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**Subject:**Update from Lowell - November 25, 2020

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**From:**Jeffrey Hall <[jch@lowell.edu](mailto:jch@lowell.edu)>

Hi everyone,

Just a short update for you before the Thanksgiving holidays.

### **Section 17**

- Bob Holmes at Nexxus Consulting has told me that S.242 will only be marked up in December if a committee meeting can be posted by December 4. Time may now be running too short to get that meeting organized; everyone has been consumed by post-election turbulence and, of course, now by the transition of administrations. Bob will keep me posted, and I will pass any news on.
- In the meantime, Bob is working to insert greater clarity on the definition of "observatory purposes" in the bill, as well as on establishing the parameters under which any road access on Section 17 would be done (i.e., collaboratively between Lowell, City, and community). This is in response to some thoughtful feedback from F3. Once this revised wording is developed, we will post it on the <http://www.lowell.edu/local-updates> page and notify everyone.

### **Astronomy Discovery Center**

- No change from two weeks ago.

### **Lowell operational status**

- We have reduced our security presence at the Mars Hill overlook to 5-11 PM Thursday-Saturday only. I've seen only one non-trivial incident in the reports from the past two weeks - apparently four gentlemen got into a fight, undoubtedly about something important. It was between them, not directed at anyone else, and they were gone by the time FPD arrived. Otherwise, I personally haven't seen too much craziness down there.
- Since August, our "premium access" Phase 1 programs have been starting at 6:30 PM for small-group telescope viewing. In December, we're adding a few programs between 4:00 PM and 6:30 PM for equally small groups of 10 or fewer, with no more than two on site at a time, at a much lower price point (\$15/person). This is to take advantage of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction taking place in December - look for the two planets to get incredibly close to one another in the SW sky after sunset, reaching closest approach right on the solstice. You can't miss them! With telescopes, you can actually see them in the day, so we're extending our hours just a bit to let more people enjoy the sight. The impact on neighborhood traffic should be negligible, as it will involve a few extra cars per day at most.

I wish everyone a very happy and restful Thanksgiving, with whomever it's prudent to have in one place at one time!

Best regards,

Jeff Hall  
Director  
Lowell Observatory