



**Lowell Observatory Advisory Board
Meeting of the Executive Committee**

Friday, September 25, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

I. Introduction and Virtual Meeting Etiquette

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Beckage. Present via ZOOM were Executive Committee Members: Leo Crowley, Donna Weistrop, Kay Corbin, Tom Ensign, John Giovale, Joseph Marcus, Pam Ross (Secretary) and David Chase. Present via telephone were James McCarthy and Drew Barringer. Also present via ZOOM: Sole Trustee Lowell Putnam, Lisa Actor (Deputy Director for Development – DDD), Stephen Riggs (Development Manager), Anne LaBruzzo (Deputy Director for Administration - DDA), Michael West (Deputy Director for Science - DDS), Samantha Gorney (Deputy Director for Outreach), Danielle Adams (Deputy Director for Marketing) and Director Jeffrey Hall (ex-officio). Several other Advisory Board members attended as guests. Mattie Harrington took minutes.

II. Recap of Executive Committee (EC) Activity in June and Election of Officers

During the Advisory Board meetings in June 2020, all EC members accepted nominations to serve the next term. The Advisory Board subsequently elected all EC nominees for the term running June 2020 to June 2021.

Several other changes were reviewed:

- Dennis Hollars became chair of the Technology Committee, replacing John Giovale who remains a member of the EC.
- David Price became chair of the Membership Committee, replacing Donna Weistrop who has been elected chair of the Lowell Observatory Foundation (LOF).
- David Connell retired from the LOF and will continue to serve on the EC.
- A new Diversity Statement was proposed by the Membership Committee and approved by the full Advisory Board for inclusion in the Bylaws.

As the Bylaws require, an election of EC officers was held. The committee voted to elect Michael Beckage as Chair of the Executive Committee, and Pamela Ross as Secretary.

III. Millennium Fund

Michael Beckage reported the balance of the Millennium Fund was \$2,079,904 at the end of August 2020. The total disbursements in 2019 totaled \$77,576. The Director has requested two new disbursements. The first totaling \$30,000 to cover consultant costs for Section 17 legislative work. The second request for \$25,000 is for increased campus security during the COVID-19 shutdown. Both requests were discussed and approved by committee vote.

IV. Trustee's Comments

Trustee Lowell Putnam reported that funds from the line of credit were put into the Trust as the trust is recovering in the uncertain market. The current plan is to pay down the line of credit in 2021. Putnam is planning a meeting of the investment committee in January to get strategic perspective from BNY Mellon and Vigilant Capital. The Trustee also reported that the Section 17 Bill is still pending.

V. Director's Report

Jeff Hall gave an overview of the current finances for the Observatory. The line of credit is \$8.1M, \$3.5M of which was paid to the trust, with \$4.6M remaining. Funds coming in from partner institutions will help as the shutdown has caused a reduction in cashflow from public programs. The philosophy regarding Phase 2 reopening is very conservative with hopes to move into Phase 2 in the spring of 2021, and possibly Phase 3 by next summer. The ORBITS pre-school curriculum program is a potential new source of revenue.

The planned October groundbreaking for the Astronomy Discovery Center (ADC) has been delayed to late next spring due to permitting delays with the City of Flagstaff.

The Section 17 bill has stalled in Congress over the removal of the timber rights.

Director Hall gave a brief overview of the impacts to astronomy of planned satellite constellations. SpaceX is working on a "dark" design with reduced impact. There is a need for international policy by the United Nations. More information to follow as this issue develops.

VI. MARS Project

Tom Ensign gave a brief overview of the Marketing and Revenue Strategy team (formerly the Marketing Steering Team). Their initial purpose was to find and hire a Deputy Director for Marketing and Communications (Danielle Adams). The group is now focused on generating revenue through LOCKs/ORBITS projects and branding. The team consists of co-chairs Tom Ensign, Stephen Brown, DDMC Danielle Adams, and new members Kyle and Rachel Dilger. Anyone with interest is welcome to join.

VII. Marketing and Communications

Danielle Adams reported that Observatory video streaming had a big spike in July. After going to online streaming, participation has increased to 593,677 viewers in partnership with Orpheum Virtual Kids Camp, Flagstaff Star Party and Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra (playing from the GODO). The new website now in development should take about 6 to 8 months to complete. A new Shopify system for the gift shop will save the Observatory \$2K per year. Orbits 2020 Q4 will be a primary focus. It will include a new business plan, video program, website development, and a Google AdWords grant.

VIII. Development

Lisa Actor reported that while new memberships are down approximately 40% due to the COVID-19 closure, the annual fund is up approximately 97%.

The Slipher Society, which supports scientific research, was launched in June 2020, and has raised \$55,125 to date and provided three grants for research or equipment in the amount of \$9,015. Lowell staff Gerard van Belle, Kyler Kuehn, and Phil Massey were grant recipients.

The Percival Lowell Society (PLS) now has 78 members with 7 new members since October of 2019. The Lowell Observatory Foundation sponsored multiple webinars to bring members and prospective members information on the Observatory and planned giving opportunities.

The ADC has a campaign total of \$34M. There are \$27.19M in gifts to date with \$370K in gifts pending for a total of \$27.56M.

\$6M has been raised so far in 2020, \$2.1M of which is for the LOF. The total raised for the Comprehensive Campaign since July 1, 2016 is \$45.6M

IX. Putnam Collection Center (PCC)

Joe Marcus reported that David Eicher has joined the PCC Committee along with Stephen Levine and Kevin Schindler ex officio. He also reported a fundraising campaign in progress to purchase a scanner for the PCC. With the help of dedicated volunteers John and Linda Spahn this past summer, the 16 Lampland radiometry logbooks from 1924-1943 have been inventoried and indexed in preparation for scanning and tabulation for eventual placement on the web for researchers. The unpublished Venus radiometry may be particularly valuable scientifically.

Lauren Amundson received a \$1300 grant from the Arizona Historical Records Advisory Board to digitize drawings made by Ralph Nye. Under a previous AHRAB grant, her intern Abbey Buckham, working with Stephen Levine, is just finishing a project -- interrupted by the COVID shutdown -- to inventory and rehouse glass plates in preparation for digitization. Lauren and staff have digitized the microfilm collection, which includes the early (1894-1916) correspondence of Percival Lowell, the Slipshers, Lampland, Leonard, Douglas, and many

others. These are now available as PDFs. Lauren also reports that the Slipher brothers exhibit is now available online. Regarding the online Slipher-Hubble correspondence, Lauren and Kevin have a writeup that has been submitted to the American Institute of Physics Newsletter.

X. Lowell Observatory Foundation

Dr. Donna Weistrop, chairperson, announced the new LOF trustees Teri Kelley and George Putnam III. The continuing Trustees are Dr. Weistrop, John Radway, David Chase, Ginger Giovale, Stephen Brown, John Menke and Lowell Putnam. Weistrop mentioned that we now have five LOF Trustees who are not Advisory Board members and four who are. It has been a goal for the Foundation to have a majority of the Trustees not be Advisory Board members. We have met that goal.

Almost all of Don Trantow's estate assets have been transferred to the Foundation. We are all grateful for Don's love for Lowell Observatory and his generosity in passing.

The Foundation sponsored planned giving webinars in September. Total endowments April 2020 through August 2020 grew from \$7M to \$8.5M. Recent gifts totaled \$872,800.

XI. Future Meeting Calendar, Other Business

The Trustee is planning a series of virtual meetings in mid to late January. The Investment Committee and Advisory Board will meet during the week of January 25th.

The meeting was adjourned.