

DUDLEY OBSERVATORY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

June 7, 2010

Schenectady, NY 12308

Present: Joan Wagner, Janie Schwab, Vince Amodeo, Francis Wilkin, Robert Ward, Heidi Newberg, Douglass Klein, Alan French, Michael Kornstein, Mark Marchand, Cherrice Traver, Louis Suarato, Bryan Amedio, Jonathan Cassidy,

Not Present: Dan Wulff, Peter Persans, Kerry Orlyk,

Special Meeting to discuss new site for Observatory

Bob Ward: Summary of Site Committee

Criteria: Accessible and dark. Decided on area, South of Route 20 and west of Thruway (southwest quadrant of Albany County).

Two major options for site:

1. Library in Voorheesville (building plus about 5 acres)
2. Thatcher Park

Library pros and cons

Pros

- Open Space Institute (OSI) may buy property with both land and existing building, though Dudley has not approached about doing this. If there is no building, Dudley pays for building and/or rehab of a preexisting building. OSI buys land that is threatened by development.
- The library has 5 acres of open land. OSI could buy some land next to library for a total of 20-30 acres.
- OSI likes organizations that have a historic link.
- The local community has expressed desire to keep the open space.
- There is very little preserved space in the urban core.
- Skies by library appear dark enough for night viewing. There is a minor glow, possibly from Colonie Center.
- Library is a lot more assessable than Thacher Park.
- Dudley is not a very strong organization to take on a project that also requires a building.

Library is more in our reach.

- Good for star parties

Cons

- Library is about 25 years old. It is a drab looking building.
- Not good location for star parties because of trees.
- Issue about where to place the telescopes. Drumlin not very accessible.

Other Issues

- Operating cost of the library, which is about 6000 sq ft., needs to be determined
- Will library be exempt from property taxes? Probably will keep library's present status as an educational institution.

Thacher Park:*

Pros

- Interest from Parks
- Though it is further than the library, the park is well known.
- Park's office very interested in working with us would champion this project.
- There would be a lot of public involvement.
- Have not discussed specific places but would be nice to be located along the escarpment.
- No other partnerships as of now except with a nature center.
- Add to aura of Tech Valley
- Showcase facility: Thacher Park could be such a facility but not library.

Cons

- Need to construct a building
- Too far and unstable (funding for parks an issue in NYS).

Other sites

- Land on 85 and 85A, nice and dark about 200 acres for \$6,000,000.
- Saratoga Park: Parks rather use Thacher. Not good view of southern sky.
- Property with 10 acres in Voorheesville: Font Grove Road and Krumkill: Good for a site. Good value.

Construction Costs

- Give Adirondack Public Observatory conceptual plan to an architect to get an estimate of cost for new construction

Financing Move

- How much of endowment can be used to support a new facility?
- What are we comfortable on spending?
- Fundraising: Do we hire a professional fundraiser?
- OSI can be thought of as a donor
- Need to get support of no big box people

The board came to a consensus that Thacher Park is probably too far to attract the volume of visitors we would like, but did not rule out the possibility of returning to consideration of the park. The board instructed the Site Committee to give first priority to working with the Open Space Institute in hopes of identifying a site that would be closer to the population centers of the region, and that would allow financial participation by the Open Space Institute.

Next Meeting on July 7th

Respectfully Submitted by Joan Wagner