

CLARK PLANETARIUM ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

**Location: Virtual Meeting
Thursday, January 21, 2021**

Board attendance:

Allison Thompson, Chair
Jordan Hansen, Vice-Chair
Rees Petersen
Kim Wilson
Jim Brass
James Karner
Julia Kamenetzky
Mike Hanson
Ahsan Iqbal
Tanasia Valdez
Olga Siggins
Bianca Lyon
Councilman Dave Alvord
Ulrich Rassner

Board Absent:

Lauren Littlefield
Andrea Garavito-Martinez
Michelle Love-Day

Others Present:

Lindsie Smith
Durand Johnson
Tim Glenn
Nick Hoffman
Richard Cox
Holly Yocom
Robin Chalhoub
Jayceen Craven Walker
Joe Stohel

- I. **STELLAR SHARE** – Olga Siggins, Corporate Counsel for Northrop Grumman Space systems, shared fun facts and interesting pieces about the James Webb telescope which will be launched later this year. Lindsie Smith mentioned the Planetarium is tentatively thinking of using the James Webb Telescope as its theme for the Gala theme this fall.
- II. **CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME** at 12:40 p.m. by Allison Thompson. She noted that a quorum was in attendance.
- III. New member Councilman Dave Alvord introduced himself. He is replacing former Councilwoman Shireen Ghorbani.



- IV. Allison Thompson noted that the meeting was being held virtually and, as such, read a statement on why this decision was made to ensure compliance with the Open Meeting Acts. This statement was also included in the public notice that went out about today's meeting. The statement notes that it was determined that holding a meeting in a physical location would present a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Salt Lake County remains under a state of public health emergency related to the ongoing pandemic. The Board has prepared for and demonstrated the ability to effectively conduct its public meetings electronically, including providing members of the public with the means to observe the Board's meeting virtually and to provide comments electronically.
- V. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** were requested by Allison Thompson. None were brought to the attention of the Board.
- VI. **REVIEW OF MINUTES** – The minutes of the November 2020 Board meeting were submitted for approval. Kim Wilson moved that they adopt those minutes. Rees Petersen seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.
- VII. **BOARD BUSINESS**
- a. Allison Thompson reminded Board members to complete their conflict of interest form and submit it. These forms need to be sent to the County Council and approved by the end of the month.
 - b. Allison Thompson took a moment to thank departed Board member Shireen Ghorbani for her input and contributions during her tenure and for her

continued and ongoing support for the Planetarium. The Board hopes to see her around regularly.

- c. Allison Thompson noted that in November's meeting, it was mentioned that there was a \$90 surplus in Board donations for Duke Johnson's NEOWISE photo that was auctioned at the Gala. The \$90 has been donated back to Clark Planetarium, and the check is in the mail.
- d. Allison Thompson noted that Lindsie Smith has consolidated ideas from both the strategic planning brainstorming session from the November meeting and a special session held with the staff into one Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will be circulated soon. The next step in the planning process: Lindsie has reached out to both the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and the Arizona Science Center, and we hope to set up some meetings with them to glean some ideas and best practices. Please keep an eye out for emails and calendar invites once those meetings are set up. This will help round out the brainstorming process so that we can move on to selecting what the Planetarium is going to be focusing on for a larger strategic plan.
- e. Allison Thompson said two important upcoming events are on February 11th and February 18th. Since the Legislature is not allowing the Planetarium to do a legislative break or host the annual Legislature family night, on February 11th, there will be a virtual Perseverance landing event. Dr. Jeff Hoffman will be doing a presentation. All the legislators will be invited to

join, and it would be nice to have a strong showing of Board members at that event to show unity and support. February 18th is the day of the actual Perseverance landing, and the staff is working on putting together a sustaining member event that includes a “grab and go” lunch and a presentation of the landing in the IMAX Theatre. This is pending review.

- f. Allison Thompson noted that board members are integral to increasing both regular and sustaining memberships. When everything starts opening back up, and events start populating on the calendar, please consider bringing friends and family to these events to have them cultivate a relationship with the Planetarium, including an invitation to them to become sustainers.
- g. Allison Thompson also noted that Board could partner even more closely with the Planetarium staff on increasing sustaining membership numbers. She asked if the Planetarium could come up with a presentation on both regular and sustaining membership numbers. Lindsie Smith said the Planetarium will have a presentation ready for the next Board meeting and will then perhaps continue it moving forward on a quarterly basis.

VIII. PLANETARIUM REPORT

- a. Lindsie Smith discussed the Planetarium’s financials.
 - i. December revenue is down due to the COVID-19 closure.
 - ii. Membership sales were down considerably. Memberships are a hard sell right now with such an unknown future. The Planetarium is adding on months to the length of the memberships of current

members to make up for the closures. The Planetarium has extended so many memberships that it will affect renewal rates in 2021.

iii. Planet Fun was open on a limited basis and brought in about half as much as the previous year. The Planetarium was grateful to have the store, even on a limited basis. To provide families with educational, fun gifts is part of its mission.

iv. Distribution sales came in at over \$8,000. These would be dome shows or exhibits sold to other institutions.

v. Overall, the Planetarium is running about 1.3 million dollars behind where we were in 2019. Lindsay Smith is proud of the great job the team has done in a very difficult year.

vi. The Planetarium still saw a significant shortfall even though a million dollars was cut from the budget midyear. It has been able to offset that yearend shortfall with a lot of reductions in expenditures. The team has been very good at being frugal and at differentiating need-to-have expenditures and want-to-have ones.

vii. The Planetarium does have a fund balance, which is basically like its savings account. For years that run a surplus, money can be put into that account. This year, the Planetarium may be pulling out an amount to offset losses from COVID-19 but is aware of the importance of keeping that fund balance healthy and is being responsible with those funds.

viii. The Planetarium is fortunate that, even though it has been closed to help protect community health, it has still not had to lay off laid off a single full time staff member. Both the County and the Planetarium are committed to taking care of the Planetarium’s staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

ix. Holly Yocom mentioned staff redeployment and how the Planetarium staff has been amazing in stepping up to do projects for other Divisions across the County. She also mentioned all the wonderful work the Planetarium is doing in reaching out to the community online since people can’t be in the facility itself.

x. Lindsie Smith said we want to make sure that the Planetarium is ready to continue to serve and make a comeback at some point.

xi. Ahsan Iqbal asked if the Planetarium staff was considered for early vaccination since they are part of public education. Holly Yocom responded that the state is responsible for setting the priorities and unfortunately, none of the County staff have been moved up higher in the priority list yet (unless they meet one of the state’s priority requirements).

b. Lindsie Smith went over upcoming programs in February, including Science Kit Distribution through County Libraries, partnership with Discovery Gateway to celebrate Space Month, the Mars 2020 Perseverance Landing events, and a virtual event with the Girl Scouts of Utah called “Robots in



Space.” This is on top of the weekly virtual programming the includes Afterschool Code, Clark Classroom Creates, Virtual Mindstorms, Space Jam, and Engineering Challenge.

- c. In March, a tentative reopening is scheduled. If this is realized, the Planetarium plans to open a new show, “Big Astronomy.”
- d. Nick Hoffman and Jayceen Craven Walker went over the 2021 Legislative Session.
 - i. Jayceen Craven Walker noted that the Planetarium is a member of the iSEE collective, a group of ten organizations that provide outreach education and inhouse education throughout the state. iSEE members are required to visit every district in the state over a three-year period. The Planetarium is one of the few that visits every district every year.
 - ii. As a member of iSEE, the Planetarium presents before the legislature every year. This year the presentation is on Thursday, January 28th, sometime after 8:00 a.m. Because of the COVID-19 situation, the consortium is only allowed ten people, total, in the room for the presentation.
 - iii. Lindsie Smith noted that all the canceled student experiences due to COVID-19 were replaced last year by virtual experiences. Kudos to the education team for making this happen.

iv. Jayceen Craven Walker gave the following agenda to the Board

members:

- i. Find your legislators, both House and Senate.
- ii. Email your legislators using a template that Jayceen Craven Walker will provide. There is no need to ask them for anything; just thank them for their past and current support. The template will also include the Perseverance virtual event on February 18th. The Planetarium will also be dropping off Milky Way bars and reminders for the Perseverance event to the Sergeant at Arms.
- iii. Jayceen Craven Walker will take care of getting a sponsor in both the House and the Senate.
- iv. If any of the Board members would like to attend the iSEE presentation on February 28th, Jayceen Craven Walker will provide the information on how to do so with the email template.
- v. Nick Hoffman presented an interactive map that shows student experiences by House district and Senate district. If you click on any of the visits, it will show you the number of students that were worked with and which schools that were worked with. The Planetarium wants to make sure that all the

Legislators are aware of the services offered to their constituents.

- vi. Jayceen Craven Walker stressed that it is incredibly important that in the re: line in the email Board members put “From your constituent.”
- vii. Jayceen also noted that just before the session on January 28th, please email the Legislators again and let them know that the Planetarium/iSEE would like to enlist the Legislator’s support for the Planetarium’s request to move Ogden Nature Center to line item status and to reinstate the \$200,000 that was cut during the special session last year.
- viii. Holly Yocom added that it will also be brought to the attention of the Salt Lake County Council, and they will be asked for their support on the Hill as well. If they approve it, Justin on the Mayor’s side will work closely with Jayceen. There is a lot of support for the work that the Planetarium is doing.
- ix. Jayceen Craven Walker mentioned that we are being supported by the Utah Board of Education for the two requests.
- x. Lindsie Smith noted that the Planetarium receives almost a million dollars a year from the State Legislature for these

education programs, and we match it one to one, dollar for dollar.

- xi. Lindsie Smith also noted that Clark Planetarium does not engage in lobbying but rather in advocacy activities meant to educate the Legislature and enlist support for its programs.
- xii. Allison Thompson emphasized that sending a couple of emails to Legislators will go a long way to supporting and maintaining their relationship with the Planetarium that we've cultivated over the last five or six years.
- xiii. Jayceen Craven Walker pointed out that the Clark Planetarium sends out letters to Legislators every time it makes an outreach presentation in their district, inviting them to join us and watch the presentation. Board members, she said, are also invited to attend presentations that are held in their district so that they can see what the Planetarium is doing in the classrooms and the impact it has on students and schoolteachers in the state.

IX. CLOSING REMARKS – Robin Chalhoub shared with the Board the “Rock Star” photos of the redeployed Planetarium staff building shelves for the Q & I center. They put together over 100 of the 146 shelving units that needed to be built. Since the next Board meeting currently scheduled conflicts with the Perseverance Landing, Allison Thompson



noted that the time of the March meeting is still to be determined since the regular time currently conflicts with the February 18th Perseverance event.

PERSEVERANCE