

RASC WINNIPEG CENTRE COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the council of RASC Winnipeg Centre held via Zoom on Tuesday, February 7, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Dennis Lyons, Russell Brown, Michael Stephens, Mike Karakas, Ed Wright, Judy Anderson, Marc Sarrasin, Gord Tulloch, Michelle Boyce, Abdul al Manni, Bryan Stach, Kevin Galka, Scott Young,



REGRETS:

1. Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement Dennis
2. Welcome and Introductions All
 - Dennis: Agenda/goal for orientation to past years and planning, possibly issues as per typical agenda outline of business. Approval to record meetings, as minutes not verbatim. The way that he runs meetings, mostly open discussion, financial matters by motion, follow RONR s much as possible. Goal tonight is orient council, up to speed, same page. No major decisions.
 - Dennis: 2nd year of term as president, held many volunteer leadership positions since 1991. Observed that many admin procedures are not documented, for any council to have a book for carrying out council business. He aims to get a book of procedures/operations, and tracking progress toward plans (short and longer term).
 - Ed: Secretary, second year of term. Relatively new to astronomy. Believes in potential for the organization to be good for membership and also community at large. Helping to mature the organization based on experience as business and volunteering.
 - Mike Stephens: 28th year as a member of RASC, been on council as treasurer, and national rep for Saskatoon centre, observational astronomy, offer experience and enjoyment, interesting people and interesting things to do
 - Mike Karakas: Has respect for council members (past and present), coming to 24th year as member, was Winnicentrics editor for couple of years, volunteers at events, giving back to centre.
 - Russell: Member since July 2021, saw was an opening and a need, done exec and council work in military and union, an armchair enthusiast for years, just bought a scope.
 - Judy: Member for about 10 years with Jay, have a ton of admin experience, exp with strat planning, people person (enjoy the people), likes people aiming to help people enjoy astronomy.
 - Marc: Member for 20 years, joined council because volunteered for GA in 2011, part of SWSP occasionally, convinced to stand for council; hopes to contribute to the club. Met Captain Kirk and hopes that helps.
 - Gord: On council for a few years in appointed position working on website, OCD about getting things done, 2nd year of position as VP and 4th year as webmaster, a member for 37 years. Wants to give up webmaster and keep newsletter, member since 1986 (36 years), volunteered in Scouting org.
 - Abdul: Been in astronomy since 2015, joined the council as assistance for WinniCentric, then offered to take Treasurer position around 4 years ago. Should give someone else chance at that role in next year or two.

- Michelle: Been involved in many committees, involved in RASC with radio telescope group. Here for 2 years, and interested in Council contributions, do have technical skills to offer. Strong desire for outreach, although club seems to be focused on equipment, but my experience is on physics. Teaching 2nd year observational astronomy PHYS 2070 this year.
 - Bryan: Past president, on council long time 8 or 9 years. Appreciate work on the website. Always volunteered since grade 2.
 - Kevin: conductor for CN, first joined during Halley's comet, make it to everything he can, would like to see Glenlea stuff directions, move it in certain dir'ns. Big user of Glenlea. interested in the potential site near Tolstoy. First member in 1986. Ran into Jerry at planetarium. His niche is astrophotography.
 - Scott: Have been a member of centre since comet Halley days, on and off council for number of years, on national a bit, want to do my part in keeping the club going, would like big projects come to fruition, Glenlea and education / outreach.
3. Meeting Dates and Times Dennis
 - First Monday of every month. Start at 7:00 p.m. and only go to 9:00.
 4. Council Work – Committees and Council Meetings Dennis
 - Dennis: Blessed to have 12 elected members. Largest elected council ever. Many hands make light work; good that so many are interested. Would like a council member attached to every committee, as a conduit back to council. Council not aiming to run those committees unless it's important at the start, but to assist/enable those volunteers. This should help prevent a few people on council trying to do everything. There are many people interested, and they can definitely help, and this should help other members to be more active in the club. Hopefully we'll see that evolution.
 5. Conflict of Interest Dennis
 - Dennis: One person notified on conflict of interest. Anyone else please drop Dennis an email.
 6. Strategic Plan Review Dennis, Ed
 - Dennis: The goal is not for council to do everything in the plan. Goal is that more than a few people work hard to achieve goals in strategic plan. Very cognizant of time that people devote to volunteer activities.
 - Ed: Background: plan developed over. There were about 20 weekly meetings. Sets a baseline for future councils to review/renew strategic plan. Followed well-known processes. Did consultations with focus groups (selected senior members, council) as well as membership survey. Hopefully council members have read the document. Highlights: mission, vision, values (MVV) – vision to create a community that shares astronomy as a common expression of curiosity, life, and learning. Values/code of conduct should fit into bylaws. Focus to better distribute work of the Centre, amongst council and members. Page 36 in the document outlines differences between previous and now-targeted structure of the organization, and then what is needed to get to goals. Other than having a full fundraising coordinator, all the rest was a consensus. Using the SWOT analysis against MVV, committee developed a plan for years 1, 2, and 3, plus long-term goals. Final page is current/expected annual costs, a high-level snapshot of expenses and revenues. This is not an income/expense statement, but generalized to show financial position, particularly a weakness in revenues for long-term stability.
 - Dennis: Note that none of these items are costed, only estimates; real costing is required before we launch a drive to fund the plan that is developed for each project. As

well, we don't necessarily have a good idea of things that we're already doing, and how much it would cost to do those things even better. Some people didn't know SWSP was advertised, and Council wanted to better support the planning committee who are working hard as volunteers. There's a lot of work to be done. The plan is only a collection of information and suggestions; all activities have to be achieved with volunteers/members, and we don't know when the 'action' portion of any particular project might begin. It depends on future Councils and where people take the priorities. The document could change, and nothing in it is finished; it's an outline for the evolution that we may or may not follow in future.

- Russell: Understanding incorporating but not charity. For fundraising, would be easier if got a bookkeeper. Gord: If future council missed doing the paperwork, the tax becomes 100% on assets. Risk is extreme. Dennis: there are ways to do fundraising. When working with like minded partners don't want to get into doing the same thing. Want to get all of the processes in place. Will want a business plan for how to achieve that. You build relationships, other orgs give letters of support and get support of larger committee. The SP said we are not good at putting a plan together. Gord: The SP looked at the 8 existing programs (includes loaner program, meetings, outreach, etc.), plus the 1 new one. Also, demographics are good and interesting. We have a group of 50 year olds. Dennis: It's important to know where we are today, and where we'd like to go. New members have new ideas, and the planning was a good exercise to know ourselves, and realize we are doing many good things, although we haven't documented it well, and weren't keeping good records very well. A lot of the stuff is not documented but now with Google Docs we are starting to archive these documents. Finding that a lot of the areas depends on one volunteer. There is a way to work through National to generate a charitable receipt. Ed: Business researchers find consistently that there is strong positive value to having a strategic plan. Successful organizations more often than not have used a strategic plan. It's the difference between being re-active and pro-active, capturing opportunities, avoiding threats and minimizing risks to grow strengths. This is why we have done the strategic planning

7. Committee Work Council Member

a. Operations Manual

Mike and Mike

- MikeK: Done some work on it. Getting into detail now that bylaws ratified. It is policies and procedures manual. Dovetails into bylaws. Easier to read document. MikeS: Getting back into the groove now. Gord: The P&P manual is minor stuff that council can change, stuff that codifies, dovetails with the bylaws. Michelle: Current state of document? MikeK: 75% done, it is on Google Drive. Scott: I have some old docs where we worked on docs can share and I can help on this. He can help on this. Judy: Google Docs is really good. Gord: Good to use Google Docs rather than the Word document. Important to note difference between edit and suggest. Judy: Multiple people can give suggestions and comments at a given time; access is not restricted to "working group". Michelle: Could help proofread the document.

b. Code of Conduct Council and appointees

- Dennis: Exec started on this. Exec to keep working on this. Do we want 1 page or 2 pager? Not close to being done. This is written for council and appointees. National working on the one for members.

c. Bylaws

Judy

- Dennis: Judy running this. Judy: Bylaws are now in effect. Can work within them. Scott and others wanted to discuss things. Judy will invite Scott and Michelle as well as

Catherine Lee and Cliff Levi who volunteered at the January meeting. Will send Doodle to find out when people are available. Format will be to take direct input from those folks and discuss at a few meetings and bring revision back to council. Work in progress. Looking to come up with better version. New bylaw doc for ... thinking on a semi regular basis. Dennis: Scott and Michelle volunteered to assist. Ed: Timing for this relative to the AGM? Judy: Could do before the AGM. Aim for before the AGM in early fall. Ed: Note that Catherine is his spouse. She has a lot of volunteer experience. Michelle: If things coming up in council, good to mention in the membership meetings. Dennis: Newsletter is well received but is just one channel to the membership. Gord suggests we need to do messaging at the other platforms (FaceBook, RASC list, webpage, forums, etc.).

d. Observatory Committee

Gord

- Gord: The committee met 3 times. Look in the newsletter for a synopsis. Were looking for training on the LX200. Trying to spread this out. Also want to change locks to a key code. Will reduce need for keys, and code can be changed periodically. Also, the expansion of the pad involving U of M needs to happen. Also, need an enclosure for the 14" so can be setup on a slide off enclosure. Also, more seating. Also electrical for the pad and cars to plug in.
- Would like to get rid of this responsibility. Chairing the committee is straightforward. Scott: Why don't we have to ask permission for the 14" slide-off enclosure? Gord: Not intrusive. Danielle would be fine with it and we don't have anyone else to ask until we have a more permanent relationship with the U of M.
- Michelle: Interested in being involved but not running it. Gord: I am removing my name from chair although can provide technical guidance. Bryan: I am interested. Dennis: Need someone from council. MikeK: We are short on seating arrangements. Michelle: How many on the committee? Gord: There are minutes in the WinniCentrics. Russell: There are six.

e. Incorporation

- No rush.

f. Finance Committee

Abdul/Mark Irvine

- Dennis: Mark is on the list. Council needs to set goals, for example budget, insurance, how we document financial information, reporting back to the council and membership.

g. Star Parties

- Dennis: We have the SWSP.

8. Directors and Councilors

Dennis

- Dennis: With incorporation, everyone has same privileges with voting, minimum 4 directors and 4 executives. By having a councilor position allows an underage person to be on. There are differences between directors and councilors minimum 4 of each to be filed to the Companies Office under The Corporations Act. Not a decision needed tonight, but information for orientation.

9. Appointed Positions Recruitment

Dennis

- Finance: Chair is Mark Irvine

a. National Council (2)

Bryan, Dennis

b. SWSP

Silvia Graca

c. Spring Star Party

Gord stepped back; cancelled for this

year; a good group of volunteers, and will try again next year

- d. Explore the Universe Dennis – conduit for certificate applications, and signs off on the log books. There’s an opening for this, if Dennis is reappointed to National Council
- e. Binocular Interest Group Darren Hennig
- f. Webmaster open
- g. Volunteer Coordinator open (this is currently ad hoc and needs formality)
- h. Mentor Coordinator open (Judy interim) – kind of like an education coordinator)
- i. Newsletter Editor Gord
- j. Meeting Coordinator Dennis: Purpose is to get meetings lined up. Judy volunteered.
- k. Membership Coordinator Abdul (check on lapsed membership and update website (add new members and remove lapsed members after 60-day grace period)
- l. Others (brainstorm)
- Loaner scope Mike Karakas
 - Education Coordinator – Michelle: Does this exist? Dennis: No. Judy: The basic thing is the mentor coord. Volunteer and education coordinator could be separate or same person. Gord: I am lining up the outreach requests that come in from the website. There is a lot about volunteer recognition in the SP that needs to be formalized.
10. Web Infrastructure and io email list Gord
- Dennis: To Gord to discuss. National was replacing the email. Gord: The performance on website has been crappy but do not have visibility to the *Siteground*. Performance on website has been bad for a while, and he can’t figure out what is wrong. There’s a \$50 USD charge for the company to figure out why it’s fluctuating in speed (very fast versus very slow). There may be an errant task to remove.
- MOTION: Gord moved to pay *Siteground* US\$50 to investigate, will get resolution, seconded MikeS. ADOPTED
- Gord: Wanting to get off U of M mail list for a while. Also there is an archive which is not good when some council communications is in-camera. Other centres using groups.io now. Was from Yahoo. It is free for < 100 people. Ok for council but might push it for the membership. Can set up the new council list now and play by ear for the membership list. We could eventually stop using the RASC membership list (many are not on the list any longer and we are unable to add new members as we don’t control this list). We do not have admin rights for the U of M RASC Winnipeg. Suggest we embark on council list for now. Judy: Can we create 3 groups for memberships? Gord: Think we should just pay for it so we avoid the segregation. Talked to Darren about Binos. He would be fine with that.
- MOTION Gord moved that council move to the group.io service, Scott seconded. ADOPTED
11. Business agenda if time Dennis
12. Round table All
- Judy: We are lined up for Friday. Jay doing astronomy bucket list. Michelle is this week for What’s New.
13. Next Meeting Monday 7 March 7 PM
14. Adjourn 9:12 PM

	Name	Signature	Date
Secretary	Ed Wright		