

Minutes from the October 3, 2011, Board Meeting of the Howard Astronomical League (HAL)

The meeting was convened at 7:00 P.M. at the “Pasta Blitz” restaurant in Ellicott City.

The meeting was attended by President Bob Prokop; Treasurer Peter Friedman; Observatory Chair Joel Goodman; Webmaster Chas Rimpo; Event Coordinator David Stein; Past Presidents Wayne Baggett and Marc Feuerberg; HAL members Tony Matesi and Fred Nastvogel; and Secretary David Illig.

The board congratulated Chas Rimpo on setting up the new HAL on-line store. Chas said that he had ordered a sample, but had not yet received it.

Joel asked about future prizes for Stumper winners. David Stein said that he has a couple of things left and then will “play it by ear.” There is one Café Press (old store) coffee mug available to be presented to the October speaker.

Bob Prokop noted that the September general meeting at the Robinson Nature Center went well.

On the subject of the observatory project, Joel said that Howard County has the architectural plans for study. He said that the state grant for the observatory project in the amount of \$25,000 expires in mid 2012 and that it takes several weeks to apply for and receive the funds. Joel said that the county expects to pour concrete at Alpha Ridge before the end of 2011.

Secretary David Illig, who has agreed to take charge of moving the dome to a county facility and to inspect and inventory it, asked where we will move it to. Joel replied that it will be a Recreation and Parks maintenance facility in the northern part of the county. We will probably need four volunteers from the general membership to handle this task. The Secretary said that he would like to move the dome between the end of his Canada vacation (19 October) and Thanksgiving. David has a digital copy of the dome assembly manual.

Marc asked whether the county was going to require us to have a backup electric generator for the observatory. Joel said no.

The question of naming the observatory was raised again. The consensus was that the membership will choose a name from a list provided by the board. HAL will advise the county of the name we have chosen, and not seek input from the county.

?David Stein? said that no one had signed up for the solar event “Spectacular Sun.”

Joel asked whether HAL would do sidewalk astronomy at the Robinson Nature Center, and if so, how often. The Board agreed that we could show up if weather was good and if members were willing, but we would not promote or announce our presence in advance. The board also agreed that our HAL officially sponsored “sidewalk astronomy” would take place at the observatory after it is open.

The speaker for the October meeting is Alex Storrs, a professor from Towson State U. who will speak on urban astronomy.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50, but Bob immediately remembered—before anyone had left—that he had one more agenda item, and the meeting reconvened. Bob proposed that HAL opt out of future zoning meetings on the Waverly gas station/convenience store issue so as not to give the appearance of being biased for or against the project. The board voted unanimously to accept that proposal and the meeting adjourned for the final time at 7:54 p.m. EDT.