)
10. Affordable (lease \$1/yr)
11. Connected to electrical power (presently two solar panels and two deep-cycle storage batteries provide a small amount of 12volt DC power)

Roy pointed out that the SCO site meets 10 criteria, and we are now attempting to address the one criterion on which the SCO site falls short.

Roy then went on to present a brief history of SCO, starting with the discovery of the SCO site by the Observatory Site Selection Committee on October 28, 1994. A lease for the site was obtained from Minas Energy a year later. Paul Gray surveyed the site and drew up a site survey. Dave Lane drew up plans for the two buildings, the roll-off roof observatory and the warm room. Between June 1995 and November 1996, trees were cleared, and the two buildings were constructed (the storage building/toilet was constructed several years later). The grand opening occurred on June 21, 1997 at 13:18ADT, the timing of the summer solstice. Roy pointed out that the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the grand opening would be in less than 2 years, and he felt it would be a wonderful anniversary gift for Halifax Centre to have electrical power connected to the site.

There were no questions regarding the history of SCO.

B) **How did we get to today's meeting?** (Judy Black)

Judy Black summarized the steps that led up to the meeting today. She indicated that during the regular meeting of the Halifax Centre Board of Directors held on September 3, 2020, discussions regarding moving forward with upgrading the electrical service at SCO led to the conclusion that a special meeting of the Board to discuss moving forward was required. A special meeting of the Board was held on September 10, 2020 with the sole topic being upgrading SCO. A series of questions for the Centre membership were drafted and a poll was distributed to the membership by email with a response deadline of September 23, 2020. A total of 34 responses were received, 33 positive, one negative. The Board met again on September 24, 2020 to review the results and to determine how to proceed. It was agreed to hold a Members' Meeting on Requisition so that members would have an opportunity to fully understand what was being proposed and to ask questions. As required by the Centre bylaws, notice was sent out that such a meeting would be held in 30 days, which is this meeting today.

**C) Project Description (John Liddard)**

John Liddard indicated that in the past the Minas Energy power transmission lines ran down the far side of the lake from the SCO site and that connecting SCO to the transmission lines had been too expensive. Electrical power at the SCO site consisted of two solar panels and two deep cycle batteries, which provided a minimal amount of 12volt DC power. However, in the fall of 2019, Minas Energy installed new transmission lines along the access road that runs past the SCO site. This started a conversation with Minas Energy, facilitated by Roy Bishop, about the possibility of connecting SCO to the new power transmission lines. Minas Energy was supportive.

John explained that what is required is that the buildings need a breaker panel, power meter and mast installed, and wiring for any additional power outlets and lighting need to be installed. This would need to meet building codes and would require a licensed electrician. The line contractor K-Line that Minas Energy uses would then install the required power pole and transformer that Minas Energy will supply to us, run the power lines and connect them up to the mast on our building. The transformer will be ours (it is included in the quote received from Minas Energy), while Minas Energy is letting us use the pole but retains ownership.

Paul Heath asked what work would be done first and John indicated the two parts could be done simultaneously or independently. He also pointed out that running power to the storage building/toilet could be expensive since a trench would need to be dug to bury the cables, and that it could be done at a later time or that there might be other less expensive options.

**D) RASC Halifax Centre Finances (Gregg Dill)**

Gregg Dill presented a summary of the current financial status of RASC Halifax Centre, in relation to the estimated project cost of \$15,000. The proposal from the Board is to contribute \$7,500 from Centre funds and to fundraise an additional \$7,500. Greg pointed out that the Centre does not have charitable status and therefore cannot issue tax receipts for charitable contributions, and that the proposal is that all fund raised would be reserved for SCO improvements.

**Financial Report**

A. Estimated Project Cost	\$15,000
B. Source of Funds for the Project	
RASC Halifax Contribution	\$7,500
Fundraising Campaign	\$7,500
C. RASC Halifax Bank Funds	
Bank Balance (Oct 24)	\$10,257
• Source of Bank Funds	
2019-2020 Transactions	\$4,257 (income & expenses)

Redeemed GICs	<u>\$6,000</u>
Balance	\$10,257

- Expenses  
Insurance + Minimum Balance \$2,600  
(insurance policy (est. \$1600) + minimum balance (\$1000) to avoid banking fees)
- Available Cash \$7,657

D. RASC Halifax GICs

October 2019 Balance	\$14,000
Redeemed March 2020	-\$ 4,000
Redeemed Sept. 2020	-\$ 2,000
GIC Balance Oct 2020	\$8,000

This is a reasonable cushion to have available for future and unexpected expenses.

The floor was then opened to questions.

Q. What if funding is more successful than the target?

A. The proposal is that all funds raised be reserved for SCO improvements.

Q. Can we use the National office charitable status to generate tax receipts?

A. No, that was already explored and not available to us.

Q. Where/How do I make a contribution?

A. E-transfer sent to [treasurer@halifax.rasc.ca](mailto:treasurer@halifax.rasc.ca) is preferable.

Q. How much has been contributed so far?

A. Uncertain, likely \$2,200 promised so far.

Q. What is the anticipated timeline?

A. This generated considerable discussion, and it was concluded that sooner would be better. Minas Energy doesn't seem to have a deadline, they are committed, they understand that the Centre has a process to obtain approval from the membership and raise funds.

Blair MacDonald offered to donate any of his astroimages the Centre wished to use for fund raising purposes.

**20201024MMoR- Mot01**

A motion was made by Bob Russell and seconded by Mary Lou Whitehorne that electrification of the St. Croix Observatory proceed, and the donations be received from members by December 31, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

The poll vote results were as follows: 24 said yes via poll, 1 emailed response of yes. One member did not respond in any way; 100% of respondents said yes to going forward with the proposal.

Actions going forward as identified by members included:

- Make a commitment to Minas Energy that the project will be going forward.
- Members notified of the outcome of the MMoR and deadline for donations and purchase of astrophotos.
- Provide email and mailing address to members to send their donations.

Judy Black thanked everyone for attending and participating.

Blair MacDonald made the motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 1:58 PM ADT.

Approved Nov. 5, 2020 SurveyMonkey