

Subject:Update from Lowell - November 11, 2020
Date:Wed, 11 Nov 2020 10:48:37 -0700
From:Jeffrey Hall <jch@lowell.edu>

Good morning everyone,

I hope everyone is enjoying a pleasant Veterans' Day holiday. I grew up having an ex-Navy dad and enjoy working with our colleagues at the US Naval Observatory and the Naval Research Laboratory. It's good to take a moment to remember all who have served and continue to serve the country in all branches of the services.

General notes

- As a reminder, we have created a page on our website where you can view and download various information regarding Section 17 and our visitor center project. The URL is <http://www.lowell.edu/local-updates>. Within a few days, we're going to start archiving all of these bi-weekly updates on that page as well, in case you want to refer to any of them later.
- We've added about 15 new recipients since the October 28 update. Further recipients are welcome.

Section 17

- As noted in the October 28 update, Nexxus Consulting, which works with City and County on multiple matters, is assisting us with the bill. The contacts there are Bob Holmes (bholmes@nexxusconsulting.com) and Ana Ma (ama@nexxusconsulting.com). They welcome any and all questions or comments regarding the Section 17 bill S. 242, available at the link above.
- Bob informed me earlier this week that a possible mark-up on S. 242 scheduled for next week will *not* happen due to post-election turbulence. I find this unsurprising. The mark-up may happen in December, but in any case, comments about the bill can be directed at any time to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (<http://energy.senate.gov> and contact link on that page) .

Astronomy Discovery Center

- No change from two weeks ago. We continue to work on permits and content planning.

Lowell operational status

- As you no doubt know, Covid numbers in Arizona and in our community are spiking rapidly, and now that the wave has been underway for a few weeks, hospitalizations have also begun this week to rise steeply. The summer wave

lasted three months almost to the day from start of steep rise to end of steep decline; I'm therefore planning for least four for the current wave, under the assumption it will be lengthened by holiday travel and mingling and general virus fatigue. Lowell will remain in Phase 1 programming while this plays out, meaning 3-6 groups of 10 or fewer per evening for distanced outdoor viewing when weather permits. Lowell-related traffic on Santa Fe and nearby streets should remain light.

- The most recent reports from Southwest Protective Services indicate general tranquility at the Mars Hill overlook. Mostly it has been occasionally telling folks to turn music down or not to park partially in the travel lanes. We will be reducing our 7 nights/week presence after this week to 2-3 nights/week. I'll keep you posted on how things seem after that.

If the current Covid wave indeed lasts four months, it will then be March, with the days lengthening rapidly and an ever-fickle Flagstaff spring on the way...and perhaps a vaccine in the offing. Maybe at that point the world will be brighter in multiple ways. I hope everyone is hanging in there and staying well.

Best regards,

Jeff Hall
Director
Lowell Observatory