



**Halifax Centre Board of Directors - Minutes of Meeting  
2 November 2019  
SMU, The Atrium, Room AT306 (10:30 AM – 12:30 PM)**

**Present:** Judy Black, Paul Gray, Tom Crosman, Peter Hurley, Paul Heath, Pat Kelly.

**Regrets:** Charles White, John Read, Mary Lou Whitehorne, Gregg Dill.

**Guests:** John Liddard (arrival at 11:30 AM); Connor Gray

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

Judy Black as Acting Chair welcomed members at 10:40 AM. Quorum had been met. Judy requested that "20. RASC Website revisions - SOP" be discussed as part of Item 6, and that Items #8 and #9 be put into reverse order.

**191102MN-Mot01**

It was moved by Tom Crosman and seconded by Paul Gray to approve the November 2, 2019 Board of Directors meeting agenda with the amendment.  
CARRIED unanimously.

The Action Lists were reviewed.

a) April 2019

**Action 8:** remains open.

**Action 12:** Closed. It had been decided that RASC would retain a separate site from Astronomy Nova Scotia but that there would be links between the two on their respective websites.

b) May 2019

**Action 2:** Closed.

**1191102MN-Act01**

Paul Heath will send the PDF of the RASC Inclusivity & Diversity brochure to Judy Black for printing.

c) June 2019

**Action 1:** remains open. Members agreed the relationship with the planetarium needs to be discussed at a later meeting.

d) October 2019

**Action 1:** Closed. Presenter descriptions received from all 4 speakers and included on Announce List reminders to members.

**Action 2:** Closed. Judy confirmed the number of ETU guides via email to Gregg Dill (Oct.5/19)

**Action 3:** Closed. Judy contacted National RASC regarding increase of the Nova Notes mail fee to \$20. It was implemented on October 18, 2019.

**Action 4:** Closed. Members advised of the RASC calendar availability and costs on Oct. 15/19.

**Action 5:** Closed. John McPhee did contact Superior Propane about the burner. However, John Liddard identified the problem as with the thermostat and it has been replaced. The Warm Room is now warm.

**Action 6:** Closed. John McPhee agreed to step down as SCO Manager and would assist any person coming into the role.

**Action 7:** Closed. John Liddard agreed to stand as the appointee for the SCO Manager position.

**Action 8:** Closed. Members advised of the ETU Guide availability and costs on Oct. 15/19.

**Action 9:** Closed. The PDF of the June meeting was sent to Pat Kelly

**Action 10:** Closed. Pat posted the June Board meeting minutes to the Halifax Centre website.

The minutes of the October 5, 2019 Board of Directors meeting were reviewed.

**191102MN-Mot02**

It was moved by Paul Gray and seconded by Patrick Kelly to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2019 Board of Directors meeting.  
CARRIED unanimously.

**ONGOING ITEMS**

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

*a) Meeting Dates:*

Upcoming meeting date is 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.

**191102MN-Act02**

Judy Black will contact Dan Snyder at SMU to confirm meeting space for January to April 2020.

*c) Guest Speakers:*

The speakers for the November 2 meeting are:

- (Special Presentation) 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

*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)

The Agenda for the AGM is on this agenda for discussion and approval. Suggestions for the January 2020 meeting were:

- Photos/Videos of the Transit of Mercury
- Christmas Gift Show & Tell

Judy noted that 2020 will be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the lease signing of the property where SCO now stands. It was agreed there should be a cake to commemorate the anniversary. The official opening's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary is in 2022.

Paul Heath brought attention to the deadline for submission of RASC Awards. He suggested Michael Boschat for an award and members agreed he might qualify for the *Chant Medal* that is given once per year "to an amateur astronomer resident in Canada on the basis of the value of the work carried out in astronomy and closely allied fields of the original investigation and specifically not for the services of the Society, worthy though these may be."

**191102MN-Act03**

Paul Gray will act as lead to determine if the long-term activities of Michael Boschat qualify him for the Chant Medal.

Judy Black suggested David Chapman for the Fellowship Award that “recognizes those outstanding members who have made extraordinary contributions to the Society over the long term, much of which service has been rendered at the national level.”

**191102MN-Act04**

Patrick Kelly will act as lead to determine if the long-term activities of David Chapman qualify him for the Fellow of the RASC (FRASC) award.

**3. Report from National Council Representative**

Patrick Kelly stated there was nothing new to report. The next meeting will be on Sunday, December 1.

**4. Communications Plan**

Nothing new to report.

**5. Outreach Requests**

Paul Heath has received one school request that he receives annually. He then proposed that Halifax Centre did not organize anything for the Transit of Mercury as it occurred from approximately 10 AM to 2 PM local time which would coincide with Remembrance Day memorial services. Members agreed that a RASC event would not be organized; however, members could organize something personally at that time if they wished.

**6. RASC-Halifax Centre Website**

Dave Lane set up an environment for the new Joomla-based site. Fine tuning of the content is now underway. A link to the site has been sent to Dave Chapman, Pat Kelly and Dave Lane for their review and insight. New content added includes links to the Deep Sky Eye Observatory, listing of all Halifax Centre members receiving RASC observing or astro-imaging awards, the history of the Centre, and a re-write of the “Lighting” page (now named “Dark Skies”. Questions regarding the documentation had been sent to 12 long-term members for input. It is hoped the site should be ready for the launch at the AGM; if not then, then at the January 2020 meeting. Paul Heath suggested a link regarding Outreach would be welcomed.

**191102MN-Act05**

Judy Black will ask Jerry Black to include a link to Outreach on the activities page of the Halifax Centre website.

Judy Black presented the newly revised Standard Operating Procedures for the Halifax Centre Website. This had been on the ‘old’ website as a Centre brochure; she suggested it be approved as a policy of the Centre. Members discussed responsibilities for changes to the website and it was agreed the wording of item 5 should be changed from “The Webmaster is responsible for maintaining the web page....” to “The Webmaster or their designate is responsible for....”.

**191102MN-Mot03**

It was moved by Paul Gray and seconded by Tom Crosman to approve the policy *G7: RASC Halifax Centre Website Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)*.  
CARRIED unanimously.

**7. Budget**

Gregg Dill forwarded an update of the budget that had been prepared for the previous meeting.

There is a budget line for library. Judy Black noted that John Read had suggested a Library Review Committee be formed to go through all the library holdings with the purpose of culling the inventory. He would be willing to assist in this process. Judy noted that Jerry Black volunteered to be on the committee so that photos of each book and video cover could be taken and included on the website.

**191102MN-Act06**

Judy Black will ask for volunteers to assist in the library review process at the Members’ Meeting later this afternoon (November 2/19).

**BYLAW REQUIREMENTS**

**8. Appointment: SCO Manager**

Judy Black noted that John Liddard had agreed to assume the role of SCO Manager. Mr. Liddard had held the position in the past and was very effective in that role. He was recently instrumental in examining the SCO burner and determined it was the thermostat that required replacing and in doing so saved the Centre an electrician's bill.

**191102MN-Mot04**

It was moved by Patrick Kelly and seconded by Paul Gray to approve the appointment of John Liddard as the SCO Manager.

CARRIED unanimously.

**9. AGM Requirements**

**a) Nominating Committee:**

Paul Gray stated that not all members had informed him of their intent regarding re-offer or standing down from the Board. He had received confirmation from Patrick Kelly, Peter Hurley, Paul Heath, and Judy Black (who is offering for the President position). Charles White is stepping down as a Director but agreed to be appointed as Nova Notes Editor again. Paul Gray stated he is debating whether or not to retain a role on the Board. Judy Black noted that John Read was stepping down from the Board due to school and family commitments; his replacement as a director and the Librarian will be required.

Paul Gray will make the announcement at the Members' meeting regarding a call for nominations to the Board and Judy Black has included it in her presentation *News from the Board*.

**b) AGM Agenda:**

Judy Black presented a draft agenda to Board members that was based on agenda from previous AGMs. She noted that there are no matters this year that require a special resolution and therefore can be deleted from the 2019 agenda.

**191102MN-Mot05**

It was moved by Paul Heath and seconded by Peter Hurley that the agenda for the 2019 Annual General Meeting be approved with the deletion of the matters to be determined by special resolution.

CARRIED unanimously.

**c) 2020 Meeting Dates:**

Judy Black presented a draft listing of the dates for Halifax Centre meetings, known special events, New Moon and proposed SCO Observing nights.

John Liddard (guest, newly appointed SCO Manager) arrived.

Special events to be added to the listing are Saltscapes (April), HalCon (tentative due to cost), and International Observe the Moon (InOM). It was noted that the first Saturday in September is Labour Day weekend so that the that month's meeting date would be moved from Sept. 5 to Sept. 12.

**191102MN-Mot06**

It was moved by Patrick Kelly and seconded by Tom Crosman to approve the 2020 RASC Halifax Centre meeting dates.

CARRIED unanimously.

Judy noted the dates of the New Moon and proposed dates for SCO Observing Nights were also listed. She questioned whether or not the observing nights should be posted on the website or used to plan and then announce via the Discussion list (as has been the case as of late) and the Announce List. Members agreed that observing nights should be organized then announced on the two lists.

**10. Changes to Terms of Reference**

**a) Board of Directors:**

Judy Black noted the section regarding Meetings in *Policy B1: Terms of Reference – Board of Directors* currently reads: "The Board of Directors shall meet before the Members' Meeting on the third Friday of every month, except July and August. Because of statutory holidays, the directors may agree to set another date and time." This should be changed due to the change in meeting dates for the Centre.

Patrick Kelly suggested a more generic statement be made so that the Terms of Reference would not have to be changed when dates changed. Patrick suggested the following re-wording: "The Board of Directors shall meet before the regular monthly members' meeting. The directors may agree to set meetings at other dates and times."

**191102MN-Mot07**

It was moved by Patrick Kelly and seconded by Peter Hurley to approve the revision to the Board of Directors meeting time in the Terms of Reference to read: "The Board of Directors shall meet before the regular monthly members' meeting. The directors may agree to set meetings at other dates and times."  
CARRIED unanimously.

**b) Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee:**

Dave Chapman requested the maximum number of members on the DSP Committee be increased to 5 (excluding the President) from the currently approved maximum of 3.

**191102MN-Mot08**

It was moved by Paul Heath and seconded by Peter Hurley that the maximum number of appointed members to the Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Committee be increased to 6, which would include the President *ex officio*.  
CARRIED unanimously.

**DEFERRED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**11. Photo Release Form (deferred from March 2, 2019)**

This item is considered closed. A statement regarding usage of photos and videos taken at Halifax Centre meetings and events and at Nova East is included on their respective websites.

**12. RASC Halifax Centre Laminated ID Tags (deferred from April 4, 2019)**

Members agreed that a lanyard-style nametag could be given to Board members for easy ID at Members' Meetings. The name tag would be their name and position only. This is to start in January 2020.

**191102MN-Act07**

Judy Black will purchase lanyard-style name tags and print the name tags for use at the January 2020 Members' Meeting.

**UPDATES / REPORTS**

**13. Report: Nova East**

The final report for Nova East had been pre-circulated to members. Judy Black noted she had been a net profit again this year. Just added to the report was the resignation of Melody Hamilton as Registrar. Patrick Kelly volunteered to take on the role and to be part of the NEPC (in person or via phone).

**191102MN-Mot09**

It was moved by Patrick Kelly and seconded by Peter Hurley to approve the *Nova East 2019 report and Summaries* as circulated.  
CARRIED unanimously.

**14. Update: Drying of Vanderburg Eyepieces**

The Vanderburg and other eyepieces are in metal cases. Chris Young felt that because the warm room was drier and locked, it would be the best place to store the eyepieces, with the key to the boxes being kept in the key lockbox in the warm room. A method of drying the eyepieces after use needs to be determined.

A discussion ensued regarding the use of silica gel packs with the eyepieces. Members agreed the eyepieces should stay with Chris Young for now, and that further discussion as required.

**191102MN-Act08**

Judy Black will include the Vanderburg Eyepieces on the December 2019 agenda.

**15. Report: SCO**

**a) SCO Burner:**

Electrician not required. Thanks to John Liddard a new thermostat was installed for ~\$35.00 versus approximately \$200 for an electrician.

John Liddard noted that the warm room furnace burner had not been cleaned when the propane tank was installed. Given the black soot on the warm room siding, he will contact Superior Propane to request a furnace cleaning.

**191102MN-Act09**

John Liddard will contact Superior Propane to arrange a furnace cleaning.

**b) Revised Keyholder Orientation List**

The *SCO Closing Checklist* and *SCO Keyholder Orientation List* have been revised. Chris Young, John McPhee and John Liddard have the electronic versions for use. Chris Young has the master key.

**c) SCO Inventory:**

There is a complete inventory of the Warm Room and Storage Shed; however, the Observatory inventory has not been conducted. Judy Black noted that she and John Liddard could complete the inventory and also devise a list of needed repairs and/or replacements.

**191102MN-Act10**

Judy Black and John Liddard will conduct an inventory of the SCO observatory and devise a list of needed repairs.

John Liddard also noted he had a discussion with Jamie Carmichael regarding electricity to SCO. The power lines are now on the Salmon Hole Road side of the river and power poles are not far from SCO. The considerations would be the cost of bringing power from the line to the building, electricity costs and perhaps the need for a transformer.

**191102MN-Act11**

John Liddard will contact Dr. Roy Bishop to discuss a possible power upgrade for SCO.

**16. Kejimkujik-RASC Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) Agreement**

Dave Chapman will be providing an update at the Members' Meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Members agreed that in the interest of time that items 18. *Donor Plaque at SCO* and 19. *Validation of Observing Certificate Applications* be deferred to the December meeting.

**17. Relationship with *The Discovery Centre***

Judy Black expressed her concern about the Centre becoming overextended in its commitments and that the existing and perhaps the future volunteer base (if there is one) might lead to a closing of the Centre. Before we approach *The Discovery Centre (TDC)*, we need to know what we could offer to them, what their technical capabilities are, what their expectations are in entering a relationship with us, and what had been discussed by Dr. Roy Bishop and Helen Dolan of the TDC. Paul Heath noted that when he and Wayne Hasamovitch discussed this with the Centre in the past that the Centre wanted us in an advisory capacity only on how to improve their shows; they emphasized it would only be their staff conducting the shows.

A meeting with the Centre is needed. Before this happens, we need to find out what Dr. Roy Bishop and Helen Dolan of the Centre discussed. Also, it was suggested that the team meeting with Centre be kept small. Possible members would be Dr. Roy Bishop, Peter Hurley, Mary Lou Whitehorne and Judy Black.

**191102MN-Act12**

Judy Black will contact Dr. Roy Bishop to obtain information about the discussion he and Helen Dolan had prior to the special RASC Members' show at the Discovery Centre.

**Adjournment**

**190601MN-Mot10**

It was moved by Tom Crosman to adjourn.

Adjournment at 12:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judy Black, Secretary

Approved December 7, 2019