

CLARK PLANETARIUM ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Location: Virtual and In-Person Meeting

Thursday, September 21, 2023

Board attendance:

Ahsan Iqbal, Chair
Jim Brass, Vice Chair
Rod Parker, Strategic Planning Chair
Laurie Stringham
Bianca Lyon
Emily Lenhardt
Michelle Love-Day
James Karner
Jonathan Ebbeler
Ulrich Rassner
Olga Siggins
Madelaine Miller Anderson

Board, absent:

Jordan Hansen
Tanasia Valdez
Julia Kamenetzky
Andrea Garavito-Martinez
Marisol Perez Gonzalez

Others Present:

Duke Johnson
Jason Sills
Richard Cox
Andrea Doubek
Jason Trump
Joe Stohel
Allen Reeve
Maureen Ford
Jim Langer

- I. **CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME** at 12:43 p.m. by Ahsan Iqbal.
 - a. Ahsan asked the Board members if any of them had received public written or verbal comments to be presented to the Board. None were brought forth.

- II. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**
 - a. Ahsan asked for a motion to approve the minutes for August. Emily made the motion to approve them, and Jim Brass seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously by the Board.

- III. **PLANETARIUM REPORT**



- a. Financials. Duke noted that the Planetarium's performance was pretty close to what was predicted. Dome shows were slightly down, memberships were slightly up, and IMAX shows were just about dead on. The biggest anomaly was the store, which didn't bring in quite what was projected or what it had brought in in 2022. However, 2022 were record numbers. All in all, we were down about 7% from previous August numbers, including building rentals. However, we're still doing very, very well pretty much across the board. Total earned revenue from January through August is up \$215,141 from last year.
- b. Board concerns and suggestions:
 - i. Bianca asked if people were coming in for eclipses glasses. Jason said that sales are currently slow, but we expect them to ramp up closer to the event. People often wait until the last moment. In 2017, we started out selling only a few thousand, but by the time of the eclipse, we ended up selling 125,000 overall. Laurie suggested an advertising campaign that centered around "get your glasses before they're gone. We could be sold out of them before the day of the event." If people think they could miss out, they'll buy them sooner. It's a great marketing strategy. The campaign should have some urgency to it. Using social media links to direct the public to more information, Board members could put them on their own social media pages and ask people to share. We could get the word out fast, simple, and cheap. Duke said that we'll get that out.

- ii. Bianca Lyon asked if most building rentals were small scale, like birthday parties, or larger, like corporate rentals. Duke mentioned that building rentals were sporadic and hadn't quite bounced back with the stability we had before the pandemic. Laurie Stringham said that she works with older singles groups that do events who would love to hold an event here. They could attend the last show at 10:30 p.m. and then hold a dance afterwards until 1 a.m. They would rent the whole space for special events, holidays, and occasions like that. So far, they've had difficulties finding places that can accommodate them. The Planetarium could hold one of those events once a month and literally have about a thousand people show up. She wondered if the Planetarium would be open to that since it would mean staying open later. She and Duke agreed to discuss it.
- iii. Jason noted that we did a trial run for "Clark After Dark," an event that is targeted more to adults than children and families. We expected about 30 people, and 160 showed up. He said that the Planetarium will be bringing in a "Laser Taylor Swift" laser show. We will kick it off with an "After Dark" event that will have three showings. There will be special wrist bands that will glow in different colors, depending on where you are in the building. Patrons will also get laser glasses and a mocktail, all at a package cost of about \$20. We're expecting about 400 to 450 patrons. Laurie suggested that we should allow

for friendship bracelet exchanges. People could bring their own bracelets and exchange them with people here. Duke said we could certainly set up a couple of tables like that. Jason said that we've built a survey just for that crowd, where we'll get to explore things like laser glasses and bracelets. Such value-added experiences could be revenue generating. Laurie offered her help in planning the event, since there's new technology Taylor Swift is using that she thinks the Clark Planetarium could incorporate.

- c. Jason Trump has been hired as the new Education Supervisor. We are also looking at some of our final candidates for the graphic artist position and are hoping to have an offer out within the next week.
- d. Budget Update. The FY24 budget has been prepared by our fiscal team. The presentation with the Mayor's Office and CFO on September 7 went well. We have prepared a conservative budget. Special thanks to Robin, Joey, and Laurie for all their help navigating the process in the right way.
- e. OSIRIS-REx activities launched today. Attendees for the weekend's events include NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, NASA Ames Research Center, NASA Planetary Science Division, Hill aerospace Museum, Northrop Grumman, the University of Arizona, and the United States Postal Service with an OSIRIS-REx commemorative stamp unveiling ceremony. We've become the hub for this all activity and there will be so much free publicity and so much public engagement that it really is exciting. We'll be tracking it.

f. Community Programs. In August, there were 32 programs with 3,536 participants.

The department is also heavily involved with the OSIRIS-REx activities currently happening within the building, as well as all the activities currently happening over at our FanX booth. “Clark After Dark” was a major success. Laurie said that it's nice to see adults enjoying themselves and being immersed in science. These experiences show adults can also have fun sometimes.

g. FanX. Jason showed pictures of the FanX booth. There is an introductory table, some of our exhibits, and staff members attending to the public, including how to use the exhibits. There is a stage for demonstrations with chairs set up. People can sit down, watch the demonstrations, play with our exhibits, and hopefully buy some eclipse glasses as well.

h. Annular Solar Eclipse on October 14. We will have three events across Salt Lake County: Magna Regional Park, Whitmore Library, and the Olympic Legacy Plaza here at the Gateway. County Mayor Jenny Wilson’s book club will screen our dome show “Eclipse: the Sun Revealed.” All the seats for the book club screening went in just 48 hours. The Mayor will also be at the Gateway viewing event. Jason Trump has been spearheading eclipse training events for County personnel, as well as sending out resources to people who registered by email. We will also be sending out 115,000 glasses to all the sixth-grade students in Utah, as well as holding two special workshops for teachers and educators. Bianca gave a call to

action for fellow Board members to take photos of the eclipse, even if it's in their own backyard, to showcase how the Board celebrated it.

- i. Bianca acknowledged Jayceen, who is getting the Phil Notarianni Distinguished Service Award from the Utah Museum Association. That's why she's not here today. Duke said we will also acknowledge her achievement at the next Board meeting when she can be present.

IV. CLOSING REMARKS

- a. Ahsan adjourned the meeting at 1:31 pm.