

CLARK PLANETARIUM ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Location: Virtual and In-Person Meeting

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Board attendance:

Rod Parker, Chair
Mike Maxwell, Vice Chair
Joe Bauman
Ken Gritton
Emily Lehnardt
Bob Moore
Priscilla Hansen Neve
Patrick Neville
Shawn O’Kane
Natalie Pinkney, Council member
Michelle Schmitt
Tanasia Valdez

Board, absent:

Madelaine Miller Anderson
Andrea Garavito-Martinez

Others Present:

Kunbi Adekunle
Richard Cox
Maureen Ford
Duke Johnson
Misty Morris
Laurie Stringham, Council member
Anna Marie Tueller
Jayceen Craven Walker

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME at 12:33 p.m. by Rod Parker.

- a. Rod Parker 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 & CURRENT BUSINESS

- a. Rod asked for a vote to approve the June minutes. Bob Moore motioned for approval and Patrick Neville seconded. The June minutes were approved.
- b. The status of the Board Member recruitment process was discussed.

Currently, the new incoming board members are waiting for County approval. Additionally, a future prospective applicant was found from District 5 and will be applying when there is an opening on the Board.



- c. Rod and Duke Johnson shared information on the Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Master Plan.
- i. The Community Needs Assessment will be done [see appendix]* around January 2026 now that stakeholders have been identified. A business model will be created to help the Strategic Master Plan.

III. PLANETARIUM BUSINESS & DISCUSSION

- a. Duke acknowledged that recent trends in decreased sales have continued with other science and museum institutions. He also updated the Board on progress with sponsors and encouraged all Board Members to reach out to individuals, organizations, and businesses they are involved with, to seek out other sponsors.
- b. Kunbi walked the Board through the June and July financials and projections.
 - i. January through July has seen a levelling off instead of a continued drop in sales. Additionally, the July registers were up about 8% year over year.
 - ii. The 2025 Clark Planetarium Summer camps were a success and Education and Community Programs are already planning for 2026 camps.
 - iii. There have been two grants, from those Mighty Penguin wrote, that have been successful: \$10,000 from Enbridge and \$15,000 from Marathon Oil. Also, the iSEE grant was approved.

- c. Richard Cox gave an update on theatre attendance and ticket trends. The previous increase in Planetarium visitors and lower comparable ticket sales continues. There was a discussion over what could be causing this trend; ideas included the current state of the economy and home streaming. It was noted that the high interactivity of the Planetarium exhibits helps to bring guests back to visit. Rod suggested that the consultants currently helping guide the Planetarium forward be brought into this conversation for their insights. Natalie Pinkney asked whether surveys have been conducted on visitor spending habits and choices. Anna Marie Tueller and Duke both pointed out that Clark Planetarium has numerous surveys but that responses have been limited.
- i. Richard shared the new show scheduling (both theatres starting on the hour, every hour), which allows for school groups to more fully participate in multiple shows and activities when visiting the Planetarium. He also pointed out that the new *Laser Maestro Presents Rush* show is doing well.

IV. **COMMUNITY PROGRAMS UPDATE**

- a. Misty Morris presented the Community Programs update for the months of June and July. She discussed how successful the summer camps were and the continued high attendance at the star parties. She also reported that Clark After Dark and the Introductory Telescope class -- both revenue generating adult programs -- are performing well and will continue.

Additional programs are being developed, including an astrophotography class.

V. COPENHAGEN PLANETARIUM TRIP

- a. Mike Maxwell shared photos and his thoughts from his recent trip to the Copenhagen Planetarium. He felt it was a good experience but noted that the visit gave him greater appreciation for Clark Planetarium's free exhibits and the high quality they offer.

VI. CLOSING REMARKS

- a. Rod adjourned the meeting at 1:42 p.m.
-

*APPENDIX, added 9/18/25:

At the September 18th meeting clarification was asked for and discussed as to what the 'will be done' statement means. See the September meeting minutes for clarification.