

Dudley Observatory Board of Trustees
Minutes of the Special Board Meeting
7:00 pm, Thursday, April 24, 2008

Attendees: Amodeo; Bogucki; J Comly; L Comly; Fladger; A French; Newberg; Schwab; Traver; Wait; Ward

Absent:

This special board meeting reviewed relations with the Schenectady Museum and the Science Center of Tech Valley; and our vision of the future of the Dudley Observatory. Sam Wait handed out and reviewed a partial chronology of interactions with the Museum from about a decade ago up to the present time.

Sam, Alan, and Jim reviewed a lunch meeting they had with the Museum's President Neil Levine and Executive Director Kerry Orlyk on April 16, 2008. The main discussion points at the lunch were extreme frustration with Dudley on Levine's part and misunderstandings in communication that seem to be based on different basic assumptions on each side. Levine offered to send a one-line written response to Dudley's repeated requests for written responses to the letters Dudley sent to the Museum at the Museum's request. After much discussion about our wanting a continuing dialogue between Dudley and the Museum, Levine finally agreed to send a letter stating the Museum's interests in collaborating with Dudley in a manner similar to our letters to the Museum. The responding letter is among the attachments. Its primary response to our request is:

“As I stated to you at lunch, I have no objection to including the points made in the Dudley Letters as part of the working premise for developing a relationship between the Museum and Dudley which would result in the physical presence of Dudley in our anticipated new science center facility”

Sam will invite representatives of the Challenger Center to our May 7, 2008 board meeting to discuss their plans and working relations with the Science Center.

When a response is sent to Science Center's Levine, its flavor should be: “We are considering several options for location”; “We are preparing a vision statement”; “We want to continue our ongoing joint programs”; and, “We want to continue a dialog about the future of the Science Center and Dudley's possible role in it”

Cherrice Traver reported a discussion with Union College President Steven Ainley in which Ainley expressed general interest in Dudley and hoped we might find a place along a hoped-for “Education Corridor” along Nott Terrace, but had no concrete suggestions as to a specific location. Union College is beginning a new Master Plan leading up to a capital campaign.

Concerning the Pine Bush location, Janie will set up a visit there, possibly including Schenectady Historian Don Rittner, and may hold a Rising Star event there.

Vince Amodeo proposed that an external agent be requested to poll several entities, including Dudley, Museum, Challenger, and Electric Museum, to find their desires for space and operations. The polling entity would use the results to suggest joint projects.

Several people suggested we still need a concise and specific mission statement that we can work to. Sam asked each board member to write a brief statement of their vision for Dudley. He asked Heidi Newberg to write Harvey Patashnick's vision as she understands it. The statements should address, among other issues, the question of whether we need to have a public telescope, how we should use our collections of historical books, and of historical artifacts. Those who have background related to Troy City, Emma Willard, Pine Bush, and Science Center could include insights from them.

Janie plans to review and get quotes for bringing our insurance coverage up to date.

-- Jim Comly