RASC WINNIPEG CENTRE COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the council of RASC Winnipeg Centre held via Zoom on Monday, September 5, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Judy Anderson, Daemon Nightshade, Dennis Lyons, Scott Young, Mike Karakas, Marc Sarrasin, Mark Irvine, Kamala Kodi, Bryan Stach, Ed Wright,

REGRETS: Stan Runge, Michelle Boyce, Russell Brown

1. Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement — Dennis
2. Welcome and Introductions — All
3. Adoption of Agenda — Dennis
4. Adoption of previous minutes — Ed

Ed moved and Daemon seconded that the previous minutes be adopted	PASSED

5. Financial Report — Mark
    - Mark: Memberships are down about 4% on budget (memberships / renewals may not be linear through the year). Brief discussion about coverage. Loaner scopes covered by property insurance covers, we do not cover, the Dob was at $3K, so we have coverage for big ticket items but not for the loaner items. Not seen the bill for the director's liability ins, costs will hit in 4th quarter, will swing our position from positive to negative, membership fees trending slightly lower, talked at finance committee about doing cyclical budgeting, when things come due in certain months. For now, can just talk about trending. Marc: Those who are paid, 178 are paid, 28 due in the next month, 29 lapsed. The lapsed are through several months.
    - Summary of membership that I mentioned... Active members: 235
      Paid up members: 178
      Due in the next month: 28 (not in grace period as yet)
      Unpaid in the past month: 29 (have left not renewed)
      For new members, I will check and get back to you.
    - Scott: For a number of years membership switched to calendar year, then it reverted to a 12-month period, so there should be a number coming due in December, so we should get two thirds renewing in December. Mark: Will budget based on dollars for now. Would be nice to have quantities by month. If you put all optimism in one month of the year, and it goes bad, hard to plan around that. We will come at you guys, 2 or 3 folks that are gung-ho, one from a T.O. treasurer job and he works for the CRA. If agree to the budget process, then those in that budget area will contact the chairs. Hoping first draft for October Council meeting and if not then email exchanges. Present in November. Would vote on it in December. Want it in the membership hands for digest. Could take to the finance committee for reworking and back to council. Does not have to be as elaborate as this. Gives good expertise to the process. Might improve situation relative to what happened in National. Will be less stress. What are expectations for next year. Then will carve into cap and exp, cap will come from the savings. Big expenses coming due, and then the porta-potty issue with Russell. I cannot e-transfer to him because we have a dual signor account. We are obliged to carry the obligation on the balance sheet because we owe him the money.

- Mhike: Insurance for the loaner scopes, is it possible to have insurance coverage for property not stored on RASC property? Mark: Can get a rider for a piece of equipment. Dennis: By the time you do the rider, even if lose all of the scopes, you lose money. Only lost one scope over the last ten years. Better to self-insure. **DECISION: The corporation will self-insure the loaner scopes**.
- Ed: Does the membership need to vote on the budget? Mark: Not necessarily to vote, but transparency, could do something different.
- Scott: Same as Ed the routine budget stuff not necessarily to go to the membership, but if a big project, I like the transparency, not necessarily for them to vote. Also, Insurance for loaner scopes, is there liability to a loaner scope holder? Dennis: This was reviewed a while ago, and with individual riders, and the $500 deductible, it would mean that the loaner scopes will cost us money. Always a risk, but again only one was lost in last 10 years, would have to look at it. Often would be multiple items stolen from a home so it alone would not necessarily affect the premiums. Dennis: It would be for the board to decide, depends on the scope. Mike: Anytime a scope loaned out, the person signs acknowledging the cost of the scope, e.g., last year a person had binos stolen from car. He purchased the new binos, people are usually quite honest. This would be contents insurance for whomever had it on their location.
- Ed: His experience on boards is that budget does not go to membership but to Council, and then when it makes sense, the Council would go to the members for input, discussion, presentation. Definitely the auditor report goes to members for approval by vote, but the budget does not. Judy: About the presentation of a budget, we have presented to the AGM but only the auditor's report gets voted on. Mark: it would be up to Council to decide whether the members are asked to vote on the budget. His proposal was to have members vote, but he will work toward whatever we want to do. Scott: Routine budget stuff doesn't need to go to membership, but if we were going to do a major project with major expenses, then it would be useful and important to have members vote on the budget.
- Mark: If equipment is misused and if they burn their eyes, Dennis: Not insured because not an RASC event. Scott: We would get sued. Dennis: Can go as far down hole as want. It is a service we provide and is an accepted risk. In aviation, … only lost one item over ten years. Everyone likes the program, people support it, law of diminishing returns, the more that you insure … if someone uses a scope improperly courts will not go after the 3rd party. Mark: As long as we have in the agreement that they accept risk for the use of the …

MOTION Mark moved, Judy seconded to accept the finance report. PASSED

- Mike in CHAT, "the loaner equipment form item 4 (liability for injury) notes The borrower of this equipment is solely resp for the safe usage while it is in his/her possession. The borrower agrees to hold harmless and indemnify the Winnipeg Centre of the RASC, and its officers against any losses, damages, judgements, claims, expenses, costs and liabilities imposed upon or incurred by or asserted against the borrower, including reasonable attorney's fees and expenses arising out of the acts or omissions."
- Dennis: To Marc can you send a note out to people who have lapsed and use the president's account president@winnipeg.rasc.ca.

6. Committee Work Reports
   a. Policies and Procedures Manual Dennis
      - Dennis: Nothing new.

b. Observatory Committee — Michelle
   - Scott: Michelle asked me to look after some of this. The scopes polar alignment and collimation is good but the drive gears are shot probably due to misuse. Will try to come up with solution that is practical. Many people are asking to join the committee. New computer at Observatory and new Wi-Fi that allows you to control equipment on the pad. People are also throwing gear at RASC (computer, internet router), but the thing missing is that everyone on the committee has their own ideas, but we need a statement of what we are trying to do. Why do we have an observatory and loaner scopes: outreach vs. members only; super-users vs. beginners, learning or introduction to astronomy. One person's needs/wants do not satisfy everyone else's want/need. I think something like Glenlea is convenient, but council should have a strategic plan for the observatory resources that we provide. That would feed to in city observatory sites, outside city sites, if thinking where we go almost have to go to strategic plan. Mark: I agree, always good to bump up to strategy. Scott: Also, because trying to answer this I created a draft survey. Dennis: Will put on the agenda for next meeting, we talked about doing a strategic review in the fall.
   - Judy: Were there minutes for the observatory committee meeting. Scott: I will try to send something out.

c. Member Meeting — Judy
   - Beginner Session, Dennis Lyons; What's Up? Bryan Stach; What's New? Scott Young; Main speakers: Jay & Judy Anderson, 2023 Eclipse adventure!
   - October: gAIL Wise, Bryan Stach, Danielle Pahud, Dr. Mark Buie
   - November: Beginner TBD, Bryan Stach, Michelle Boyce, Main speaker: TBD
   - Alan Dyer requested to watch the presentation this month by Zoom; Dennis agreed to accommodate the request.

d. Finance Committee — Mark Irvine
   - Dennis: Questions for Mark on anything new for next year's budget?
   - Ed: Need to consider if the financials are lumpy how to handle.
   - Scott: There are some bare bones maintenance things to be done, will try to send an estimate for basic observatory repairs.
   - Daemon: If starting a fundraising committee, there might things needing a capital expenditure, although they should not be large.
   - Judy: We need to budget for more promo materials, seem to always be scraping bottom of the barrel. Mark: Shipping will be saved with large orders.
   - Kamala: Mark got some of the materials printed, moon chart and sky chart, I have > 100 of each.
   - Kamala: For the fundraising committee, looks like ___ is interested in this. Dennis: This is on the agenda.
   - Dennis: Scott will send an estimate to Mark of the observatory repairs. Mark: I will divide the expenses up and then ask the finance committee members to reach out to you guys. If you guys have stuff for me, give to me.

e. SWSP — Dennis
   - Dennis: 22 signed up now. Can pay at finance@winnipeg.rasc.ca. Nothing fancy. Sunday breakfast. Contact Silvia … Russell was supposed to drop all his stuff with Silvia but has not happened yet. Judy: Have they finished mowing, and will the picnic tables be in right location, and the port-potties?

- Kamala: When SW event happening, she was willing to facilitate the breakfast. Sounds like this year registrations is less. To Judy, let me know how many people registered so she can bring the right amount of food.
- Dennis: Looking at forecast, hit and miss right now. Will try to get someone next year to take over equipment.

f. Explore the Universe — Stan
- Dennis: Stan recovering from a heart attack. Judy: He is in quite a bit of pain so no visitors next few days.

g. Eclipse 2024 — Scott
- Scott: Contact with the park made, MB Museum is supportive of everything, but they want to charge the Museum $1,500 but no cost for the RASC. The APC has big projects and looking for more funding. Maybe RASC could be lead people on the park. MB Museum does not have $1,500. Kamala: Could go the route of renting for $67. There is a $70/event rate at St. Vital Park. Scott: There is a not-for-profit rate, an institutional rate, and a commercial rate. $1500 is their corp for profit rate. That is why no signed contract yet. Dennis: Will need to order promo items. Judy: Eclipse glasses should arrive in 3rd week sept. Daemon: Bryan is going to hand suitcase off to me to see what is missing. Kamala: I have moon chart and sky chart. Scott: Can I have moment at Sept meeting to drum up volunteers? Dennis: Will add that in.

h. Fundraising
- Dennis: We wanted a person to put together the roles of this. Anyone have a name for this. Daemon: I can do it, run with it. Dennis: Forward ideas to Daemon, parameters around what this is. E.g., for a new scope at Glenlea, they get guided by council, need to get that down on paper, then send to council to review. Then can recruit for the position. Kamala: Wing does a lot of fundraising for U of M. Could do as astronomy outreach event, once public … What I would say to Daemon is include Wing, and I would like to help out but not be a chair. Dennis: first we should develop policy and procedures. Judy volunteers to help with policies and procedures. Judy: But you could think about it, there are people interested, I think a new one every year, they are just ideas at this point, I can help with policies and goals. Daemon: I am good at writing policies.

7. Appointed Positions Recruitment — Dennis
   a. Volunteer Coordinator
   b. Mentor Coordinator
   c. Youth Outreach
8. Business Arising
   a. NCC — Dennis/Silvia
      - Dennis: They reached out in Oct for this, need to start over because app was lost, happened at committee level. No date set yet for taking dark-sky readings.
   b. Glenlea, cleanup, damage repair — Ed
      - Ed: The province received our input on August 7 and acknowledged receipt. We were using what it has cost to date (several $1000 for porta-potty and repair materials). But we're not done at Glenlea. Judy: Original notion was to replace the base plate and the 2' of siding. We haven't done anything yet on the dome building as yet (as per needs in Engineer's report). But that building is going to flood semi regularly, and there are a number of things affecting the scope, so do we do small fixes or have a larger plan. Scott: impression is that we're waiting for approval from Province before we start the

main repair (Dennis agrees). Ed: in next 2 weeks will ask EMO for a status update on the decision about funding.

c. Spruce Woods gift to casino $180 plus tax Dennis
d. Website – Marc
   - Marc: Got the menus sorted out. Just need to fix that it goes to your profile when you log in. Just need to fix that.
e. Strategic Plan/Bylaws Dennis
   - Dennis: Will talk about that next month. Judy: When we talk about strategic plan and obs, we should take some of the other items off. Dennis: Look at the existing strategic plan. We want to focus on that one item. The one we would discuss for next meeting is what do we want the observatory and loaner scopes to do. It continues to come up.
f. Credit Card Mark
   - Dennis: Moving along. Mark got it approved. I will be the second signing person on it. Waiting for the bank to say ready for us to come in. Mark: Yes, I was able to submit the finance statements.
g. Glenlea Public use Dennis
   - Dennis: This will get talked about in the strategic plan.
h. Members Observing Night – who does what? Scott
   - Scott: We just need to assign someone to each event. Does not have to be full on observatory event. Should I just email a schedule and ask people to self-select a date. Dennis: Could go to both council and observatory committee.
i. On the move Kamala
   - Kamala: We did St Vital Park outreach, coincided with the SWPP event, but wanted moon and sun out, so was on the same date. Mark came and Abdul came, when went in the evening we were happy, then cloud rolled in. But did attract many in the public and collected a brochure and moon chart. For the outreach reporting for the RASC main centre Kamala volunteers to take a lead on this. Dennis: Jenna the director, there is outreach committee then another committee, Jenna will decide which one is better suited to report to. There are at least two on the National site on which things can be reported. I can take a lead in the reporting from our centre.
j. Glenlea Keys All
   - Dennis: moving to the observatory committee.
k. Assiniboine Park winter activities Mike
   - Mike: The deadline came and went, fell off my radar, but valuable to have an outreach coordinator. I don't recall having a winter outreach event. Would like to know how much interest in that.
l. Meade Scope donation Judy
   - Dennis: Had a Meade scope donation. To be sold to raise money for Telescopes for Kids program. Judy: It is a 4" Meade, purchased in about 1986, some accessories, but in really good condition, could do an auction, that was the idea, but then with mid-Sept date on star party and people not able to check online for checking, then the idea to sell as a package, all together worth up to $800, would break into scope and then the accessories. Circulated to Ed. Mark, and Dennis, they have agreed they would go to members, if not then Astrosell, but notion is to raise money for the scopes for kids. I can post anytime now. Dennis: Selling individually can be tedious, so if someone offers $600 .

- Dennis: To Scott are you willing to run that program? Scott: I can help out on it. Gret to have a $600 contribution. If anyone else interested. I will work on it but would like help.

m. Second observing site (pass to committee?) Dennis
- Dennis: People's thoughts, Gord approached by gun club for spare dark sky sites. Scott: We are getting a lot of offers on things, something to consider, but we should not commit, say we will consider, maybe nice letter to them. Judy: Mike stopped and looked at the site, Gord T was going to check out the site. We should not wait 6 months until considering properly. Mike: I did take a drive by, accessible, 3.5 kms from Hwy 59, lots of no trespassing signs, winter snow clearing is not something they can guarantee. So it would be a 3 season observing site. It is encouraging. Scott: Us talking about that site for observing would be okay, but the main thing is if replacing Glenlea, don't want to say nothing for 6 months, but also don't want to split the volunteer base between the two sites. It would take some time for them to come up with an agreement anyway. Mark: Thought is it is a good thing, would give us a northern site, no fees, the more relationships we have the better. We could just have an MOU. Dennis: A commitment made to the NCC is that we need to run an outreach program. Scott's notion of volunteers spreading out is important to remember for NCC site, is that there is an annual outreach program that we'd need volunteers to run. Tying that in it is something that has been approved for a while. Dennis: Okay I will go back to Gord, say interested in MOU, would like to know the process to get access, and then feedback to Observatory Committee, and they can look at whether membership wants observatory site.

n. Insurance renewal Mark (see above)

o. RASC Calendars, do we order? Dennis
- Dennis: RASC calendars, are we interested this year? Daemon: I think we should lower the volumes. Dennis: It is shipping. Daemon: Think we order but keep volume low. Scott: Can we order preorders? Dennis: We are always over 10 -12, so look at the number last year, Mark: It has been a financial loser. Scott: Mark: Could use as a promotional item, was interest at the library, only made money when local guys put their own pics in. Dennis: There is risk for any volume, it is convenience, but people can buy from National. So do we worry about it at all. Mark: could we do a doodle poll with a 1-week deadline, and ask members. Judy: We could get calendars prepaid, Scott: Even if took orders without the money, people would buy. Dennis: I will put a call out at the meeting and say if want let us know. Will say by the end of the month. Will say up to $20.

9. Round table All
- Judy: Hoping SWSP is good, suggest everyone bring winter gear.
- Daemon: Public event went well, heritage site after that was good,
- Ed: Need the teaser for the J&J presentation.
- Scott: Will be at the meeting on Friday, will need to make the streaming stuff accessible to more people, on me to document all of the stuff that we do.
- Marc: Good luck for the SWSP.
- BS: Looking forward to SP next week.
- Dennis: Forwarded the discussion document from National Council. Appreciate the feedback. Will have more discussion once starting the strategic plan, happy we now have the observatory committee, finance committee, fundraising, nice to see a lot of the

stuff fleshed out, taken a lot of effort, so a pat on the back, everyone works collaboratively, want to thank everyone for doing that. A lot of really good things there to support the membership.

- Marc: Tuesday October 3, 2023. Dennis: Oct 2 is a stat. Ed will send out updated invitation.

10. Next Meeting, Tuesday October 3, 2023, 7 PM
11. Adjourn 8:50 PM

	Name	Signature	Date
Secretary	Ed Wright		