



RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors Meeting
 Tuesday, April 30, 2024: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
 Via Zoom - Meeting ID: 849 0997 3742

Agenda Items				
Time	Item	Purpose	Responsibility	Support Documents / Notes
7:00 PM	1. Welcome & Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of Agenda Review Action List Approval of Previous Minutes of Meeting 	Information Approval	Tony McGrath	Pre-circulated: Agenda: April 30, 2024 Minutes: March 26, 2024
ONGOING ITEMS				
	2. Upcoming Meeting Dates & Guest Speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2024 Member's Meeting Date Confirmation and Format b. Confirm Member's Meeting agenda c. Zoom/SMU Bookings d. Guest Speakers & Ideas for Future Presentations 	Ongoing Discussion Approval	Tony McGrath Judy Black	<i>Refer to Agenda Notes #1: Speakers & Approved 2024 Member Meeting Dates</i> <i>Refer to Agenda Notes #2: 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Dates</i>
	3. Report from National Council Representative	Information Discussion	Judy Black	<i>Pre-circulated</i>
	4. RASC Halifax Centre Website & YouTube	Discussion	Judy Black	<i>n/a</i>
	5. Financial Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Status 	Discussion	Gregg Dill	<i>n/a</i>
	6. Member Welcome Package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status 	Discussion	Tony McGrath	<i>How to set this up on an ongoing basis?</i>
	7. Education & Public Outreach (EPO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach Requests 	Discussion	David Hoskin	<i>n/a</i>
RASC HALIFAX CENTRE – GOALS & OBJECTIVES				
	8. 2024 Goals & Objectives	Ongoing Discussion	Tony McGrath	<i>Document circulated by Tony on April 18, 2024</i>
UPDATES / REPORTS				
	9. SCO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RASC video request Update Members observing night 	Discussion	John Liddard	<i>Observing night: Friday May 10, 2024</i>
	10. Update: GLP certificates and training	Discussion	Judy Black	<i>n/a</i>
NEW BUSINESS				
Adjournment				
9:00 PM	11. Adjournment <i>(Next meeting: May 28, 2024)</i>			

RASC, Halifax Centre – Member’s Meeting
 Saturday, May 11, 2024 – 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
 Via Zoom – Meeting ID 896 0218 8976

Agenda Items		
Time*	Item	Responsibility
1:00 PM	Welcome & Introductions Photo Montage EtU guides for sale Astroimaging Contest	David Hoskin (MC)
	Presentation: Members Eclipse stories	
	Social Break	
	Food for the Soul:	Paul Heath
	What’s Up? (May)	David Hoskin
	News from the Board	Tony McGrath
	Telescopes on display for discussion	
4:00 PM	Adjournment	

* Times are for Board of Director information only and for informing presenters of the length of their presentations; they will not be published on the Halifax Centre website. Times will be adjusted for each meeting.

AGENDA NOTES

Agenda Item, Proposed By, & Date Proposed	Description Received (& Proposed Motion, if Applicable)
Agenda Note #1 re: Speakers & 2024 Member Meeting Dates	<p>2024 Approved Members Meeting Dates and Events Members’ Meeting dates were approved at the November 2023 Board of Directors meeting. They have been posted on the RASC(HC) website.</p> <p>Confirmed Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 11, 2024 – Members’ eclipse stories • June 1, 2024 – Tiffany Fields (What it's like to be a BGO Astronomy Technician); Blair MacDonald (Changes in Astroimaging) • September 7, 2024 - BBQ in lieu of meeting • October 5, 2024 – Luigi Gallo (<i>JAXA’s XRISM satellite</i>) • November 2, 2024 – TBD • AGM December 7, 2024 – Lisa Ann Fanning (Stereoscopy) <p>Suggested Speakers / Special Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Badowski • Dave Chapman • Kaja Rotermund (formation of a high-redshift galaxy cluster) • SMU Astronomy and Physics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grad students • Tiffany Fields • Rob Thacker • https://rasc.ca/find-speaker

<p>Agenda Note #2 re: Approved 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Dates</p>	<p>2024 Approved Board Meeting Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 28 • June 25 (if required) • September 3 • October 1 • October 29 • December 3
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Halifax Centre Board of Directors - Minutes of Meeting
April 30, 2024 - 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
held via Zoom - Meeting ID 849 0997 3742

Present: Jerry Black (8:04 – 8:15pm), Judy Black, Matt Dyer, Lisa Ann Fanning, David Hoskin (until 8:17pm), Peter Hurley, John Liddard, Tony McGrath (President),

Regrets: Gregg Dill, Jeff Donaldson, Dave Robertson, Mary Lou Whitehorne

Absent: John Nangreaves

1. Welcome & Introductions

Tony called the meeting to order at 7:02pm and welcomed Board members. He asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda which had been circulated by email by Peter on April 29, 2024. David mentioned the email received from Jerry Black this evening regarding proposed changes/enhancements to the donated C8 with Hyperstar and Atik camera at SCO. It was agreed this would be discussed under item 9 SCO Report.

240430MN-Mot01

It was moved by Judy Black and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the April 30, 2024 RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting agenda, as amended.
CARRIED.

The Action List, which was attached to the minutes of the previous meeting circulated by Peter on April 29, 2024, was reviewed.

From January 10, 2023

Action 10: Open.

From May 2, 2023

Action 4: Closed.

From September 5, 2023

Action 1,4,5: Open.

From January 2, 2024

Action 10: Open. Pending discussion of item 10 to this meeting.

From February 27, 2024

Action 1: Open.

From March 26, 2024

Action 1,2: Closed.

Action 3: Open.

Action 4-7: Closed.

It was suggested that, given the problem we have encountered with Board attendance recently, that going forward we record in the minutes “regrets” when a member indicates they are unable to attend and record as ‘absent’ when a member hasn’t indicated they cannot attend and they don’t attend. It was agreed to follow this practice going forward.

240430MN-Act01

Peter Hurley to check that the email address in the Board email distribution list is the correct email address that Jeff Donaldson has provided to the Board.

Tony asked if there were any changes or corrections that needed to be made to the minutes of the previous Board meeting held on March 28, 2024 which had been circulated by email by Peter on April 29, 2024. Judy asked that Board of Directors Meeting: 30 April 2024

under item 9 SCO the minutes show that John Liddard presented. Peter indicated that these minutes didn't contain minutes from the in-camera session from that meeting because he hadn't been sure how to deal with them. There was discussion about this and it was agreed that minutes for the in-camera session would be circulated by email separately for review and approval.

240430MN-Mot02

It was moved by Judy Black and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the March 28, 2024 RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting minutes, as amended.
CARRIED

ONGOING ITEMS

2. Upcoming Meeting Dates & Guest Speakers

Tony reviewed meeting dates and speakers and pointed out that we needed a speaker for November which Judy was exploring. Judy suggested that the BBQ in September might be a good opportunity for Michelle Lane to explain the plans to construct a decked area at SCO in memory of Dave. She offered to discuss this with Mary Lou and if that date didn't work out, then another would be found for Michelle. All agreed with that plan of action. Peter indicated that he hadn't heard from anyone that they planned on speaking at the May 11 Members meeting about their eclipse experience. Judy, David and Matt all indicated that they would speak. It was agreed to send out another reminder to members and that they should contact Jerry Black if they have images that they wanted to share.

240430MN-Act02

Peter Hurlley to resend the invitation to Members to share their eclipse experience at the Members meeting on May 11, 2024.

There was a discussion of the plan to have a telescope display at the break and at the end of the meeting. Tony reminded us that the primary goal was to contribute a social element to the meeting. Peter confirmed that the SMU AT101 booking had been changed from May 4 to May 11.

Peter asked whether we thought we would need the provisional Board meeting date of June 25, 2024 and Judy indicated that the Governance Committee would have input for review by that date. It was agreed that June 18 would be a better date, to get away from the end of the school year and July 1 plans.

3. Report from National Council Representative (full report at end of minutes)

Judy thanked Peter for distributing her report from the April 21, 2024 NC meeting and indicated she had highlighted in red the areas where our Centre had an action required. For the GA on May 4, our Centre had been asked to prepare a short video about our observatory at St. Croix and preparation of that was going well, with her, Jerry, John Liddard and John McPhee all contributing. The RASC AGM date is set for June 23, 2024 on Zoom and we need to advertise the date and encourage our members to participate. Tony agreed to include that in News from the Board at the Members meeting. There was a question why the announcement of the GA had been so sudden, and it was explained that there are now 3 staff at National office where there had previously been 16. The National Eclipse task team has requested a summary of eclipse activities from each Centre. She anticipated that the team would send what was required to either Tony or David. It was agreed to wait until details and a format were provided by the team. We reviewed eclipse activities of our Centre members, and we were surprised by how much had happened. It was suggested that an email to the Announce list would capture any activity we weren't aware of, once we knew the format required for the report. Judy encouraged us all to read the Centre Operations Manual and asked for input on any inaccuracies or information missed. There was a request that Centres promote GLP training and that we advertise the GA training session being offered by Dennis Lyon. A GLP usage report form has been drafted. Jenna is drafting a card to document course completion for the use of Centres. Ontario has changed its Not-For-Profit legislation regarding societies and our Governance Committee will have to check that there haven't been similar changes here in NS. Judy indicated the next NC meeting was on June 9, 2024.

There was a question about the GLP training session at the GA and Peter indicated he felt strongly that our Centre needed to track GLP training and usage within our Centre and not rely upon National office to track this and to ensure that trained members follow the requirements of the Agreement with Transport Canada. Judy agreed that the role of National office was to facilitate GLP usage following the Agreement with TC and that it was up to Centres to train, certify, approve and track GLP usage.

240430MN-Act03

Judy Black to ask Dennis Lyon to let our Board know who was trained and certified for GLP use during the GLP training session at the GA.

4. RASC Halifax Centre Website and YouTube

Judy indicated there was nothing new to report.

5. Financial Update

Gregg wasn't present so this item was deferred.

6. Member Welcome Package

Tony agreed that we needed a process so that the Members Welcome Package would be distributed to all new members automatically. In the interim, Peter will send Tony an update of new members who have joined since the last mail-out.

240430MN-Act04

Peter Hurley to send a list of new members contact information to Tony McGrath since he sent the previous list to Tony.

7. Education and Public Outreach

David observed that, perhaps as a result of the solar eclipse, he had received several requests for solar observing and he summarized the outreach requests he had received. Judy asked David, in reference to the Governance Committee review, if combining Public Outreach and Education had been an experiment or a permanent decision. David responded that he thought there was some benefit to keeping them separate.

RASC Halifax Centre Goals and Objectives

8. 2024 Goals and Objectives

Tony thanked members for reviewing the Goals and Objectives document. He reiterated that it was a long range plan that had multiple steps and he was looking for input on the top priorities and for suggestions on how to proceed. And how and when to share it with the membership. He felt that increasing the number of volunteers in the Centre might be the top priority. He would like to share the plan with the membership. As an example, he asked for ideas how we might promote the RASC observing certificate programs. He thought that having individuals available on observing nights at SCO to spend some time with new members was important. It was suggested that having someone to promote the Explore the Universe certificate would be extremely beneficial and would help engage new members.

240430MN-Act05

Tony McGrath to ask the membership during News from the Board at the May 11, 2024 Members meeting which observing certificates they are interested in pursuing.

It was suggested that we draw up a list of workshops that we have someone interested in leading and then advertising the list to see which topics the membership are interested in, with follow-up with the Centre President.

Updates/Reports

9. SCO

Jerry Black joined the meeting at 8:04pm and outlined his proposal to provide a new interface for the donated C8/Hyperstar/Atik camera at SCO using a Raspberry Pi and K-stars that would use a cellphone or tablet for input. John mentioned that the battery in the laptop that had come with the system was dead and Jerry explained he was proposing a setup that would use a cellphone or tablet in place of the laptop. It was agreed that Jerry could temporarily remove the C8+ to facilitate developing and implementing his proposal. Jerry left the meeting at 8:15pm.

John reported he had sent an email to the keyholder list that he has. He has refurbished the old lock for the gate on the driveway to SCO and replaced the combination lock he had recently installed there.

(David left the meeting at this point (8:17pm) and so that we no longer had quorum.)

John indicated that he and Tony needed to discuss the inventory again and that he hoped they would have it done by our next meeting. He also indicated that we needed to organize a work party so. There was some painting needed, a turnbuckle on the roll off needed replacing, and other minor things. He indicated that he felt that a checklist for the close-up of SCO was needed, in particular the breaker shut-off.

240430MN-Act06

John Liddard to draft a new breaker shut-off checklist for SCO, circulate it to the Board for comment, and then send it to the SCO keyholders email list and affix a copy to the wall in the warm room at SCO.

Judy indicated that she would send the video of SCO that will be presented at the RASC GA on May 11, 2024 to the Board for review and comment.

The next SCO Members observing night is scheduled for May 10, 2024. John will send a message to Harden Wile asking him to leave the gate unlocked that night.

There was a brief discussion that ticks are abundant at SCO this year and Members should be cautioned to take precautions. During the clean-up, any tall vegetation in the parking area, around the buildings and roll-off, and around the observing pads should be trimmed.

10. GLP certificates and training

This topic was covered earlier in the meeting.

11. New Business

There was none brought forward.

12. Adjournment

There being no other business, Tony adjourned the meeting at 8:33pm. He reminded us that our next meeting was scheduled for May 28, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Hurley, Secretary

ACTION LIST (April 30, 2024):

From January 10, 2023		
230110MN-Act10	Peter Hurley to work with David Hoskin to create a list of volunteers to help with observing and outreach requests that are remote to the HRM area.	Open
From May 2, 2023		
From September 5, 2023		
230905MN-Act01	Gregg Dill and John Liddard to review SCO inventory and confirm items still exist and assign value to assets.	Open
230905MN-Act04	Gregg Dill to provide an update on SCO upgrade fundraising budget.	Open
230905MN-Act05	The Governance Committee to provide a recommendation to the Board regarding retention and disposal of historical documents.	Open
From January 2, 2024		
240102MN-Act010	Peter Hurley and Tony McGrath to put together a proposal how to proceed with training and certifying other members for GLP use.	Open
From February 27, 2024		
240227MN-Act01	Judy Black to contact Charles Ennis about presenting on the asterisms project at our November 2, 2024 Members meeting.	Open
From March 26, 2024		
240326MN-Act01	David Hoskin and Peter Hurley to coordinate a display of a variety of telescope types for the end of Members meetings starting with the May 4, 2024 meeting.	Open
240326MN-Act02	Judy Black to share the link to the RASC logos stored on the National website.	Open
240326MN-Act03	David Hoskin to post on the Centre Announce list that we need volunteers for an Astronomy Day event at the Discovery Centre on May 18, 2024 and for observing that evening.	Open

240326MN-Act04	Peter Hurley to ask Tiffany for a contact at SMU and then post on the Centre Announce list that members interested in volunteering to help with eclipse plans at SMU should reach out to that contact.	Open
240326MN-Act05	Judy Black to ask Jenna for an update on progress by the National GLP task team.	Open
240326MN-Act06	Tony McGrath to send a message to Jaime Whynot thanking her for her time on the Board.	Open
240326MN-Act07	Tony McGrath to send a message to Jeff Donaldson welcoming him to the Halifax Centre Board of Directors effective immediately.	Open
From April 30, 2024		
240430MN-Act01	Peter Hurley to check that the email address in the Board email distribution list is the correct email address that Jeff Donaldson has provided to the Board.	Open
240430MN-Act02	Peter Hurley to resend the invitation to Members to share their eclipse experience at the Members meeting on May 11, 2024.	Open
240430MN-Act03	Judy Black to ask Dennis Lyon to let our Board know who was trained and certified for GLP use during the GLP training session at the GA.	Open
240430MN-Act04	Peter Hurley to send a list of new members contact information to Tony McGrath since he sent the previous list to Tony.	Open
240430MN-Act05	Tony McGrath to ask the membership during News from the Board at the May 11, 2024 Members meeting which observing certificates they are interested in pursuing.	Open
240430MN-Act06	John Liddard to draft a new breaker shut-off checklist for SCO, circulate it to the Board for comment, and then send it to the SCO keyholders email list and affix a copy to the wall in the warm room at SCO.	

MOTION LIST (April 30, 2024):

240430MN-Mot01	It was moved by Judy Black and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the April 30, 2024 RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting agenda, as amended. CARRIED.
240430MN-Mot02	It was moved by Judy Black and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the March 28, 2024 RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors meeting minutes, as amended. CARRIED

Report of the National Council (NC) Meeting (April 21, 2024) to the RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors

Thirty-one of 39 NC members plus all 9 RASC Board members and Jenna Hinds were in attendance.

1- Reports from the Board

a- Financial Statements (Michael Watson)

An overview of the financial statements for the first quarter of 2024 (January-March) was provided. NC Representatives had been asked at the February NC meeting for comments. Those received tended to lean more towards long-term planning challenges versus line-by-line questions. The Board is endeavouring to prepare the 2025 budget for presentation to the NC at its September meeting; this would allow for review and comments before the Board approves it at their December 2024 meeting.

The Society's financial performance for the first quarter has been on track with the budget. As usual, Michael included a row below the Net Profit row that removes the gain / loss on the Society's investments, so as to show the actual performance based on operations alone. He included his usual explanatory note beside this row. Refer to the attached Excel document for details.

A member asked if a balanced budget would be expected in 2025. There is a loss in 2024 but that had been anticipated; however, it is significantly less than in 2023.

After the General Assembly (GA), the Board will focus on revenue generation. This may or may not include an increase to membership fees; if the Board determines an increase is needed above and beyond all other sources of revenue, the NC will be consulted about the increase.

b- Treasurer Comments (Stuart Heggie)

Stuart provided a bit of his background; his candidate statement can be found on the RASC website (https://www.rasc.ca/system/files/Candidate4_2023_1.pdf). As a 25-year veteran RASC member, this is Stuart's first year on the Board. He sees there are some things that require oversight and change:

- i- Operational Change: How to help the RASC live within its means and to simplify business processes.
- ii- As a change agent, there must be decisions made to make RASC more efficient.
- iii- Investments: Look into whether or not the current method and company used for our investments is in fact the best one; there is a need to spread out the investments and to consult other investment groups to increase the value of our investments.

He confirmed the Finance Committee would be involved throughout this process.

c- Operations (Jenna Hinds)

The Audit was finished and for the first time in many years was conducted in-house versus through an external accounting firm. It went smoothly with no additional costs for the audit; all required reports were provided in a timely manner and all questions answered. It will be included in the Annual report being presented at the GA.

d- General Assembly (GA) (Jenna Hinds)

The GA will be held the weekend of May 4-5. Speakers have been gleaned from Canada to highlight "the cool stuff that Centres are doing." Look for John Read on the agenda! All sessions will be recorded and put on the RASC YouTube for members only to view. Contact Jenna if anyone would like to assist with co-hosting; they would be most welcomed. An email will be going out later this week to invite members to attend. Fees to attend: \$20 for non-members, \$15 for members and \$12 for youth.

Request to all Centre Boards: Promote the GA and encourage all members to attend. For new members, there will be a new member orientation session.

Jenna would also like to highlight Centre Observatories. She will be contacting the Centres to request a 2- to 3-minute video about ours.

Request to RASC Halifax Centre: Produce a 3-minute video about SCO.

Renee Drummond (Membership Coordinator, Marketing & Sales Coordinator) will be leaving in the fall due to family commitments. The job posting will be made in June following the GA.

e- RASC AGM (Jenna Hinds)

RASC AGM is Sunday, June 23, 2024.

Request to RASC Halifax Centre Board:

- (1) Heads up! Mark your calendar!
- (2) Promote attending the AGM to Centre members.

f- 2024 Eclipse Task Force Re-Cap (Randy Attwood, Victoria Kramkowski)

Victoria noted that it was a true collaboration not only within the committee and RASC Centres but also with external groups. A community guide was developed. A webinar was held in October for communities regarding safety, logistics and available resources. As part of the wrap-up process, Victoria will be sending a request to Centres to determine what was done for the Solar eclipse.

Request to RASC Halifax Centre: Compile what was done as part of RASC Halifax Centre outreach during the eclipse.

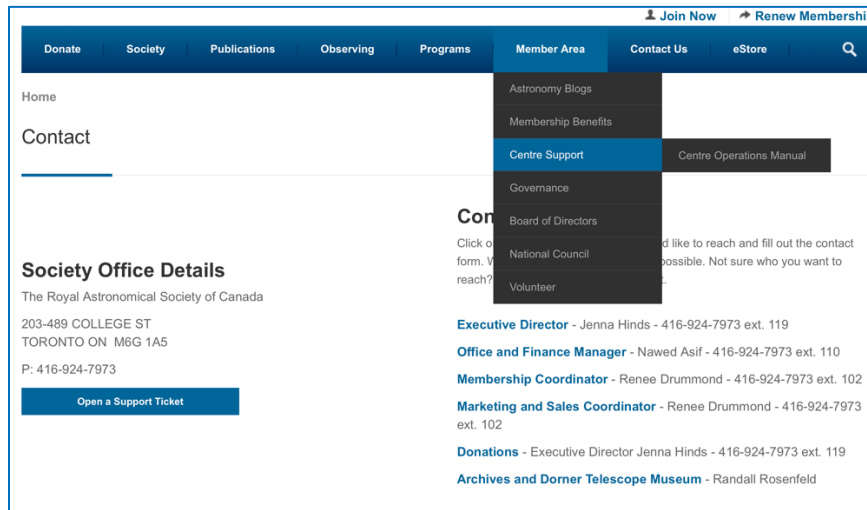
Randy reported on the Eclipse postage stamp project that began in mid-2022. He noted that because of the RASC volunteer involvement in the 150 anniversary stamp project, Canada Post was very receptive to this project. Randy ensured the graphic of the eclipse was more realistic versus an artist's impression. RASC was also explained on the back of the stamp booklet.

2- 2023-2024 Priorities

a- Centre Operations Manual (COM) (Lauri Roche - Victoria Centre; Chair, RASC EPO Committee)

Lauri provided an overview of the project that has taken many years and many volunteers to complete. She explained it is a comprehensive document about becoming and being a RASC Centre and would be useful for both new and long-time members of the RASC to read. Lots of useful information and how to find information needed. She thanked Judy Sterner (Edmonton), Judy Black (Halifax) and Jenna Hinds for their work in past 2 years to bring this work to fruition. Here's where to find it on the national RASC site after you log in using your email and password.

Request to Board Members of the RASC Halifax Centre: You are encouraged to read it.



b- NC Representative Welcome Package (Judy Black)

Judy noted that members were provided with the draft welcome package for their review. It is not a long document because much of the information is in the links provided. Members were asked to review the document and to provide input, especially the newer members, to determine where improvements were needed. It was noted that Appendix B regarding how to access NC documents would be written soon. She thanked fellow team members Victor Abraham (Hamilton), Ellen Papenburg (Kitchener-Waterloo) and Tom Sobocan (Windsor) for their participation in this project. She also thanked Rob Woods (Prince George) for his editorial skills.

3- Green Laser Pointer Training Reports (Jenna Hinds on behalf of Dennis Lyons)

Jenna noted that a spread sheet is being developed to facilitate reporting those trained and retrained. A template for a certification card is also being developed for Centres to provide to each student trained/retrained. Judy noted Halifax Centre had developed a congratulatory letter that would be handed to each participant as they completed the course. Dennis will be providing a training session at the GA.

Request to RASC Halifax Centre:

- (1) Promote GLP training within the Centre.
- (2) Advertise and promote the GA session with Dennis Lyons to Centre members.
- (3) Until documentation prepared by the RASC, keep track of trainers and those trained/retrained.

4- Print vs. electronic Observer's Handbook (OH)

Mark Meadows asked the question in the chat and it was addressed by Michael Watson and Randy Attwood. All publications are under review and there are lots of issues, not the least of which are the financial impact and succession planning for many of the editors.

Decisions about what publications to keep and what to jettison also have to be made. The Board will be meeting with the Editorial Board to discuss. The Board will consult the NC when tentative decisions are being made; timeline unknown but it will not be before the fall.

5- Changes to Ontario Charitable and Not-for-Profit Legislation

Stephen Nourse (Ottawa) explained there were changes made to legislation in Ontario that would affect Ontario Centres. Ontario is among the first provinces to make changes to their legislation. NC members were told to investigate whether their province's legislation would impact bylaws and objectives.

Request to RASC Halifax Centre Governance Review Committee: Determine if there has been any change to the Societies Act of NS that could impact our bylaw.

6- Next NC Meeting

Sunday, June 9, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Black
RASC Halifax Centre NC Representative
Chair, RASC National Council