

ASSA COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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DATE	30 Oct 2010	TIME	10:00	VENUE	Ward Room - Military History Museum, Johannesburg
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ATTENDANCE

Present

	Role
Michael Poll	President (Chair)
Chris Stewart	Council Member
Johan Smit	Membership Secretary
Lerika Cross	Secretary
Rynhardt van Rooyen	Treasurer

Via Skype

Matie Hoffman	Vice President
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Apologies (a) and not present

Ian Glass (a)	Vice President, named Member of the Editorial Board
Lia Labuschagne (a)	Cape Town Centre Rep
Maciej Soltynski (a)	Council Member, Convenor of Scholarship Committee
Case Rijdsdijk (a)	Vice President, Garden Route Centre Rep, MNASSA Editor
Adv AJ Nel (a)	Council Member
Chris de Koning	Bloemfontein Centre Rep
Christian Hettlage (a)	Web Master
Constant Volschenk	Johannesburg Centre Rep
John Saunders	Hermanus Centre Rep
Peter Cramb (a)	Durban Centre Rep

NOTE: Names responsible for progressing actions are in bold

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	Agenda Points	Discussions / Decisions / Actions (in bold)
1	Welcome	M Poll welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.
2	Acceptance of Minutes	<p>The minutes of 21 August 2010 were accepted by Council with one correction received from M Hoffman regarding point 3.7:</p> <p>“Matie Hoffman also mentioned that there is "webmaster" expertise in the ASSA Bloemfontein Centre (Hannes Pieterse) that might in future make a contribution to ASSA concerning the ASSA Webpage.”</p>
3	Confirmation of the agenda items	<p>Additional agenda items accepted:</p> <p>3.1 Commercial request: received from local tour operators to recommend amateur astronomer for sky shows</p> <p>3.2 Astronomy Desk</p> <p>3.3 Astronauts tour</p> <p>3.4 Space resources society</p>
4	Council Structure	<p>4.1 Vacancy on Council</p> <p>Council accepted the proposal submitted by I Glass, L Labuschagne and M Soltynski to co-opt Auke Slotegraaf onto Council – this to be effective until the next AGM. Secretary to contact Auke and formalise the arrangement. (This was done on 31 Oct and Auke graciously accepted).</p> <p>4.2 Business Manager</p> <p>L Cross contacted I Bassett who agreed to continue until Business Manager tasks have become redundant; claims from I Bassett were submitted and paid by R van Rooyen.</p> <p>During the meeting issues were raised that necessitated someone on Council to perform duties typically done by the Business Manager in the past such as invoicing advertisers. J Smit agreed to assist with these tasks for the time being – many thanks, Johan.</p> <p>4.3 MNASSA Editor</p> <p>W Koorts and C Rijdsdijk discussed the matter since the last meeting and agreed that C Rijdsdijk will take over as MNASSA Editor. The outcome was advised to Allen Versfeld by W Koorts. I Glass is Assistant Editor.</p> <p>4.4 Webmaster</p> <p>L Cross contacted C Hettlage who confirmed he was happy to continue as WebMaster. M Hoffman noted that Hannes Pieterse can be contacted for any website help (if needed) and that Hannes is also running an astronomy blog, URL: http://assabfn.blogspot.com/</p>
5	Financial Management	<p>5.1 Handover to new Treasurer</p> <p>R van Rooyen is still waiting for handover from the previous Treasurer: audited statements for up to 30 June 2010 required. Secretary to contact C Turk and ask for a progress report. (Report from C Turk on 31 Oct: “I expect the 2009 accounts to go to the auditors about end November - certainly by 7 December. Then I should be able to get stuck in to the 2010 accounts and hope they will take no more than 3 months. At that stage I can give Rynhardt van Rooyen the balances brought forward for each account.”)</p>

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		<p>5.2 Bank Statement recon from 1 July 2010</p> <p>R van Rooyen reported that he and J Smit have been progressing well on identifying and properly allocating payments received into the ASSA account from 1 July 2010. They will continue with this process and should there be payments that they cannot identify, these items will be circulated to Council for input.</p> <p>5.3 Authorisation of payments</p> <p>R van Rooyen asked that Council approves the payments that he has made at the request of a number of people. See annexure A attached – these will be considered approved unless any council member queries any of the payments with Treasurer.</p> <p>5.4 Payment of Sky Guide 2011 Advertisers</p> <p>W Trow requested R van Rooyen to prepare invoices for the advertisers. As acting Business Manager, J Smit will assist with this in conjunction with the Treasurer.</p>
6	Membership Management	<p>6.1 Membership Records</p> <p>J Smit reported that the Membership Records have been updated with all payments received and are now as up to date as it can be. Any discrepancies will have to be resolved as they become known.</p> <p>6.2 Renewal / Application form</p> <p>J Smit has improved the design of the renewal / application form and these are now available on the website.</p>
7	Communication	<p>6.3. Minute Books</p> <p>L Simone ordered the books at the request of Council.</p> <p>6.4 Faxes into ASSA</p> <p>The meeting discussed the implications of having a fax number into the SAAO. J Smit suggested that his electronic fax number be used – and the meeting agreed – this will ensure that any communication to ASSA can electronically be forwarded to responsible council members. J Smit will advise the Webmaster of the change required.</p> <p>6.5 Website contact detail</p> <p>The meeting discussed whether the website contains all the correct details. L Cross and J Smit to review these with the help of the Webmaster and ask for changes where necessary.</p>
8	Sky Guide 2011	<p>8.1 Many thanks to Sky Guide team</p> <p>C Rijdsdijk sent email proposing a “vote of thanks to M Soltynski, I Glass and others who were involved in getting the Sky Guide into a workable and stable situation”. The meeting fully endorsed this proposal and recorded Council’s thanks to the team effort for the successful completion of the outsourcing of the Sky Guide printing and distribution to Struik;</p> <p>8.2 Sky Guides for members:</p> <p>300 Sky Guides have been received; M Soltynski and I Glass are arranging the distribution to members and will claim back expenses incurred. See Annexure B for the insert M Soltynski compiled and had printed for placing in the envelope with the Sky Guide to ASSA members.</p>

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		<p>8.3 Sky Guides to Centres:</p> <p>J Smit offered and the meeting agreed that J Smit be the single point of contact for orders to Struik for Sky Guides for the Centres. J Smit will compile and send a note to the Centres explaining what the process will be. It is planned to be able to get the Sky Guides to the Centres by early Dec;</p> <p>For this order process, Struik wants an account to be opened and a credit application to be completed. R van Rooyen to discuss this process with Struik's Lucille Bester in the first instance.</p> <p>8.4 Feedback on the Sky Guide</p> <p>M Solynski asked that once the Sky Guides have been examined that he and Ian Glass be sent feedback – this will help them in their deliberations with the Editor for the next edition.</p>
9	Sky Guide 2012	<p>9.1 M Soltynski and I Glass to discuss with W Trow the possible renewal of a contract for Sky Guide 2012 and to submit their recommendations to Council in terms of renewal and remuneration.</p>
10	Sky Guide: Tax implications	<p>10.1 Tax implications to be assessed</p> <p>The Treasurer raised his concern at the meeting regarding the possible tax implications of the new arrangements around the Sky Guide: ASSA is paying someone to produce a product that is being marketed and sold as a commercial item. This could be seen as running a business</p> <p>The meeting agreed that Adv AJ Nel be asked (Secretary) to kindly provide an opinion to Council in this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what could be the potential tax implications - does the Constitution adequately cater for the disposal of ASSA assets should it be dissolved; not to benefit any one member.
11	Other Editorial Board Matters	<p>11.1 MNASSA feedback</p> <p>This received from I Glass by email before the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Aug and Oct issues distributed - Web site www.mnassa.org.za set up - I bought a new "return address" stamp that does not have "Business Manager" on it, i.e, ASSA c/o SAAO, PO Box 9, Observatory 7935, South Africa - I can now produce address labels from excel files." <p>Many thanks, Ian.</p>
12	Website	<p>12.1 Website report:</p> <p>Items received from C Hettlage by email before the meeting and not discussed at the meeting:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Subscription rates for MNASSA removed from the website - Online application form. To be developed and implemented in due course - Improvements to the website: - Council should consider is how the website can reflect the goals of ASSA. For example, should the website be a place where all astronomy stakeholders can publish astronomy-related news, so that the website becomes a central place where to find information about current developments for astronomy in South Africa? - Website could do with a major overhaul. Any suggestions about what is missing, could be improved etc. will be very welcome. Council can request recommendations on the structure and functionality of a future website, including the MNASSA site, and that I then produce such a recommendation and pass it on to the Editorial Board and to Council for further discussion (and

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		decision).”
13	ASSA objectives and governance	<p>13.1 ASSA review mandate</p> <p>Meeting discussed the need for a review and the draft approach submitted and gave a mandate for Council to proceed with the next step: gather information from members and Centres.</p> <p>13.2 Comments received</p> <p>Comments discussed to be worked into the approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it would be fruitless to ask individual ASSA members for their input and that the soliciting of input be restricted to the Centres; - ASSA needs to understand what its business and objectives are. It would be a worthwhile exercise to look at what is its business and objectives: need to tick boxes of what we need to do; - ASSA can't function if its admin is not in place. Admin is not in place, yet, but is improving and should be sorted soon. Must give sorting out the admin the top priority and streamline it wherever possible - Need focus on where ASSA are going and why - Should spend a couple of hours at the next ASSA council meeting to workshop what the purpose of ASSA is; - Must send request for input and ask for Centre feedback by end Jan 2011 <p>M Soltynski provided a document he wrote in 2006 on “Future Directions ASSA” which will be used for this review and gave email input before the meeting – see Annexure C.</p> <p>13.3 Next step</p> <p>Secretary to draft request for input for Council comment before sending out</p>
14	New Honorary Member	<p>14.1 New Honorary Member request:</p> <p>Request was received from Cliff Turk to offer Brian Warner Honorary Membership. Meeting discussed this request as well as an email from M Soltynski with another recommendation. Key comments from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due process should be followed for nomination of new Hon Members; - “vacancy” is not really the right word: ASSA does not have to have max number allowed according to the Constitution; - Call for proposals for nominations should be invited – use the MNASSA as a vehicle for this – in time for proposals to be considered at the AGM. It was suggested that a specific time is allocated for this process and the AGM was suggested as the right time. <p>Secretary to advise C Turk of outcome of the meeting (Update 1 Nov: L Cross advised C Turk)</p>
15	Hon Members: S&T subscription	<p>15.1 Honorary Members – Sky and Telescope Subscriptions</p> <p>The matter is now finalised:</p> <p>Hon members – both in RSA and living outside the country - are entitled to a free subscription for which they can subscribe and claim back from the Treasurer. Even if they have already subscribed they may claim back. (M Streicher and T Cooper already renewed)</p> <p>Secretary will assist with subscriptions for out of country residents if required (Mike Begbie, Jose Campos, Tom Lloyd Evans)</p> <p>The meeting noted that the current arrangement can continue for the existing Hon Members – they received S&T as members and when the S&T subscription ceased</p>

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		for members, it was continued for the Hon Members. New Hon Members may not necessarily receive the same benefit.
16	Cliff Turk	<p>16.1 Cliff Turk</p> <p>The meeting noted that C Turk's 38 consecutive years as Council member is most remarkable and special.</p> <p>M Poll noted that he sent a note to C Turk at the time of the new Council nominations – in July 2010. Secretary to send him a note from the new Council. (Updated 1 Nov: L Cross sent C Turk note on 31 Oct)</p>
17	Publications to ASSA	<p>17.1 Publications to ASSA</p> <p>L Cross suggested that ASSA not renew any magazine subscriptions that ASSA has such as Astronomy. No place to store these. This was agreed to at the meeting. Anyone who wants to reorder any magazine can re-motivate to order</p>
18	Past minutes	<p>18.1 Past minutes</p> <p>Meeting discussed the most appropriate storage place for past minutes and this was discussed and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - current minutes (past and current year's) to be placed by the Secretary / President on the website with access allowed by current council members. C Hettlage to effect this capability; - older minutes may be made available by the Historic Section (C de Koning) on that Sections' website. But access will have to be controlled: should access be requested then Council must be asked for permission. The period to be kept are to be decided by the Section Director and be based on the storage and retrieval capability, costs and restrictions; - the proposal from Chris de Coning was thus approved in principle: to store historic minutes on the Section's website. Should C de Koning decide to scan and store very old paper copy minutes then he may approach Council with quote.
19	Request from tour operator	<p>19.1 Commercial request received</p> <p>A local tour operator is arranging tours from Australia and requested recommendation from ASSA on who to contact for local sky gazing support and places to visit. Council agreed that ASSA cannot recommend anyone as it will show preference and the Secretary will advise them accordingly. (Update 2 Nov: L Cross sent advice)</p>
20	Astronomy Desk	<p>20.1 Astronomy Desk</p> <p>An Astronomy Desk was established in the DST (refer to mail sent out to Council by M Soltynski on 21 Oct 21.15):</p> <p>The Head of the Astronomy Desk addressed a request to ASSA for input. The meeting discussed and agreed that all outgoing communication under ASSA name must follow due process and go out under ASSA President name. The President may at his discretion get input from anyone and establish ground rules for outward communication.</p>
21	Astronaut Tour	<p>21.1 "Astronaut tour"</p> <p>This includes the special event at Boyden on 10 November:</p> <p>M Hoffmann asked Council to consider paying for a ASSA Council Representative to attend the 10 November function at Boyden since Boyden plays a significant role in ASSA related activities in central South Africa. The meeting agreed to this but could not finalise an ASSA representative. M Poll will consider the invite to attend to represent ASSA and if not will see if he can get any of the other members to stand in for him. M Hoffman can arrange for accommodation.</p> <p>M Hoffmann agreed to do a write-up for MNASSA on the tour/event.</p>

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22	Space Resources Society	22.1 Space resources society: Michael Neale - President of the Unofficial SASRA – contacted ASSA to ask whether they should be an independent society, or if they should start a space resources branch at an established society (like ASSA). Secretary was asked to respond to the email. (L Cross responded on 30 Oct advising Mr Neale that the ASSA Constitution does not cater for specialist branches, inviting them to make contact with the local Centres and wishing them well with their endeavours)
23	Closure Next Meeting	23.1 R van Rooyen noted his concern that the Cape Town representatives were not present at the meeting. Secretary to get input from the non-Gauteng representatives if the next date would be suitable to them to attend via Skype. 23.2 M Poll thanked everyone for their contribution and closed the meeting at 13:08. Next Council Meeting Sat 5 February 2011 10:00 start.

Minutes Approved: _____ Date: _____
Chair: M Poll

Annexure A: Expenditure considered approved unless queried with Treasurer

A	B	C	D	E
ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA				
EXPENDITURE-1 July 2010-31 October 2010				
DATE	PAID TO	AMOUNT	PAID BY	DETAILS
6/07/10	IS Glass	2104.00		
7/07/10	Wayne Trow	12500.00		Honorarium
9/07/10	IS Glass	108.30		
29/07/10	Lithotech	1206.55		
6/08/10	C Turk	1341.32		
13/08/10	Lithotech	792.59		
14/09/10	Mega Digital	4960.29	RVR	MNASSA Journal inv 13/09/10
2/10/10	Wayne Trow	12500.00	RVR	Honorarium
2/10/10	I Bassett	497.38	RVR	Stationary-R102,00;Postage-R315,38;travel-R80,00
11/10/10	Mega Digital	4960.29	RVR	MNASSA Journal inv 1/10/10
15/10/10	Lithotech	1196.85	RVR	MNASSA Journal inv 13/10/10
TO BE PAID				
13/10/10	IS Glass	2375.50		Envelopes and postage
18/10/10	Ierika Cross	408.00		Sky and Telescope Mike Begbie
21/10/10	IS Glass	165.00		Address stamp
27/10/10	Maciej Soltynski	1836.00		Stamps
29/10/10	Maciej Soltynski	99.50		Notices for envelopes
27/10/10	Maciej Soltynski	4035.00		300 Sky guides
		51086.57		

Annexure B: Note compiled by M Soltynski for inclusion in envelope with Sky Guide

IMPORTANT - Notice to ASSA Members

- ASSA wants to communicate with you by e-mail for more timeous and cost-effective notifications. If ASSA does not yet have your e-mail address, please send it, together with your full name, to assa@sao.ac.za
- *Sky Guide Africa South* is compiled and edited by ASSA, but is **no longer distributed by ASSA**. Struik Nature now has the exclusive rights to print, market and distribute *Sky Guide Africa South*, with two exceptions. 1. ASSA Members continue to receive a copy from ASSA. 2. Members of ASSA Centres may approach their committee to enjoy a reduced price for a copy for their own personal use (but not for onward selling). ASSA and Centre members requiring additional copies may obtain *Sky Guide Africa South* from bookshops or on-line bookshops such as Loot.co.za or Kalahari.net. This also applies to non-members. The recommended retail price is R85.
- Bulk orders of *Sky Guide Africa South* (for bookshops and other re-sellers) may be negotiated directly with:
Lucille Bester at Struik Nature
e-mail: lucilleb@randomstruik.co.za
phone: 021-462-4360 fax: 021-462- 4377

Annexure C: From Maciej Soltynski on ASSA Review

“Herewith my thoughts about change and reviews:

1. As a matter of urgency get all members on a e-mail distribution list or use Google groups for this purpose. I encouraged Frikkie to set one up for the Cosmology Section and it is great for communications.
2. Use 1. to communicate with members
3. By all means send out a questionnaire. Be very careful of wasting time by asking questions, the answers to which will not help in any way - i.e only ask questions if you know what you are going to do with the answers. e.g. Don't ask things like - how many telescopes do you have? What are you going to do about the answer as regards making ASSA a better Society.
4. I suggest you only ask two questions:
 - a. Do you have any practical suggestions which will make ASSA a better or more fun or more interesting or more useful Society to belong to, and if, yes, what are they?
 - b Are you prepared to champion or assist in implementing your suggestion(s)?
5. Avoid meetings / workshops / structured idealistic documents etc. Very unproductive in a volunteer Society as ours is. (Ask Chris de Coning)”