



RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, January 7, 2021: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Via Zoom - Meeting ID 991 5629 3114

Agenda Items				
Time	Item	Purpose	Responsibility	Support Documents
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	Judy Black	Minutes: November 26, 2020 were pre-circulated
ONGOING ITEMS				
	2. Upcoming Meeting Dates & Guest Speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2021 Meeting date confirmation & approval b. Zoom/SMU Bookings c. Guest Speakers & Ideas for Future Presentations 	Ongoing Discussion Approval	Judy Black	<i>Refer to Agenda Note #1</i>
	3. Report from National Representative (December 2020)	Information Discussion	Patrick Kelly Judy Black	n/a
	4. Outreach / Inreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach Requests (if applicable) • Inreach Session Offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Virtual Observing Sessions (Moon, DSO, special event) ○ Astroimaging ○ Sketching ○ Others? 	Discussion Decision	Paul Heath Peter Hurley	n/a
	5. RASC Halifax Centre Website	Discussion Decision	Judy Black	n/a
	6. Financial Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditor Report • SCO Donations • Photo Reprints • Thank you letters • RASC Calendar Sales 	Discussion Decision	Gregg Dill Judy Black	n/a
BYLAW & POLICY ITEMS				
	7. Board of Directors Resources	Discussion Decision	Judy Black	n/a
	8. Review of Appointment Approval Timelines (Policy G6: Procedures Regarding Nominations, Elections & Appointments)	Discussion Decision	Judy Black	n/a
	9. Nomination/Appointment of NEPC Chair	Discussion Decision	Judy Black	n/a
UPDATES / REPORTS				
	10. Update: SCO Upgrade Status	Discussion Decision	John Liddard	n/a
	11. Update: Binocular Flyer	Discussion Decision	Pat Kelly	n/a
NEW BUSINESS				
	12. RJSC Requirements	Discussion Decision	Judy Black	n/a
	13. Development of Halifax Centre Financial Strategy	Discussion	Judy Black Gregg Dill	n/a

	14. Membership Retention	Discussion	Judy Black	n/a
9:00 PM	Adjournment			

RASC, Halifax Centre – Members' Meeting

Saturday, January 9, 2021: 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM

[Via Zoom - Meeting ID 929 5629 3114](#)

Agenda Items		
Time	Item	Responsibility
1:00 PM	1. Welcome & Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo Montage • 2021 Calendars & ETU Guides for sale 	Judy Black Paul Gray
	2. Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kaja Rotermund: Gravitational Lensing</i> 	Kaja Rotermund
	3. Outreach Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests Received • Food for the Soul 	Paul Heath
	4. What's Up? (January)	Dave Chapman
	5. News from the Board	Judy Black
	6. Adjournment	
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	<i>Astro-Chat</i>	

Approved February 2, 2021



**Halifax Centre Board of Directors - Minutes of Meeting
January 7, 2021 - 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
held via Zoom Meeting ID 991 5629 3114**

Present: Judy Black, Peter Hurley, Tim Doucette, Kathy Walker, Wayne Harasimovitch, David Hoskin, Gregg Dill, John Liddard, Pat Kelly (joined 7:06), Paul Heath (joined 7:11)

Regrets: Matt Dyer, Mary Lou Whitehorne

1. Welcome & Introductions

Judy Black called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and welcomed members. Introductions were made as we had two new Board members.

The meeting agenda was reviewed. Judy added item 2d Members' meeting agenda, as an ongoing item. No additional agenda items or changes were requested.

210107MN-Mot01

It was moved by Gregg Dill and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the January 7, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting agenda, as amended.
CARRIED.

The Action Lists were reviewed.

From January 2020

Action 5: Open. Still waiting to hear from Ian Anderson what items we should be tracking.

From September 10, 2020 (Special Meeting)

Action 5: Open. John Liddard and Paul Gray had not performed the test.

From September 24, 2020

Action 13: Closed.

From October 28, 2020

Action 7: Closed.

From November 26, 2020

Action 1-5: Closed.

Action 6: Open.

Action 7: Closed.

The minutes of the November 26, 2020 Board of Directors meeting were reviewed. Comments were received from Pat Kelly by email on January 5, 2021. There were no further changes proposed.

210107MN-Mot02

It was moved by Pat Kelly and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the November 26, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting minutes, as amended.

CARRIED.

ONGOING ITEMS

2. Upcoming Meeting Dates & Guest Speakers

a) 2021 Meeting date confirmation and approval

Dates for 2021 Board meetings appear in Agenda Note #1, as approved by the previous Board. Judy Black asked if there were any issues with the agreed time and dates, and there was discussion. It was agreed to move Board meetings to 7pm Tuesday so all Board meeting dates will be moved forward 2 days. The Members' Meeting dates also appear in Agenda Note #1 and are scheduled on the first Saturday of the month. Judy noted that the April date had been changed to April 10 because of Easter weekend.

There was a question about the number of Board meetings, why there were 11 meetings in the year. Considerable discussion followed, and it was agreed that subsequently Board meetings would be scheduled on the Tuesday preceding the Members' meeting dates. New dates will be circulated in the Agenda Notes for the next Board meeting.

b) Zoom/SMU bookings

Judy has booked all Board and Members' meetings into our Zoom account; she will change the Board meeting dates as agreed. We will not contact SMU about meeting rooms until we hear from them that they have changed their meeting room policy regarding COVID-19. Once SMU is able to invite us back, we will have to consider whether we want to continue to use Zoom for Board or for Members' meetings.

c) Guest Speakers and Ideas for Future Presentations

Judy Black reviewed confirmed speakers for the next four months. These appear in Agenda Note #18: Kaja Rotermund in January, Glenn Roberts in February, Luigi Gallo in March, and Adam Gonzales (a SMU graduate student) in April. For future speakers, Kaja Rotermund had suggested a second presentation topic. We could invite Phil Groff for an update on RASC National activities and we could ask Nicole Mortillaro again if she would like to present. David Hoskin suggested he could do a short presentation on comet NEOWISE, and other ideas were Dave Chapman and Melody Hamilton on the new RASC double star certificate program, Michael Gatto on his sketches of Mars and Tony Schellinck on his sketches of the moon. Tim Doucette suggested he might have a contact for Sara Seager and would pursue that.

d) Members' meeting agenda

The agenda for the Members' meeting was reviewed by Judy. A book review of Alien Oceans by Wayne Harasimovitch, our librarian, had been left off the list and Judy will add it to the agenda tomorrow. Paul Gray has agreed to continue to do the photo montage; Outreach and Food for the Soul will be presented by Paul Heath. Dave Chapman has a What's Up presentation ready and posted. Judy will follow with News from The Board There will be a 1-hour AstroChat after the meeting; it will not be recorded. Nova East will be up for discussion.

3. Report from National Council Representative

Pat Kelly reported that the last National Council meeting had occurred on December 6 but that he had not been able to attend and minutes from that meeting had not been circulated yet. The next meeting is scheduled for March 7. Judy is the new National Council rep.

4. Outreach / Inreach

Paul Heath indicated that he hadn't received a response from the three guide groups that had contacted him previously. He will be starting up his evening program at the Rec Centre in North Preston again on January 12.

There was a discussion regarding expanding our outreach and inreach activities during COVID restrictions using Zoom for virtual observing sessions and pre-recorded sessions. We have already had a number of sessions that have been quite successful, related to special events such as lunar viewing, imaging, and image processing. There was a lot of interest and a number of ideas expressed. Peter Hurley offered to assist Paul in determining future sessions for members, such as

constellation nights with related Mi'kmaq stories (perhaps pre-recorded sessions), astroimaging, sketching sessions, etc. Further discussion is required.

5. RASC-Halifax Centre Website

Judy Black indicated there had been updates to the benefits to new members regarding the Explore the Universe Guide now being part of the new-member package and she reminded members that they could request a copy from National office. The SCO upgrade page has been updated to show the latest contribution levels. The list of Observing Certificate recipients list has also been updated. The list of Board members has been updated. Judy will send out the link she obtained from National office for the information video on the new National website/database.

210107MN-Act01

Judy Black to circulate the link from National office for the information video on the new website/database.

6. Financial Update

Gregg Dill reported that Ian Anderson had agreed to serve as auditor and to review our financial statements for the last 3 years. Gregg reported that SCO upgrade donations have exceeded our \$7500 goal and were at \$8210, and the photo reprints have taken in \$390. There was some discussion of the costs versus revenues from photo sales. Judy reported that she had asked Mary Lou Whitehorne for help with drafting a thank you letter to contributors. Judy will ask Pat for mailing addresses for the contributors. Gregg reported we have 15 calendars unsold; revenues have been \$625. There was a discussion of costs and revenues associated with these. Tim Doucette indicated that he would post a message on his group that these were still available, with contact through treasurer@halifax.rasc.ca using e-transfer with instructions.

Discussion of the budget and our present financial status was deferred to item 13.

BYLAW & POLICY ITEMS

7. Board of Directors Resources

Judy Black explained that there are two resources available to Board members: the Policy Manual, which has been forwarded to all Board members already; the second resource, which the new Board members haven't received yet, is the Board Reference Manual, a document that describes RASC and how it functions. Judy has not circulated it yet to the new members because it contains the contact list for Board members and appointed positions, which contains sensitive information. In past years, this section of the Manual was distributed in hard copy at the first Board meeting after the AGM but with virtual Board meetings, that personal exchange isn't possible. Following considerable discussion, it was agreed that the solution was to remove the contact list from the Board Reference Manual and to distribute the two documents separately by email to Board members.

210107MN-Act02

Judy Black to circulate the Board Reference Manual and the contact list to Board members by email.

8. Review of Appointment Approval Timelines (Policy G6)

Judy Black explained that Policy G6 in the Halifax Centre Policy Manual deals only with timelines for nomination and election of Board members, not of appointed positions. Judy is chair of the Governance Committee, with Gregg Dill and Paul Gray as members, although she thought that Paul will likely want to step down, given he is no longer a Board member and his focus on the Cadet program. Another one or two members are required to assist in clarifying procedures for election to the Board and to appointed positions. The practice followed in the past in relation to the appointed positions has not provided opportunity for members to make suggestions for appointments. Although that is a Board responsibility, we should consider if and how input from members might be incorporated into the appointment process. Another item that needs addressing is the suggestion from National Council that Centres develop their own complaints-mediation process. Another item that needs to be addressed, following the request for input from the National Council, is to formally include in our Policies a statement about non-compliance and processes and consequences of non-compliance with Halifax Centre Policies.

210107MN-Act03

A volunteer(s) from the Board or suggestion of a Member to serve on the Governance Committee is required.

9. Nomination/Appointment of NEPC Chair

Judy Black referred to the recent discussion on the Centre Discussion list regarding the need for an NEPC chair and the subsequent debate regarding the format of the 2021 NEPC program, given the uncertainties of the COVID-19 situation in August.

210107MN-Act04

Judy Black to invite members to bring suggestions regarding the format of 2021 NEPC to the Members' Meeting next Saturday.

UPDATES / REPORTS

10. Update: SCO Upgrade Status

John Liddard reported that DMac Electric will start work at SCO on Saturday January 16, weather permitting, with an initial focus of getting the exterior service installed and in determining if the existing power system can be retained while the installation is completed. If disconnecting the existing power system is required, members will be notified via the Centre Discussion list. The speed with which the conversion happens will be very much dependent on the weather. K-Line has installed the transformer on the pole by the road. There was a question regarding the function of the furnace if the existing power is disconnected and John indicated that the propane furnace functions independently of the 12V DC power and would continue to function.

11. Update: Binocular Flyer

Pat Kelly reported that the text will fit well into an 8.5"x11" piece of paper folding into thirds, but he was looking for photographs to use to illustrate points that would reproduce well as a .pdf in black and white as well as in colour.

201107MN-Act05

Pat Kelly to circulate a draft of the Binocular flyer.

NEW BUSINESS

12. RJSC Requirements

Judy Black explained that there are NS Registry of Joint Stock Companies requirements to submit annually a list of Board of Director members and a financial statement. Judy will provide the list to Gregg who will determine whether the submission still requires original signatures or if it can now be submitted online. The annual fee isn't due until April.

201107MN-Act06

Judy Black to send list of Board members to Gregg Dill.

201107MN-Act07

Gregg Dill to submit annual requirements to NS RJSC.

13. Development of Halifax Centre Financial Strategy

Gregg Dill had circulated a draft budget with a 3-year comparison, and an income/expenses statement to date, on January 5 by email. He pointed out that it was confusing because he had included the major fundraising. The outcome at this point is a deficit of \$163, to date. He made the observation that our membership seems to be up a little bit. Judy Black confirmed that membership had increased from the 160s during spring/summer/fall to 179 last week. Paul Heath asked if the insurance was to cover SCO and Gregg confirmed that it was all for SCO. Paul asked if we could use the surplus from the SCO upgrade fundraising to cover the insurance and there was discussion of what was considered SCO maintenance costs and how they should be covered. There seemed to be agreement that the insurance was a maintenance cost not part of the upgrade, but that we do need to consider a means of increasing our income, some suggestions being increasing the membership fee, implementing a SCO key fee, and additional fundraising activities. To that point, this item will appear on the February agenda and Judy encouraged members to consider options in the interim.

201107MN-Act08

Peter Hurley to add finance/budget strategy discussion to the February 2021 agenda.

14. Membership Retention

Judy Black reported that she had attended a Town Hall of RASC Presidents and membership retention was discussed. She learned that RASC National sends a letter from our Centre to new members that affiliate themselves with our Centre. Peter Hurley had distributed the letter with the draft agenda that Judy had updated. She asked if Board members had suggestions for further changes or improvements to the letter. Tim Leblanc asked if this letter was standalone or sent as part of a package that included RASC membership benefits such as the Observer's Handbook, SkyNews and the Explore the Universe Guide.

201107MN-Act09

Judy Black will determine from National office how this introduction letter and other material are communicated to new members.

Pat Kelly indicated that he had just checked the membership database and the number for this month was 175 and there was discussion of whether that number included numbers within family memberships. Gregg Dill reported that he found the membership numbers confusing when he tried to resolve numbers with the membership fees received from National and that there were approximately 20 life members for which we receive no fee. Pat checked the database again and confirmed that it reported 179 members, including all categories.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Judy Black adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment at 9:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Hurley, Secretary

ACTION LIST (as of January 7, 2021):

<i>From January 2020</i>		
200111MN-Act05	Gregg Dill and John Liddard will establish the value of capital equipment when the inventory is complete.	Open
<i>From September 10, 2020</i>		
200910MN-Act05	John Liddard and Paul Gray will test whether a small jack hammer can handle digging a trench to the required 14 inches depth.	Open
<i>From November 26, 2020</i>		
201126MN-Act06	Gregg Dill to contact Superior Propane to determine the conditions to cancelling the arrangements and having the propane removed.	Open
<i>From January 7, 2021</i>		
210107MN-Act01	Judy Black to circulate the link from National office for the information video on the new website/database.	Open
210107MN-Act02	Judy Black to circulate the Board Reference Manual and the contact list to Board members by email.	Open
210107MN-Act03	A volunteer(s) from the Board or suggestion of a Member to serve on the Governance Committee is required.	Open

210107MN-Act04	Judy Black to invite members to bring suggestions regarding the format of 2021 NEPC to the Members' Meeting next Saturday.	Open
210107MN-Act05	Pat Kelly to circulate a draft of the Binocular flyer.	Open
210107MN-Act06	Judy Black to send list of Board members to Gregg Dill.	Open
210107MN-Act07	Gregg Dill to submit annual requirements to NS RJSC.	Open
210107MN-Act08	Peter Hurley to add finance/budget strategy discussion to the February 2021 agenda.	Open
210107MN-Act09	Judy Black will determine from National office how this introduction letter and other material are communicated to new members.	Open

MOTION LIST (January 7, 2021):

210107MN-Mot01	It was moved by Gregg Dill and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the January 7, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting agenda, as amended. CARRIED.
210107MN-Mot02	It was moved by Pat Kelly and seconded by David Hoskin to approve the November 28, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting minutes, as amended. CARRIED.

AGENDA NOTES

Agenda Item, Proposed By, & Date Proposed	Description Received (& Proposed Motion, if Applicable)																						
Agenda Note #1 re: 2021 Meeting Dates	<p>A) 2020 Approved Members Meeting Dates and Events <u>Board Meeting</u> dates were approved at the October 28, 2020 Board of Directors Meetings. They have been posted on the RASC(HC) website.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td>January 7</td> <td>June 24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>January 28</td> <td>September 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February 25</td> <td>September 23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March 25</td> <td>October 28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April 22</td> <td>November 25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 27</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Members' Meeting</u> dates were approved at the October 28, 2020 Board of Directors Meetings. They have been posted on the RASC(HC) website.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td>January 9</td> <td>June 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February 6</td> <td>September 11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March 6</td> <td>October 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April 10</td> <td>November 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 1</td> <td>December 4 (AGM)</td> </tr> </table> <p>B) Confirmed Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January: Kaja Rotermund (gravitational lensing by a galaxy) • February: Glenn Roberts (astronomy from youth to becoming syndicated journalist) • March: Luigi Gallo (topic TBD) • April: Adam Gonzalez (topic TBD) <p>C) Suggested Speakers Special Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o (Spring/Fall) Kaja Rotermund (formation of a high-redshift galaxy cluster) o (Spring 2021) Phil Groff (RASC Update) o Nicole Mortillaro <p>Information/General Interest Sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dave Chapman & Melody Hamilton (15 to 20 minutes <i>RASC Double Stars Observing Program</i>) o Michael Gatto (15 to 20-minutes re sketching Mars) o Tony Schellinck (15 to 20-minutes re lunar sketching) 	January 7	June 24	January 28	September 2	February 25	September 23	March 25	October 28	April 22	November 25	May 27		January 9	June 5	February 6	September 11	March 6	October 2	April 10	November 6	May 1	December 4 (AGM)
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