



**Lowell Observatory Advisory Board
Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC)
Sunday 29 January 2023 at 2:00 p.m.**

I. Welcome, Millennium Fund, and Minutes:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Beckage. Present were Executive Committee Members: Brooke Miner, Drew Barringer, David Chase, David Connell, Kay Corbin, Leo Crowley, Tom Ensign, John Giovale, Joseph Marcus, James McCarthy, Palmer Nackard, Donna Weistrop, Martin deWet, and Stephen Brown and Pamela Ross (Secretary). Others present were: Sole Trustee Lowell Putnam, Erica Broman (Trustee Designate), Lisa Actor (Chief Philanthropy Officer), Amanda Bosh (Chief Operations Officer), Christoph Keller (Director of Science), Danielle Adams (Chief Marketing and Revenue Officer), Jeffrey Hall (Executive Director), Kyler Kuehn (Director of Technology), Anne LaBruzzo (Chief Financial Officer), Samantha Gorney (ADC Interpretive Content Manager), Stephen Levine (Director of Education), Stephen Riggs (Sr. Philanthropy Manager), Hannah Rounds (Corporate and Foundation Philanthropy Manager, and Sherry Shaffer (Philanthropy Manager). Guests included George Jacoby, Michael Cordova, Pat Quinn, Clark Slipher, Dick Baker, Kris Walsh and Kent Colbath. Mattie Harrington and Pamela Ross recorded meeting minutes.

Millennium Fund: The total allowable distribution of \$81,626 from the Millennium Fund in 2022 was approved for distribution. The available funds for distribution in 2023 will be approximately \$80,000. A new request was submitted for \$40,000 to support the Philanthropy team members' travel and donor cultivation and solicitation to lead us toward completing the ADC campaign. The Claire and John Radway Foundation previously underwrote the capital campaign, but complications have prevented them from supporting at the pledged amount for 2023. The motion to approve this funding was approved.

Minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on 23 September 2022 were approved as corrected.

II. Trustee's Remarks:

Lowell Putnam, Sole Trustee, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He gave an overview of the Astronomy Discovery Center and stressed the need to keep that in mind along with the operational goals currently being planned. Lisa Actor announced an additional \$2.5-million-dollar commitment from an existing donor, toward the completion of the ADC.

III. **Preparing for the ADC Era:**

A New Era, A New Approach. The ADC will be less weather dependent than the current tours available at the observatory. We will need to be prepared for the opening of the ADC and the press leading up to the opening needs to be big. Scheduled opening for the ADC is October 2024.

Samantha Gorney gave an overview of what will be inside the ADC when ready to open. She showed the exhibits and the various levels and sections: Kids Zone, Astronomy Gallery, Dark Sky Gallery, and Open Sky Planetarium. Each section will have interactive exhibits and/or programs. The Dark Sky Planetarium will be located at the top of the ADC with the sky as the focal point.

Stephen Levine – is now the Director of Education, along with his other duties. In preparation for the opening of the ADC, there will be a need to address current staff strengths and abilities. The ADC programs will require more than just a ‘presenter’, they will need a performer who is able to convey information on a scale commensurate with the surroundings. Currently every staff member knows something about everything at Lowell Observatory. In the future we may require staff to specialize in certain skills to really convey the grandeur that is the ADC. Stephen is going to take a look at the current staff and others to place people in positions highlighting their strengths for the best public programs.

The admission price for the ADC will increase gradually from \$29.00 to \$49.00. The prices for other tours will have to be raised as well after the ADC is open.

Danielle Adams gave a preview of the Marketing, promotion, and business model for the ADC. She described the marketing strategy as a balancing act. We must create excitement for the ADC without cannibalizing the 2023 – 2024 visitation before it opens. We must position the ADC as a science/discovery center able to be visited during adverse weather conditions, but one that is part of the world-famous Lowell Observatory. And finally, we must win a majority of new guests every day unlike many city-based science centers.

The ADC promotion tactics must generate a strong media buzz by building relationships with science writers locally, regionally, and nationally. We need to promote visitor awareness and planning through travel guides, social media, video streams, podcast, email marketing and Google ads. And, finally, we will need to focus on attracting visitors using billboards, airport signage, online travel agencies, Google ads, social media/video ads, and visitor maps.

The approximate timeline for ADC opening events is as follows:

September 2024	Donors and Member preview
October 2024	Soft opening
November 2024	Grand Opening

Danielle and Jeff Hall discussed the business model and sustainability projections, which will be presented in more detail during the June Board meeting.

IV. Strategic Plan Update:

Executive Director Jeff Hall gave an overview of the Strategic Planning process for the Observatory. According to Hall the plan will be ready to present at the June Advisory Board meeting. Jeff and Amanda Bosh are looking for a facilitator to help lead planning sessions, possibly starting in March. The plan is to have a first draft done at the beginning of May, and the final plan ready for presentation at the June Advisory Board meeting. Discussions with staff regarding the succession of the Executive Director are also planned.

V. Succession Planning Update:

Lisa Actor, Chief Philanthropy Officer, has stated that her retirement date will be June 30, 2024.

Jeff Hall, Executive Director, has stated that his retirement date will be March 29, 2025.

There are currently five proposals from search firms to find candidates for these positions. Jeff Hall will create a plan to present at the June Advisory Board meeting regarding his succession.

VI. Other Business, Future Meetings:

Next Executive Committee meeting will be on 9 March 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

VII. Adjourn