

**ARIZONA SPACE COMMISSION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.  
Arizona State University School of Earth & Space Exploration (ISTB4, Rm. 692)  
781 E. Terrace Mall, Tempe, AZ 85287**

\*Items which may be acted upon by the Board are indicated with an asterisk below.

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Brett Mecum, Chair for the Arizona Space Commission, called the meeting of the Arizona Space Commission to order at 10:03 AM. A quorum of voting members confirmed present.

**Board Members Present:**

- Grant A. Anderson - in person
- James F. Bell – in person
- Shawn Linam – in person
- Brett Mecum - online
- Lisa Morris - in person
- Len Munsil - in person
- Douglas J. Nichols - online
- Michael P. Vargas - in person
- Steve Zylstra - in person

**Board Members Not Present:**

- Jim Cantrell
- Megan Fitzgerald
- Erika Hamden
- Michael McGuire

At 10:05 am, Chair Mecum shared his location as well as a potentially poor communication connection and designated Vice Chair Anderson to preside over the meeting for the duration.

**II. Welcome**

Sally C. Morton, Ph.D., Executive Vice President, Knowledge Enterprise with Arizona State University (ASU), provided opening remarks welcoming the Arizona Space Commission to



the ASU School of Earth and Space Exploration. Dr. Morton shared her role and responsibilities with respect to research and economic development for the university and impacting Arizona communities utilizing approximately \$1 Billion in research expenditures for ASU. She also described the core facilities ASU has as well as ASU's coordination with their sister institutions, UA and NAU. Dr. Morton mentioned the shift in federal funding landscape and shared success with university-led projects like the Psyche Mission and the Europa Clipper mission as well as the MILO Institute and the university's participation in events like SEMICON West.

### **III. Strategic Engagements for Space**

Grace O'Sullivan, Vice President for Corporate Engagement & Strategic Partnership, ASU presented to the Arizona Space Commission emphasizing the University's leadership in building innovation ecosystems and fostering public-private partnerships across the space and semiconductor sectors. She highlighted Arizona's established reputation as a hub for advanced manufacturing, with a thriving environment for semiconductor research and production fueled by industry anchors like Intel and TSMC. ASU's broad space-related activities were outlined, including its engagement with 120 industry partners, 40 research facilities, and participation in 25 active space missions. Ms. O'Sullivan also detailed the university's Innovation Zones, designed to connect academic research, workforce development, and high-potential land assets with industry and community needs to fuel economic growth and collaboration. The presentation closed by encouraging continued partnership with ASU to support Arizona's growing impact in space, research, and technology.

Vice Chair Anderson asked about data for the Commission's report, and it was indicated that ASU relies on the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) and Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) for data. Commissioner Zylstra mentioned an Optics & Photonics economic impact study being discussed with the ACA.

### **IV. Arizona's Place in Space (virtual)**

Jeff Matthews, Adjunct Professor, ASU & Chief Strategy Officer, Radian Aerospace presented to the Arizona Space Commission highlighting the need for Arizona to take a focused and strategic approach to growing its role in the space sector. He emphasized that relying on a passive "field of dreams" strategy would not work; instead, he recommended coupling traditional economic development with technology ecosystem building across the state while leveraging Arizona's regional strengths in satellite manufacturing, planetary sciences, remote sensing, and launch services. Mr. Matthews identified emerging opportunities such as artificial intelligence, space situational awareness, and lunar exploration, but also noted challenges including investor skepticism and commercial sector delays. He suggested that Arizona should look to successful models from other states and prioritize development in responsive space, cybersecurity, advanced materials, and hypersonics to remain competitive. Mr. Matthews provided an update on other competitive states – California, Washington, Colorado, Texas, Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida – and emphasized a need for an Aerospace Industrial Base.



The overall message was that a clear, coordinated effort is essential for Arizona to secure a prominent place in the evolving U.S. and global space industry.

Administrator Marisa Walker asked about the status of Texas Space Commission's updated plans, and Mr. Matthews indicated to his knowledge there was a goal for the plans to be ready by the end of the year.

Commissioner Zylstra commented on the need for a Space Ecosystem Gap Analysis and asked if there were any funders in the State who might be interested in participating in a similar way to the Flinn Foundation and the Arizona Bioscience Roadmap. Mr. Matthews indicated the person who helps the Vandenberg/Santa Barbara County Public Private Partnership effort currently lives in Scottsdale, Arizona and suggested he might be interested in sharing best practices.

Vice Chair Anderson called for a break at 11:08 am.

The meeting was called back to order at 11:16 am.

**V. Arizona Strategic Planning for Space—Essential Sections of a Successful and Actionable Strategic Plan**

Grant Anderson, Vice Chair, Arizona Space Commission & Co-Founder/Chief Innovator, Paragon Space Development Corporation presented to the Arizona Space Commission outlining the purpose, structure, and process for developing the Commission's strategic plan. He reaffirmed that the Commission's charter is to advance Arizona's space industry through research, workforce training, and commercialization by fostering statewide collaboration between government, academia, and industry. Anderson explained that an effective strategic plan must be vision-driven, assess current strengths and weaknesses, utilize assets, address deficiencies, and clearly lay out actionable, measurable steps. The plan will focus on five key elements: vision and mission, SWOT analysis, addressing opportunities and challenges, steps and outcomes, and setting short-, near-, and long-term actions. Point persons were assigned to major focus areas including infrastructure, R&D, capital formation, and public policy, with upcoming work on scheduling, communications, and legislative outreach planned for 2026.

Vice Chair Anderson asked the subcommittee leaders and members to make it a point to interact with the Commission SharePoint files, create a folder for the collection of data for each subcommittee, and start to review information provided on who might be invited to participate in subcommittee activities from the general public.

Commissioner Linam asked for stretch goals to be included in the strategic plan.

Marisa Walker provided an overview of the Paragon Fellowship and suggested the Fellows would be able to assist with subcommittee activities.



## **VI. Arizona's Future: The Federal Space Hub**

Jonathan Stratton, Space Ops Director pitched to the Arizona Space Commission for Arizona to become the nation's anchor for space and defense innovation by uniting academia, industry, and government into a statewide platform. The plan leverages federal partnership intermediaries and lease-backed investments to inject \$1 billion into Arizona's economy within five years, while building classified facilities and a space-ready workforce. The Arizona Space Commission will provide oversight, ensuring federal dollars align with state strategic goals and drive long-term economic growth, technology development, and STEM career pathways.

Commissioner Linam asked who the funding source is for Space Ops activities. Mr. Stratton indicated the Commission would be the funding source and loosely described a relationship with Space Force for funding.

Commissioner Vargas asked who the touch point was for Space Ops at AFRL and Mr. Stratton indicated Col. Omar Perea.

Commissioner Bell asked if the Commission would be able to be a partner or if that relationship needed to be contracted through the ACA.

Chair Mecum mentioned there would need to be a legislative ask.

## **VII. Commission Updates**

### **a) Space Summit**

Commissioner Zylstra updated the Commission with details of direct talks with ASU (controlling entity for the Arizona Space Summit) indicating there is an agreement for the Arizona Technology Council to take over hosting the Arizona Space Summit next year. Plans include hosting the event in Tucson in May 2026 and rolling the event into another Arizona Technology Council event that will include Arizona Space Summit activity for half a day. Vice Chair Anderson indicated since the Summit is now under the auspices of the Arizona Technology Council that any further discussion could commence separately. Chair Mecum mentioned a future conversation would be had on a space-centric regional event. The Commissioners mentioned issuing an expression of support for the event.

### **b) Charter Discussion**

Due to time constraints, the Charter discussion was tabled for the next Arizona Space Commission meeting in November.

### **c) Working Groups**

Due to time constraints, the Working Group discussion was tabled for the next Arizona Space Commission meeting in November.

## **VIII. Consent Agenda\***

Commissioner Zylstra moved to approve the minutes for the September 10, 2025, Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bell, and the minutes were unanimously approved.



## **IX. Call to the Public**

The meeting was opened for public comment.

- Mitch Colt of Space Ops commented on the plans for Arizona Space Summit.
- Jonathan Stratton of Space Ops commented on dates related to Arizona Space Summit.
- Colleen McLeod Garner of Paragon Space Development Corporation asked for details about joining the working groups for the Arizona Space Commission subcommittees.
- Taryn Struck of AZ Space Labs commented on the plans for Arizona Space Summit and mentioned the proposal provided to the Commission via the ACA. Commissioner Morris recommended adding the discussion to the agenda for the next meeting. Vice Chair Anderson indicated a desire to have subcommittee input.
- Troy Howe of Howe Industries requested to speak at the next meeting and indicated a desire for inclusion of ideas on how the State can help get product into orbit for testing.
- Commission Zylstra mentioned opening a legislative bill file for Advanced Air Mobility Sandbox with Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) with Senator Carroll and Representative Wilmeth.
- Chairperson Mecum thanked the speakers who participated in the October meeting, mentioned a legislative bill file open for a Space Commission license plate with Representative Shamp, and welcomed Colleen McLeod-Garner, commenting on Arizona attracting space professionals to the State.
- Commissioner Bell thanked the attendees for joining, indicated lunch was being provided courtesy of Arizona State University and indicated guests were welcome to join. There was a quick housekeeping discussion on docent tours of the building for anyone interested and logistics regarding the tour of the Meteorite vault for the Commissioners after lunch.

## **X. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm following a motion by Commissioner Vargas, seconded by Commissioner Linam, and unanimously approved.

