

CLARK PLANETARIUM ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Location: Virtual Meeting

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Board attendance:

Allison Thompson, Chair
Jordan Hansen, Vice-Chair
Jim Brass
Andrea Garavito-Martinez
Julia Kamenetzky
Ulrich Rassner
Kim Wilson
Bianca Lyon

Board Absent:

Mike Hanson
Ahsan Iqbal
Jim Karner

Lauren Littlefield
Michelle Love-Day
Rees Petersen
Olga Siggins
Tanasia Valdez

Others Present:

Duke Johnson
Tim Glenn
Stephanie McGinnis
Joe Stohel
Tracey Sjostrom
Steve Van Maren
Holly Yocom

- I. **STELLAR SHARE** – Board Member Andrea Garavito-Martinez gave a presentation on making science relatable, accessible, and engaging. As an example, she profiled Mary W. Jackson Elementary School in Rose Park. Joining her for the presentation was the school’s principal, Tracy Sjostrom. Originally named Andrew Jackson Elementary School, the community and the school board decided three years ago to rename the school after Mary W. Jackson, one of the first black, female NASA engineers. In addition, the school’s mascot was changed from the Cougars to the Rockets. Since the renaming, students have been excited about Mary W. Jackson as a role model. With a student body of 90% minority students, the goal of the school is to make the students feel safe





and included every single day. Mary W. Jackson Elementary School strives to make science relatable, accessible, and engaging for all its students.

II. **CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME** at 12:59 p.m. by Allison Thompson. She noted that a quorum was not in attendance so the Board would not be conducting any official business.

III. Allison Thompson stated that the meeting is 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.

IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** were requested by Allison Thompson. None were brought to the attention of the Board.

V. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

- a. Approval of the minutes of the April 2021 Board meeting was delayed until next month due to the lack of a quorum in attendance.
- b. Allison Thompson welcomed Laurie Stringham. The Board looks forward to introducing her when she can attend.
- c. Allison Thompson noted that Board leadership elections were coming up in July. Submission of nominations for Board Chair and Vice Chair are requested for June.

VI. **CURRENT BUSINESS**

- a. Allison Thomson gave an update on the Planetarium's strategic planning effort that the Board has been involved with. She gave an overview

presentation that Planetarium Director Lindsie Smith had prepared earlier.

It included Clark Planetarium's new Vision Statement. Tim Glenn said that

the Planetarium is excited to use the new Vision Statement as a lens, both

to look at what the Planetarium is doing now and to help guide the

organization forward. Allison Thompson mentioned that it is hoped that the

Board can be incorporated into the committees that will soon be formed to

focus on the strategic plan's pillars. She said that the Planetarium hopes to

expand the Board Member experience by playing on the members'

strengths. This will hopefully make their efforts more rewarding and have

some impact.

- b. Allison Thompson noted that the Board plans to meet in person in June.

Virtual attendance will also be an option through the end of summer.

VII. PLANETARIUM REPORT

- a. Duke Johnson discussed the Planetarium's financials.

- i. Duke Johnson said that it is nice to be open again. Already, the Planetarium is seeing people coming back. Show attendance has been very strong. The performance of the store is just amazing, going way over projections.

- ii. In other earned income, there was a show distribution sale and a sale of four exhibits to Robeson Planetarium in North Carolina. Building rentals are still suspended, and concessions will continue to remain closed.

- iii. The Planetarium was able to reopen Laser Shows, which also contributed the uptick in revenue.
- iv. Membership numbers are looking better.
- v. The Planetarium took in \$17,000 through Utah Space Grant. This will help it get money to serve students throughout the State, as well as to serve the teachers through some of its kit programs. The Planetarium has already engaged many thousands of students through these programs.

VIII. EXPANSION OVERVIEW

- a. Salt Lake County facilities no longer require face coverings and social distancing for fully vaccinated individuals. However, not everyone is vaccine eligible, including youth and people with certain health conditions. Clark Planetariums is committed to providing a welcoming, but still safe, environment for its guests.
- b. Planetarium staff have been working to bring exhibits that are still closed back online, except for aerosolized water exhibits.
- c. It has been found that wayfinding, used during the pandemic, has improved the guest experience. This will continue. Stanchions, distancing signage, and one-way paths have been removed.
- d. The Planetarium will continue to track guest experiences through ticketing. It has been noted that guests place a greater value on their visit experience if they are issued a ticket. Guests are now encouraged to reserve their

tickets online, but walkups will also be issued tickets. The Planetarium wants to make sure people are not turned away.

- e. Ulrich Rassner asked about the costs of issuing tickets. Tim Glenn replied that, with the Galaxy ticketing software already in place to issue show tickets, the cost of issuing tickets is minimal. Also, it has been observed that guests take better care of the space when they use a ticket. Tickets help formalize the process of admission, and, in coordination with the Greeter at the Planetarium's entrance, they help visitors get the best overall experience during their visit.
- f. Two shows will premiere this summer in the Dome and IMAX theaters. 'Big Astronomy' opens in the Dome on Memorial Day weekend. 'Antarctica' opens in the IMAX on June 5th. A member preview for 'Antarctica' is scheduled for June 3rd.
- g. We are currently scheduling summer field trips and groups and looking at fall field trips.
- h. The Planetarium is thrilled to be bringing on new staff. It is actively looking at recruiting Guest Experience Team members but acknowledges that it is a tough job market. Plus, the County in general is also hiring many people, narrowing the pool even further. The ability to recruit, hire, and train staff will have the most significant impact on the Planetarium's timeline of expansion of services.

- i. Ulrich Rassner wondered if opening concessions so soon is the right thing to do. Since people are only using an honor system to confirm their vaccinations, and since some patrons, such as children, are unable to get vaccinations, the risks still seem high. Tim Glenn responded that it is important to have the correct messaging. With concessions open, people should be aware of the risks at the outset and not be caught off guard. Luckily, the IMAX theater is a very large space and people can gather in their own groups away from others. Tim Glenn noted that the Planetarium wants to make sure that all its services are available to those that need them. Jordan Hansen said that all businesses in Utah are feeling the same concerns and pressures. Since it is an honor system, people will have to make their own decisions on how they approach different services. It is a 'rock and a hard place' for businesses, and, at the moment, it is still a wait and see scenario. Allison Thomson agreed that messaging is key, making sure that visitors are aware of the risks involved. Tim Glenn said that so far, almost all visitors are continuing to wear masks. Face coverings are still very much welcomed and encouraged. Holly Yocum said that, depending on conditions, the County Health Department feels safe about opening concessions. However, she will circle back with them about it. It is a valid concern and is something that will be investigated.



- j. The Planetarium's hours are near pre-pandemic levels. As staffing increases, the Planetarium plans to add late night laser shows and expand hours further.

IX. OVERVIEW AND UPDATE ON COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- a. Stephanie McGinnis, manager of Community Programs for the Planetarium, noted that Community Programs has been entirely virtual for some time. However, it has still maintained a weekly presence in the community, Mondays through Thursdays. Community Services has been reaching out to the community through Facebook with Engineering Challenges and Clark Classroom Creates videos. They have also been doing live virtual programming with Afterschool Code and Virtual Mindstorms.
- b. Community Programs has been working with County Libraries to distribute 'Take and Make' kits, which include Planispheres, UV Bracelets, Atmosphere Adventure, and Extremophile DNA. Through these programs, Community Services and County libraries were able to distribute approximately 10,000 kits out into the communities.
- c. Community Services has also been providing content for 'The Place.' This will continue through the end of the year.
- d. This summer, Community Services will present a summer lectures series themed around 'The Next Generation of Astronauts,' with three lectures planned so far.



- e. Two scientists involved with the 'Dinosaurs in Antarctica' film will give a lecture at a public screening of the film in September. Professional opportunities for teachers on the film will be held the next day.
 - f. Community Services will maintain a presence at various summer festivals, such as VentureOut! and Movies at the Gateway.
 - g. Community Programs is looking to get back into in-person, interactive events.
 - h. Long-term goals are actively being discussed.
- X. **CLOSING REMARKS** – Allison Thompson announced that the next Board meeting is scheduled in-person for June 17, 2021. Attending virtually will be available as well. She then declared the meeting adjourned.