

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, July 15, 2020, Online Meeting

In attendance:

David Abbou
Guest: Jim Browder
Scott Busby
Bart & Linda Billard
Don Clark

Glenn Faini
Jerry Hubbell
Guest: Don Macholz
Rolando Pancotti
Tim PLunkett

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. Nine members and two guests were present. We started with a conversation about contributions needed for the next *StarGazer* newsletter. Linda said what she had was a little sparse and she could use some more in the next 10 days. Glenn Faini mentioned comet NEOWISE and suggested putting together comments from members who had seen it. Scott Busby said he saw it about 10 degrees above the horizon in the back of his house. It faced in the right direction for the comet in the evening. Scott could only get the coma with the camera he was using. David Abbou thought the idea was good, saying he really liked the similar newsletter article on the 2017 solar eclipse experiences of club members.

Old Business

- Treasurer's Report—Glenn F. gave the report from Matt Scott. The only change was a payment of \$62.50 for Astronomical League dues on behalf of the members who opted to join or renew this year. The number of paid memberships remained at 25, and the total number of members remained at 29.
- Vice President's Event Report—Glenn F. said the July star party at Belmont remained on for Saturday after the meeting and then both star parties (at Belmont and Caledon) were planned for the following week. Scott said he was willing to have people go to Belmont if they judge it good enough—maybe they could see the comet. Glenn F. concluded he would not need to do a go/no go call for the public because we were limited to members only. He also said the Library was still closed through August.
- Secretary's report—Bart Billard reported completing and posting the June minutes.
- *StarGazer* Report—Glenn F. proposed he would follow through on the discussion at the beginning of the meeting by soliciting notes and/or images from members who see the comet.
- MSRO Status—Jerry Hubbell said use of MSRO was off and on lately because of the weather. He mentioned Shannon Morgan had been doing some support work, including getting calibration frames, updating the horizon profile for the Station 1 telescope, and developing scripts for cooling down the cameras more gradually. Jerry said the next Board of Directors meeting on August 14 would mark the first anniversary of incorporation as a nonprofit 501(c) 3 corporation. It would probably be a virtual meeting. He said they were still working on automating the Station 3 roof for remote operation.
- Communications Committee report—Don Clark said he had found a problem with CloudFlare, which sits "in front" of the club website to add some security. He thought it might be he needed to renew the service, but he had it turned off for now. Glenn F. said Groups.io still seemed fine. He noted that non-members could see the discussion traffic but could not post. He suggested to Jim Browder that he try that. Jim said he had previously gotten posts but could check again.
- Club Equipment Inventory—Scott said the club equipment loans were still suspended. He mentioned there had been a telescope donation offer, and he had indicated the club was not currently looking for donations. Scott did tell us donations might be acceptable for apertures of 6 inches or more.

New Business

- Annual Club Picnic—Glenn F. said he was not sure about holding a picnic this August and asked our thoughts. Jerry suggested having a Zoom meeting on August 19, saying he had talked with Tom Field about the possibility of doing his presentation on the third Wednesday. Linda asked for

a title to post on the club website. Glenn F. said he would update the schedule he had included in the agenda to show our August meeting on the third Wednesday instead of an August club picnic.

- Member Question About Night Access Agreements—Scott talked about Shenandoah Park arrangements, saying the Park Service had no objections to using the Skyline Drive scenic turnouts for observing. He also offered Belmont for members who could just show up. Dropping by to see the comet was welcome, for example. David said he hoped the third time would be a charm for his own attempts to see the comet. Jerry shared an image Myron had made recently. Then he showed a couple more, with one from the night before the meeting and another of images taken from Shenandoah Park and stacked. David and Glenn F. recalled taking images of comet Hale-Bopp and having to use film cameras.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, August 19, 2020. It is currently planned as an online Zoom meeting.