

Oracle Dark Skies Committee
Minutes May/29/2014, 6:30 pm.
Kannally House, Oracle State Park

Attending: Mike Weasner, Chair; Evaline Auerbach, Recorder; Stan Bembenek; MaryHelen Vasquez; Waldo Vasquez; Charlotte Poole; Wendy Ostrander; Jennifer Rinio; Peter Else; Laurie Bryant; Steve Abraham, Pinal County; Elizabeth Alvarez del Castillo, IDA; Steven Haas, Arizona State Parks.

Introductions: Peter Else, Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance; Steve Abraham, Pinal County Planning Manger; Elizabeth Alverez del Castillo: Associate Director, IDA,; Steven Haas, Arizona State Parks, Catalina State Park Manager.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes were not ready, will be ready before next meeting on June 5. With apologies from Evaline Auerbach.

General Agenda Topics:

- The music and star party is on for June 21. It does conflict with an event at the Grand Canyon that same day, so some of the local astronomers will be at that one. However, the event will be music at 6-8 pm and then viewing through telescopes from 8 - 10 pm. Mike will have a table with information during the music period. Volunteers are needed for the 8 - 10 time. They will need to operate in near darkness.
- Public outreach completed: Mike went to a program at the Trowbridge Hall (which had been at Mammoth and San Manuel earlier) about "Astronomy for Everyone." The speaker showed up 45 minutes late so Mike got to talk to those there informally and give them information.
- Public outreach, upcoming: Weasner will be appearing at the Oracle Women's Network at an unknown date. He will be presenting information to the Oracle Historical Society at their Board meeting on June 8.
- Outreach regarding lighting: Weasner contacted:
 - Oracle Ford manager was positive. The IDA may give them a light fixture.
 - The "lower" Circle K manager was supportive, but said he had to "check with Corporate". However, the Circle K webpage seems hopeful, stating how eager Circle K is to work for the benefit of the community.
 - One resident, who agreed to work toward better lighting.
- Weasner is hoping to have "before" and "after" pictures of these and other locations for inclusion in the nomination package, if they can be done in time.
- To this end, a PR campaign called "Go for the Gold" is to be directed to local individuals and businesses so that they can become part of the effort to get the Oracle State Parks nomination at the "Gold" level. Currently, OSP is "solidly at the Silver level."

Steve Abraham, Planning Manager for Pinal County, presented information and answered questions about the lighting code for Pinal County.

- The lighting code, which Abraham had co-authored, was adopted about four years ago. The previous code had not been appropriate for all the building and lighting needs of the growing County. Some considered it unenforceable.
- Compliance with the code is more effective if community members are approached informally and shown the value of meeting the code, especially in the commercial area.
- Residents usually just "fix-it" when informal visits show them that they are not in compliance.

- The biggest problem is the “blue light” that goes straight out horizontally from a bulb that is not shielded. All lights over 100 watts need to be shielded.
- The county offers courtesy compliance inspections to those residents or businesses known to be “grandfathered” in under the old code. (Installed and not remodeled before January 1, 2011). These don’t have to meet the new code (though they do need to have met the old code) and so there is no question of any punitive or other action that will be taken by the county - yet the owner will know whether the property is in compliance for purposes of getting update.
- A man in Gold Canyon crafts shields and devices that can help make lighting become compliant.
- The questions to ask about fixtures are “where”, “when,” “how much,” and “what color”?
 - where? The county is zoned for lighting standards along with property use zoning.
 - when? Most lights must go off at 11 pm or one hour after closing. After 10:00, the lights must be in safety mode, not as bright as otherwise. Various exemptions apply.
 - how much? Lights over 110 watts (measured in Lumens now, however) must meet the requirements for all the code rules. Lower lights can be exempt.

A discussion of two local issues followed:

- The Circle K manager had said that they needed the lighting they had “for safety.” Weasner had explained that he was there to show him how to use lighting to enhance the safety by putting the light where it was needed.
- The story of the lights put up, allegedly by Pinal County, at the former Liberty Park was told, with a print-out of the story by Evaline Auerbach turned over to him. He said he would look into it.

Other information along this line, which came up later in the meeting:

- Measurements are now usually in “lumens” rather than watts.
- A single-family residence over 1800 lumens needs to be shielded and turned off between 10 pm and six am.
- New amendments to the lighting code are being considered and will probably come up in October, 2014.

OSP IDSP Nomination Package discussion:

Site tier still Silver: Weasner reported that he had made new readings, but that they were still solidly mid-Silver level. However, the sky is still dusty, so reflecting light. Other readings can be made later, after the monsoons, and resubmitted. In fact, the level can be upgraded at any time, even after the package is submitted. Weasner has “started lobbying” the IDA to show that “everything else” points to the Gold level. John Barentine of IDA has written that the site is a “solidly Silver tier site.” He also said that it is as dark as the Pic du Midi Dark Sky Reserve in France, which is the site of a professional observatory.

Package Cover picture? Weasner showed the latest version of the cover photo configuration. He asked for the committee to decide which photo of several should be used. The group decided on the photo with the timed exposure which formed “star trails” (which will now be in the package).

Letter of support: The first one has come in, from Mary Heubner, Oracle Citizen. Steve Haas, present at the meeting, discussed getting letters from Arizona State Parks. Steve also presented his Letter of Support.

Letter of nomination: Only one is needed. Weasner said it would come from Bryan Martyn, Director of Arizona State Parks. Since it would be nice to have it before the package is sent out to writers of Letters of Support, Steve Haas said he would email “his boss” the next day and Weasner will draft a letter for Martyn to sign, if that is what he wants.

Weasner announced that the Arizona State Parks press release announcing that Oracle State Park was applying to be an “International Dark Sky Park” had been released. He had been interviewed by the Arizona Daily Star for an article to be published the coming weekend.

The final nomination package should be approved online before June 12. It will be presented online to members of the Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition (CCEDC) who have requested it. Weasner will go to the meeting at Dudleyville on June 20 to request a Letter of Support from that group. Several others on CCEDC have offered Letters of Support from other groups with which they have contact.

Conference: “Blinded by the Light.”

Elizabeth Alvarez invited members of the Oracle Dark Skies Committee to a summit meeting, listed as a “Dark Skies and Emerging Technology Conference” called BLINDED BY THE LIGHT: A SUMMIT AND CALL TO ACTION TO PROTECT OUR NIGHT SKIES. It is to be held August 18-20, 2014, in Flagstaff, AZ.

Alvarez noted that one issue is that blue light affects our biology as well as the biology of animals. Solutions need to be found to the problem of too much blue light - color is a new variable in lighting.

Conference Goals are to:

- Shed light on the value of Dark Skies and existing and emerging tools and technologies supporting those values
- Address issues over safety, cost, and the ability to satisfy lighting standards
- Spark demand for improved lighting technologies that meet Dark Sky requirements
- Learn what others are doing and the challenges and opportunities they face
- Develop a framework and commitment to collective action across the Southwest and a network of Dark Skies resources to help meet the challenge.

This and other Information can be found online at <https://keystone.org/darkskies.html>.

Next Meeting: Thursday, 12 June 2014, 6:30 PM, at the Kannally Ranch House

Adjourned: about 8:00 pm MST

Attachments: Attendance List 5/29/14/

Signed,

/signed/

Evaline J. Auerbach, Recorder

Signed,

/signed/

Mike Weasner, Chair

Attachment: May 29 attendance list:

First Name	Last Name	phone (520) +	Email
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