

Dudley Observatory Board of Trustees
Minutes of the Meeting on
November 5, 2008

Members present: Sam Wait (President), Erin Breslin, James B. Comly, Mary Crone Odekon, Janie Schwab, Lucy Comly, Alan French, Doug Klein, Mike Kornstein, Tom McFadden, Heidi Newberg, Cherrice Traver, Robert Ward, Francis Wilkin

Members absent: Vince Amodeo, Susan French, Brian Mercy, Jillian Perno, Jean Sheviak, Daniel Wulff

Guests: Debbie Ennis (Project manager and support for Dudley)
Mike Powell (Volunteer, photographer)

Sam Wait called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The board approved the minutes of the meeting on September 10, 2008 with minor changes.

Report of the Executive Director

Janie distributed a written report including a summary of recent progress. She and Debbie had just driven by several properties that Dudley might consider for a new location, and passed around several photos. She also described the Fasoldt clock that was returned to Dudley by Charley and Ann Marie Bowman. We could choose to refurbish the clock, but we have also received an offer of \$100k for it. The board decided that we should look into the Dudley archives for information on the historical significance of the clock and also have its value assessed before making a decision.

Events Committee

Mary described the October 9 Skywatch Lecture. Possible improvements include better communication with the IT staff at Proctors and encouraging more students to attend. Nonetheless, the event was a success; in fact, Dava Sobel told us in a thank-you note that she enjoyed her time with us more than any other lecture she has given. The board then discussed ideas for the International Year of Astronomy 2009. Jim and Francis described an astronomy lecture series sponsored by UCALL for the winter.

Finance & Physical Plant Committee

Jim Comly distributed a detailed description of Dudley's financial status. Our endowment has declined 28.9% since 6/30/08. We discussed keeping cash in an account with higher interest than our current Trustco account.

Education Committee

Alan French distributed and summarized his written report. He pointed out that Heidi Newberg's name was missing from the committee list in his report, and drew attention to the a talk given by Rising Star Intern Dan Mancuso to AAAA about his experience at the Advanced Astronomy Camp. The October 28 committee meeting included a productive discussion on offering an International Year of Astronomy-based lecture to local schools. Janie described volunteer Gregory Bellcourt and suggested that he would be a useful addition to the Dudley staff. The Board briefly discussed the possibility that he might do fund raising for his own salary.

Collections & History Committee

Janie reported that there have already been three proposals for Pollock awards. She also suggested that we might arrange history-related talks and participate in history-related conferences and programs over the next year. Jim drew attention to a UCALL series on the historical treasures of Union College, and suggested that some of our rare books might be used.

Nominating Committee

Bob Ward presented nominations for four-year board terms for Joan Wagner (an educator and science education author who is also on the Schenectady Museum board) and Vincent Maine (a banker at Key Bank who is interested in non-profits and community development). The board approved both nominations.

Sam Wait pointed out that we need nominations for officers in time for the January meeting.

Vision Statement

Doug Klein and Heidi Newberg presented a re-organized version of the Vision for Dudley, which is split into a short Vision Statement and a longer Mission Statement. Members of the board suggested several small changes, and the board approved the document as amended.

By-Laws

Lucy requested clarification on what aspects of the By-Laws need changing. Sam specified looking into board liability insurance, the description of the committee structure, and defining a quorum in terms of a percentage rather than a fixed number of board members.

New Business

Mike Kornstein made motion that Janie be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of Dudley for grant-writing purposes. This motion carried.

Janie also brought to the board's attention that she has a 401K that is becoming obsolete since Dudley switched to using Paychex, and needs to be rolled into another account. Because the status of these funds, and what can be done with them, was not clear, no further action was taking by the board at this time.

Dates proposed for board meetings 2009:

January 14, March 11, May 13, July 15, September 16, November 11

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Crone Odekon, Dudley Board Secretary