

Minutes

**IAA SETI Permanent Committee
11:00 hours Wednesday, October 5, 2011
Vasco da Gama Room, The Westin Hotel
Cape Town, South Africa**

Attendees

- Members:
 - H. Paul Shuch - Chair
 - Martin Dominik
 - Roger Malina
 - Doug Vakoch
 - Lori Walton
- Guests:
 - Hans van de Groenendaal
 - Julia de Marines

In the absence of Secretary Carol Oliver, Martin Dominik was asked to take minutes of the meeting.

The minutes of the Prague meetings were adopted unopposed.

Paul (as co-chair) welcomes attendees. [Seth Shostak sends his apologies, after having been denied boarding of his flight to South Africa on the grounds of not having two adjacent blank pages in his passport.]

Paul points to the fact that the "SETI Permanent Study Group" has been abandoned by the IAA, and a new "SETI Committee" has been created with the same structure and membership, which in practice means a renaming. The terminology still needs to be changed consistently on the committee's website.

An explicit motion to change all references on the website is passed.

The proposed list of assignments of chairs and rapporteurs for the SETI sessions of the upcoming 63rd IAC in Naples (Italy) is accepted. Paul invites suggestions for candidates to deliver the Pesek and Billingham Cutting Edge lectures in Naples. Particular consideration should go to potential Italian colleagues or those at geographic proximity, given that there is no financial support provided. For neither of the lectures, suggestions came up. Committee members are asked to submit their ideas by e-mail. Paul points out that we have lost funding for the Billingham Cutting Edge Lecture. No suggestions for funding alternatives were made, so that it currently remains a non-compensation lecture. No further discussion took place.

On the revised SETI protocols, action by the IAA was expected, but the renaming of "SETI Permanent Study Group" to "SETI Permanent Committee" caused problems in the machinery, with the "SETI Permanent Study Group" not being recognised and the input requested from the "SETI Permanent Committee" instead. Both Commission 1 and Commission 6 have voted in support, and Paul and Doug will meet with IAA Secretary General Jean-Michel Contant to inform him. Doug mentioned that the Board of the IAA should have acted in the meantime,

but in any case we have not been informed. "SETI Permanent Study Group" still has to be renamed "SETI Permanent Committee" in the document, but no further changes are anticipated.

On upcoming publications, edited by John Elliott, we did not receive a report.

Subgroups:

Post-Detection: no report

Lunar far side: Paul notes that Claudio Maccone (and others) were unable to attend because of the conflicting scheduling of DARPA's 100-year starship conference. Paul however proudly reported that we have received nice graphics from Richard Clar for the cover of the report.

The question was once again raised as to whether the SETI Committee should continue within the IAA framework. Roger pointed out that we profit politically from this affiliation. He countered the argument of the substantial cost factor of attending the IAC with the suggestion that the affiliation issue should be dissociated from discussions of the meeting venue, and that videoconferencing with remote participants should be considered. He added that the IAF successfully ran 6 virtual meetings at the 62nd IAC here in Cape Town. Paul mentions IAU Commission 51 as potential alternative, but also points to the issue of continuity.

Milan Cirkovic has been appointed as a new member of the committee following an unanimous e-mail vote.

Seth Shostak is now entering his 10th year of serving as chair. The Committee's rules (as posted to the iaaseti.org website) specify that the Chair serves a five-year term, and may be re-elected for one additional term. This means that we need to elect a new Chair at the next committee meeting on the occasion of the 63rd IAC in Naples (Italy). In the past, usually one of the Co-Chairs advanced to the position of Chair. Paul expressed his happiness to endorse Claudio, but he guesses that Claudio might be equally happy to endorse him. Paul noted that the chair and co-chairs must be Members or Corresponding Members of the IAA. There is no such requirement for the committee Secretary.

Paul has identified 14 members of the committee who have not attended any committee meetings over the past 10 years. Despite the fact that such attendance is not a strict requirement (reflecting also the fact of the costs involved), Paul wonders whether the lack of participation might indicate a lack of ongoing interest. Doug poses the question of who showed activity by voting, but Paul was not able to provide an answer. Roger suggests that with the reconstitution of the Committee under a new name, members be asked whether they desire to remain on the committee. Martin remarks that his name is missing on the IAA's official Committee membership list. Paul takes his details. Paul raises the issue of what to do with people who are active in SETI and provide service to the field, such as contributions to reports (as mentioned by Lori), but for one or the other reason did not attend committee meetings. In particular, Paul Davies and Frank Drake were absent for more than 10 years, but Paul expresses his strong support of their membership. Roger suggests we create an "honorary" affiliation and Paul is in favour, while Doug opposes this by pointing out that the committee gains from having such people as regular members. Roger suggests we look into participation in sub-committees. Paul would like to see some authority on the chair and co-chairs for acting upon clear inactivity. He reads from the Committee's operating rules:

- 12. Those nominees elected to SPC membership will serve a five-year, renewable term, which shall commence immediately upon election.
- 13. Renewal of SPC memberships shall be at the discretion of the Membership Committee, and shall be conditioned upon a member's active participation and reasonable attendance at SPC meetings during the preceding membership term.

There appears to be some lack of clarity about the explicit terms "Membership Committee" and "membership term" and/or their definition. Roger suggests that the new leadership discuss the issue of a "honorary" membership, and Paul promises to move forward on the issue of "dormant" members in consultation with Seth and Claudio.

64th IAC Beijing (China), 2013:

Paul suggests to go for continuity and name Seth Shostak and Claudio Maccone as coordinators for the two SETI sessions.

For the chair, co-chair, and rapporteurs, the following suggestions were made

- SETI I Chair: Paul volunteers
- SETI I Co-Chair: Doug: recommends Dr. Chen-Shen Guang (and will contact him)
- SETI I rapporteur: (open)
- SETI II Chair: Doug volunteers
- SETI II Co-Chair: (open)
- SETI II rapporteur: Paul volunteers

For tonight's no-host SETI dinner, a table has been reserved initially for 14 people. A fixed-price dinner will include salad course, choice of meat or fish entree, and dessert course, at a cost of 295 Rand + 10% service charge. Gratuity optional, drinks not included. Meet at 7pm in the Westin Hotel lobby.

Roger expresses an interest in on-line teaching modules.

The next committee meeting will take place during the 64th IAC to be held in Naples (Italy). Paul expresses preference to meet before the SETI sessions, and suggests Academy Day. Doug suggests Monday morning.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55.