



**Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC),  
Halifax Centre**

Dedicated to the Advancement of Astronomy and Allied Sciences

**B2: Terms of Reference - Ordinary Committees of  
RASC Halifax Centre**

(Adopted October 19, 2018; Revised November 29, 2022)

**Ordinary Committees**

**Name:**

Ordinary Committees, Halifax Centre

**Accountability:**

RASC, Halifax Centre

**Formation of Committees:**

Members of a Halifax Centre Committee are appointed by the Board as the need arises to carry out a specified task as it deems necessary or appropriate for such purposes and with such powers as the Board shall see fit. Refer to *RASC, Halifax Centre Bylaws #1, Section 8 - Committees*. All committee members must be RASC, Halifax Centre members in good standing.

**A) Standing Committees:**

Standing Committees remain in existence permanently. Any such committee may formulate its own rules of procedure, subject to such regulations or directions the Board may from time to time make. Standing Committees of RASC, Halifax Centre include but are not limited to the following.

- a- Nominating Committee

**B) Special (or ad hoc) Committees:**

Special Committees are committees appointed, as the need arises, to carry out a specified task, at the completion of which – that is, on presentation of its final report to the Board – it automatically ceases to exist. A special committee may not be appointed to perform a task that falls within the assigned function of an existing standing committee. Special Committees include but are not limited to the following:

- a- Nova East Planning Committee
- b- Bylaw Review Committee

From time to time, the Board may form other Committees (in consideration of *RASC, Halifax Centre Bylaws, Section 8 - Committees*) to address specific concerns. Any such committee may formulate its own rules of procedure, subject to such regulations or directions the Board may from time to time make (Halifax Centre By-Law #1, Section 8, Article 8.1.3).

Standing and Special Committees of the Board of Halifax Centre				
	Membership			
Standing Committee	Minimum	Maximum	Chair	Notes
Nominating	2	5	Appointed Board member	Includes President (as per Bylaw #1, Article 8.2.1)
Special Committee	Minimum	Maximum	Chair	Notes
Nova East Planning Committee	6	10	Appointed by the Board	Includes President <i>ex officio</i> (as per Bylaw #1, Article 8.2.2), and Treasurer
Governance Review Committee	3	5	Appointed by the Board	Includes President <i>ex officio</i> (as per Bylaw #1, Article 8.2.2)
Deep Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee	1	6	Appointed by the Board	Includes President <i>ex officio</i> (as per Bylaw #1, Article 8.2.2)

### **Terms of Reference: Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee is a Standing Committee of the RASC, Halifax Centre.

#### **Purpose:**

The Nominating Committee mandate is to:

- a- ensure elections to the Board are conducted in accordance with the Centre's Bylaws,
- b- undertake, organize and execute the annual Board elections, and
- c- consider other matters related to the nomination or appointment of Candidates.

#### **Accountability:**

The Committee is accountable to the Board of Directors of Halifax Centre.

#### **Authority:**

The committee has the authority to:

1. Call for nominations by October 1 of every calendar year.
2. Seek, identify and recruit qualified individuals to stand for election as a member of the Board for RASC, Halifax Centre.
3. Contact each person with whom it wishes to nominate to obtain his or her acceptance of nomination and to discuss their roles, responsibilities and expectations as a member of the Board.
4. Make nominations to the Board for Honorary Members of the Centre from time to time, supporting every nomination with a written statement citing the nominee's noteworthy contributions to astronomy.
5. After a vacancy or impending vacancy becomes known in the interim period between the AGM and the October 1 call for nominees, the committee will prepare a list of one or more candidates for an appointed office as soon as is practical.
6. Make recommendations concerning succession planning for roles within the Board, especially for the role of President.
7. Make recommendations concerning appointments for roles within the Board when they become vacant mid-term and appointments for non-elected positions within the Centre.
8. Other such duties as prescribed by the Board.

#### **Chair Appointment & Responsibilities:**

1. Any member of the Centre (except the President) appointed by the Board.
2. Oversee all deliberations of the Nominating Committee.
3. Present a list of one or more candidates for each elected office and for each position of director and National Board Representative to the Secretary for approval by the Board at least 2 weeks in advance of the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
4. Present a report to the Board that includes information about its activities, the process used, and other details related to the selection of Nominees.
5. Attend the AGM to answer to present the nominations and to answer any questions regarding the

- selection process or slate of nominees.
6. Other such duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Committee Membership:**

1. The Board of Halifax Centre shall appoint up to three (3) additional Board or Centre members plus the President *ex officio*.
2. If the Board does not appoint other members of the committee or appoints some but not all members of the committee, then members of the committee can be appointed by the chairperson of the committee, based on the additional numbers as shall be specified by the Board.

**Meetings:**

The Nominating Committee will conduct its business through meetings in person or by telephone, or through email communications, as required. Meetings (if any) will be held at the call of the Chair. The Committee shall have sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to administrative support.

**Quorum**

No business shall be conducted at any point of a meeting at which a quorum, which shall be at least one-half of the members thereof, is not present.

**Term Limits:**

The term of membership on the Committee for directors and Centre members shall be one year.

1. A committee member may serve more than one year on the Committee.
2. The term for serving on the Committee shall commence on 1 January and expire on 31 December.

***Terms of Reference: Nova East Planning Committee***

The Nova East Planning Committee is a Special Committee of the RASC, Halifax Centre.

**Vision:**

*The night sky belongs to everyone, to observe, to understand and to share.*

**Mission:**

*The Nova East Star Party mission is to celebrate and share common interests in astronomy and nature with observing opportunities, educational talks, seminars, social and outreach activities for RASC members, their families, guests, and visitors of all ages during a camping weekend.*

**Purpose:**

The Nova East Planning Committee mandate is to ensure the planning and implementation of the Nova East Star Party are conducted in accordance with the Centre's Bylaw, and to consider other matters related to the planning and implementation process.

**Accountability:**

The Committee is accountable to the Board of Directors of Halifax Centre.

**Authority:**

The committee has the authority to:

1. Determine the focus, the topics to be addressed and other activities related to Nova East.
2. Seek, identify and recruit qualified individuals to address the topics and activities.
3. Determine the site for the event and arrangements with the site for the event to be held.
4. Determine the budget for Nova East.
5. Conduct annual check of the SCO first aid kit for required replacement of contents.
6. Other such duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Chair Appointment & Responsibilities:**

1. Appointed by the Board of Halifax Centre by January 31 of each calendar year.
2. Can be a member of the Centre or a director.
3. Oversee all deliberations of the Nova East Planning Committee.
4. Submit plans, progress reports, and other documents to the Board from time to time, as requested by Board.
5. Submit the Final Report to the Secretary, Halifax Centre Board, within four (4) weeks of completion of the Nova East Star Party.
6. Present the Final Report at the next meeting of the Board following Nova East.
7. Other such duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Committee Membership:**

1. The Board of Halifax Centre shall appoint up to eight (8) additional members of Board and/or Centre.
2. The Treasurer is a member and the President is an *ex officio* member.
3. At least one director must be a member on the committee who serves as liaison with the Board. If the Board does not appoint other members or appoints some but not all members, then members can be appointed by the chairperson of the committee in such an additional number as shall be specified by the Board.
4. Members will be appointed annually no later than February 14 of each calendar year by the Board of Halifax Centre.

**Meetings:**

The Nova East Planning Committee will conduct its business through meetings in person or by telephone, by email, or through social media, as required. Meetings (if any) will be held at the call of the Chair. The Committee shall have sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to administrative support.

**Quorum**

No business shall be conducted at any point of a meeting at which a quorum, which shall be at least one-half of the members thereof, is not present. Participation in the meeting by telephonic, electronic, or other communication facility will count towards quorum.

**Term Limits:**

The Committee is automatically discharged when its report is formally presented and approved by the Board, or at the discretion of the Board.

**Terms of Reference: Governance Review Committee**

The Governance Review Committee is a Special Committee of the RASC, Halifax Centre.

**Purpose:**

The Governance Review Committee mandate is to conduct a biennial review the Bylaw #1 and to make recommendations to the Board to improve governance. It also advises on proposed changes to the Halifax Centre Bylaw #1 and policies of the Centre. To fulfill its role, the Chair may request that the Secretary provide a copy of the membership list, the bylaws and position descriptions that contain the required qualifications.

**Accountability:**

The Committee is accountable to the Board of Directors of Halifax Centre.

**Authority:**

The committee has the authority to:

1. Identify desirable changes and gaps in Bylaw #1 and its related policies, and to report findings with appropriate recommendations to the Board.
2. Research other organizations to determine governance trends and best practices.
3. Work with the Board and its Committees to support the development of consistently relevant

governance terms.

**Chair Appointment & Responsibilities:**

1. Appointed by the Board of Halifax Centre by September 30 of each calendar year.
2. Can be a member of the Centre or a director.
3. Oversee all deliberations of the Governance Review Committee.
4. Submit plans, progress reports, and other documents to the Board from time to time, as requested by Board.
5. Submit the Final Report to the Secretary, Halifax Centre Board, within four (4) weeks of completion of the Governance Review Committee deliberations.
6. Present the Final Report at the next meeting of the Board after submission of the final report to the Secretary.
7. Other such duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Committee Membership:**

1. The Board of Directors Halifax Centre shall appoint up to four (4) additional members of the Centre members plus the President *ex officio*.
2. At least one director must be a member on the committee who serves as liaison with the Board.
3. If the Board does not appoint other members or appoints some but not all members, then members can be appointed by the chairperson of the committee in such an additional number as shall be specified by the Board.
4. Members will be appointed biennially prior to September 30 of every second calendar year by the Board of Halifax Centre, beginning September 2018.

**Meetings:**

The Governance Review Committee will conduct its business through meetings in person or by telephone, or through email communications, as required. Meetings (if any) will be held at the call of the Chair. The Committee shall have sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to administrative support.

**Quorum**

No business shall be conducted at any point of a meeting at which a quorum, which shall be at least one-half of the members thereof, is not present. Participation in the meeting by telephonic, electronic, or other communication facility will count towards quorum.

**Term Limits:**

The Committee is automatically discharged when its report is formally presented and approved by the Board, or at the discretion of the Board.

**Terms of Reference: Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee**

The Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee is a Special Committee of the RASC, Halifax Centre.

**Purpose:**

The DSP Committee mandate is to collaborate with DSP Managers (e.g. Parks Canada) staff to:

- a. assist in organizing special events such as the annual Dark-Sky Weekends (DSW), and
- b. provide input into requirements for DSPs in Nova Scotia to obtain, maintain and retain their status as dark-sky preserves.

**Accountability:**

The Committee is accountable to the Board of Directors of Halifax Centre.

**Authority:**

The committee has the authority to:

1. With DSP managers, plan special events at DSPs involving RASC Halifax volunteers.
2. Negotiate with DSP Management staff (e.g. Parks Canada) regarding any Partnering Agreements between DSP Managers and RASC Halifax Centre, with the understanding that any such agreement or modifications to an agreement would be ratified by the Board.
3. Make requests to the Board to reimburse expenses incurred in planning and carrying out special events in DSPs and other meetings or work associated with support of DSP night sky programming (e.g. training of staff, maintenance of equipment, consulting on facilities). Wherever possible, costs will be recovered from the DSP Managers.
4. Seek, identify and recruit qualified individuals for committee membership.
5. Other such duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Chair Appointment & Responsibilities:**

1. Any member of the Centre (except the President) appointed by the Board.
2. Oversee all deliberations of the DSP Committee.
3. Present a report to the Board that includes information about its activities, the process used, and other details related to the activity.
4. Attend the AGM to present the Committee's annual report and to answer any questions regarding the report.
5. Other such duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Committee Membership:**

1. The Board of Halifax Centre shall determine up to five (5) additional Board or Centre members plus the President *ex officio*.
2. If the Board does not appoint other members of the committee or appoints some but not all members of the committee, then members of the committee can be appointed by the Chair of the committee, based on the additional numbers as shall be specified by the Board.

**Meetings:**

The DSP Committee will conduct its business through meetings in person or by telephone, or through email communications, as required. Meetings (if any) will be held at the call of the Chair. The Committee shall have sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to administrative support.

**Quorum**

No business shall be conducted at any point of a meeting at which a quorum, which shall be at least one-half of the members thereof, is not present.

**Term Limits:**

The term of membership on the Committee for Directors and Centre members shall be one year.

1. A committee member may serve more than one year on the Committee.
2. The term for serving on the Committee shall commence on 1 January and expire on 31 December.

