

**CLARK PLANETARIUM ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**Location: Virtual and In-Person Meeting**

**Thursday, October 19, 2023**

**Board attendance:**

Ahsan Iqbal, Chair  
Rod Parker, Strategic Planning Chair  
Emily Lenhardt  
Jonathan Ebbeler  
Olga Siggins  
Madelaine Anderson  
Tanasia Valdez  
Andrea Garavito-Martinez  
Bianca Lyon  
Laurie Stringham

**Others Present:**

Duke Johnson  
Jason Sills  
Richard Cox  
Joe Stohel  
Maureen Ford  
Anna Swenson  
Anna Marie Tueller  
Kunbi Adekunle  
Andrea Doubek  
Jayceen Craven Walker  
Joey McNamee  
Ulrich Rassner

**Board, absent:**

Jim Brass, Vice Chair (excused)  
Michelle Love-Day  
Marisol Perez Gonzalez  
James Karner  
Jordan Hansen

- I. Emily Lenhardt gave a fascinating pre-meeting presentation entitled "A Llama, Toad, Fox and Quail — Lifting Off Into the Milky Way from the Atacama Desert." Her presentation covered indigenous mythology and astronomy in Chile, as well as interesting details about her recent trip there.
- II. **CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME** at 12:48 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.
- III. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**



- a. Ahsan asked for a motion to approve the minutes for September. Jonathan Ebbeler made the motion to approve them, and Rod Parker seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

#### IV. PLANETARIUM REPORT

- a. Financials. Kunbi noted that the total September cash register revenue was \$151,878, 15% over last year's total. As of September, we are trending at \$145,000 over budget. COSI (Center of Science and Industry) bought \$34,000 worth of exhibits. Duke said that COSI was one of the big institutions, so this sale was significant. At the granular level, we are trending up in science shows, entertainment shows, IMAX shows and memberships. We missed the target sales for the store, and we still have 106,000 pairs of eclipse glasses left. However, we are looking at some avenues to sell them next year for the eclipse in 2024. We should be aware that next month, we'll be doing an adjustment for that. Concessions revenue was high and picking up, so we hope to maintain that trend through the end of the year. Facility rentals were a little low, but they usually pick up in the last quarter of the year. We're expecting that we might still hit our target for rentals by the end of the year.  
Anna Marie said that she, Richard and Bentley were interviewing for a Guest Services Supervisor, and once that position is filled, we'll be fully staffed merit-wise.
- b. Jason went over the Eclipse Extravaganza we held on October 14<sup>th</sup>. 29,000 pairs of glasses were sold. Two thirds of those were over the four days leading up to the eclipse, and a third were sold the day before. That comes to roughly \$90,000, which you'll see in next month's revenue report. Attendance for the Extravaganza was 800 people at the Whitmore Library, 275 at the Magna Regional Park, and 800 at the Gateway.

Jason showed a chart that gave sales on an hourly basis during the last four days. He used it as an example of the more data driven decision-making that we're leaning into. Such data will allow us to plan, for example, staffing decisions for events like this. He said he was very impressed with the GET staff, who



worked patiently with the public who had to wait in a long line. The GET staff really stepped up to the challenge.

Ahsan asked why the demand for glasses was lower than expected. Duke said that the media push for the eclipse was much less than it was in 2017. He also said that this time around, major stores were selling eclipses glasses, so everyone had easy access to them. We've got a plan for moving the remainder of the glasses through online sales when the big eclipse happens next year on April 8<sup>th</sup>, especially through the east coast. We're looking at putting together an eBook for people to buy, as well as packaging a smaller print version to package with the glasses to incentivize sales.

Rod asked how much the glasses cost wholesale. Duke replied they cost 24 cents, so we're not out a lot of money. Rod said that the purpose was to facilitate people getting the glasses more than making sales. He then presented some pictures he took during the eclipse.

Jason then went over the craziness during the eclipse, and Duke showed photos of the crowds. He said that at the Gateway, we were happy to partner with County Mayor Jenny Wilson and her book club. We had tables with different activities as well as a bunch of telescopes and binoculars. Anna Swenson mentioned that Northrop Grumman also had a table with volunteers, and she then went over some of the activities that Community Programs had set up. She also showed pictures from concurrent events at Whitmore Library and the Magna Regional Park. She said it was a wonderful event.

Duke showed pictures of the pinhole projector that was developed with our partnership with PUNCH. It has turned out to be extremely popular with other organizations across the U.S. He said it's really been a great partnership for us.

Laurie Stringham said the University of Utah, where she works, let employees watch the eclipse in the football stadium with glasses she bought. She said the community really came together over this special event and that she was glad that the Clark Planetarium played such an important role along the Wasatch Front to celebrate it.

- c. Jayceen showed pictures from the first selenite dig for the successful bidders from the gala. There were six families that won, and there are still another couple of tours to do. She said Duke and his sons were incredibly helpful in showing where to go and where to dig.
  
- d. Duke went over the OSIRIS-REx landing celebration on September 21-24. We had a huge list of partners, including several branches of NASA and the United States Postal Service. He said it was great that we were able to own this event for our community and to help people engage with an active mission. He said that events like this don't happen very often and that we were really happy to capitalize on it. He then went over the event list and showed pictures. He said the different partners we had had people actively engaged at their booths throughout the entire time. It was just amazing. There were thousands of people who came through to participate. There was a watch party Sunday morning where the landing of OSIRIS-REx was streamed live. Laurie went over her experience of watching the landing with her family. She said it was a cool opportunity to be involved and see that.
  
- e. Anna Swenson went over the Planetarium's participation with the FanX comic convention, where we had a room to give science demonstrations. We also had traveling versions of our exhibits, a bunch of marketing information, as well as eclipses glasses for sale. There were tons of people in the room engaging in all the activities. So, along with the OSIRIS-REx celebration, it was a huge weekend where we were able to engage with thousands of people. Jason said that FanX donated the room and has invited us back for next year. Andrea said that FanX was cutting us a check for \$1,500, so that was pleasant surprise.
  
- f. Anna then went over the Community Programs for September: there were 20 programs and a total of 5,352 participants. Upcoming is "Clark After Dark" which will feature a Taylor Swift laser show, some 'Swiftie' science activities and specialty drinks. We're really excited to bring in a pop culture audience and engage them in science. Laurie asked if there was a Facebook event set up for it



and Anna said there was. Anna then went over upcoming Community Programs events.

- g. Jason said that Mayor Wilson was here on the day of the eclipse and gave a speech. We also partnered with her office for her book club. They watched "Eclipse: The Sun Revealed," which sold out very quickly. The attendees got eclipse glasses. He said her office was great to partner with. He also wanted to point out that during these events just how smooth everything went. Community Programs, Marketing, the GET team and the IT staff were all onboard and everything synced extremely well. They were very clean operations, and the staff really stepped up and did an amazing job. Bianca said that she just wanted to reflect her gratitude to all of the staff who helped make these events happen. Ahsan said it's amazing that the Planetarium is able to have such an outsized impact in bringing science to people.

#### V. CLOSING REMARKS

- a. Ahsan adjourned the meeting at 1:38 p.m.