

BVS Astronomy Club

Observatory Committee

Meeting Minutes, 1-7-22

Overview

The Zoom meeting conveyed at 1000. The meeting roughly followed the Agenda (attached) arrived at via an e-mail exchange. Initially Claude Plymate directed the meeting until Bill Norton agreed to serve as Committee Chairperson after which he directed the proceedings. The meeting adjourned after roughly 90 minutes.

[BVS Obs Committee Agenda_revA.docx](#)

Proposed Committee Mission Statement

The Observatory Committee of the Bear Valley Springs Astronomy Club shall work to have a functional Observatory for the Club within Bear Valley Springs by November 2022 (primary objective) or July 2023 (secondary objective).

Purposed Objectives for the Observatory

The Observatory is to house, at a minimum, the 12-inch Meade LX600 telescope being lent to the Club and 6-9 observers. It is to be configured for ease of observation to include some manner of retractable roofing. It is to have the potential for inclusion of instruments/devices supporting scientific data collection. The Observatory will facilitate the public outreach and educational objectives of the Club by allowing non-members to conduct educational/scientific tasks using the telescope.

Proposed Users of the Observatory (prioritized)

1. Club Members
2. Students (BVS students priority)
3. Cub Scouts (BVS scouts priority)
4. Others in the Tehachapi area

Possible Phased Construction/Growth of the Observatory

- A. Concrete pad permitted outdoor Star Parties with greater ease and safety
- B. Erection of the building
- C. Addition of amenities such as generator, security cameras, remote operation, heater, etc.
- D. Addition of equipment/features supporting scientific endeavors such as power grid connection, internet connectivity, camera, monitor, laptop, software

These are to be revisited as the project comes into greater focus.

Location Selection (see attached spreadsheet)

[BVSAC Observatory.xlsx](#)

Building Type/Materials Selection (see attached spreadsheet)

Other Discussion

- Interim Building – This would be inexpensive and easily erected to house the Meade telescope at temporary locations. The majority reaction was that this did not appear to be essential, would add to the fundraising burden, and dilute the efforts of the Committee.
- Star Party Site – This would improve public outreach via ease of movement and safety. One possibility is a concrete pad at the RC Airfield or at least grading/rolling the soil to be more level and even. This suggested two sites being prepared for the Club activities, the other being the Observatory which would notionally attract fewer one-time/first-time/lookieloo visitors. A pad could perhaps be the first phase in the Observatory construction. The majority reaction was that this did not appear to be essential, would add to the fundraising burden, and dilute the efforts of the Committee. However, it was not rejected outright and will be raised again as the Observatory project comes into greater focus and following the meeting with Joe Horswell.
- The pluses and minuses of a Dome Roof was discussed. It is more difficult to operate and access, and would likely need to be painted per CSD direction (but so would the entire building). Cost may be the same but may be more effort to obtain and transport, and may require more upkeep. It speaks “Observatory” and so is good advertisement for the Club. The sense of the Committee was that this may not be the ideal choice.
- Public Outreach as a function of the Committee was discussed. This appeared more a Club function following completion of the Committee’s task of realizing the Observatory.

Fundraising

- This should come later after the target amount is determined. The sources in the Agenda remain valid.
- It was suggested that the Grant be for upgrade of the Observatory with scientific instruments (see Possible Phased Construction/Growth above) and this is to support education for which there are more potential sources of grants.

ACTION – John O’Bryan will query the IRS about the potential for making the Club a tax-exempt organization for the purpose of taking in donations directly versus via the BVS Association.

Committee Member Roles Volunteers

It was decided that this will await more clarity on required activities and tasks. Possibilities are Fund Raising, Cost Estimating

Next Actions

- Prior to the next meeting the Committee Members give feedback on the proposed Mission Statement, Objectives, and Users provided above, the Joe Horswell discussion points below, and the spreadsheet attached.
- A meeting with Joe Horswell will be arranged at the earliest opportunity and guided by the *proposed* discussion points below:
 - A. Outline goal
 - B. Discuss the three possible sites.

- a. Do any of these have show-stoppers?
- b. Will the Board support any of these, one above others?
- c. Do you see other potential sites? Perhaps the Equestrian Center?
- C. How do you see our chances of obtaining matching funds from the Association? We see the Association as taking in donations as a tax-exempt organization (the Club is not). Does this seem feasible?
- D. Suggestion of improved Star Party site (pad). Ideas on best approach?
- E. Who is our best liaison during planning? You?
- F. When do you believe we should approach the Board about the project?
- G. Other advice for us?

Next Meeting

It was agreed to plan weekly meetings, Fridays at 1000, with Zoom as the nominal format. The target will be 1 hour duration. E-mail/text/telephone exchanges in the days prior to the meeting may lead to a decisions to slip or skip the meeting. The Zoom meeting, sending out the invitation hyperlink and agenda, will be the responsivity of the Chairperson.