

APA-NJ Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes for May 15, 2009

Present: Michelle Alonso, Maura Fennessy, Vito Gallo, Rebecca Hersh, Michael Levine, Courtenay Mercer, Katharine Otto, Bill Purdie, John Reiser, Katie White.

Via phone: Lou Joyce, Chuck Latini, Andrew Levecchia, Eric Powers, Zunilda Rodriguez, Eric Snyder

Update from Student Representatives:

Katie White, attending her last meeting as student representative, provided an update on her attendance at the APA Conference in Minneapolis and a recent student studio presentation competition in Brooklyn. First, regarding the APA conference, she said that she really benefitted from the more real world/practical session offered at the conference, as well as the opportunity to network with other student representatives. Courtenay raised the issue of getting NJ representation on APA's national student committee, but both Katie and Katharine indicated they haven't seen much interest from at least the Bloustein students in participating. This is something that Courtenay would still like to pursue. In terms of expanding a student planners organization in NJ beyond Bloustein, Michigan – which has at least 3 planning schools – would be a good example to follow. Second, regarding the student competition, although there was no “winner” declared, the presentation by Bloustein students, which was nominated by students and selected by faculty to participate, was extremely well received. The topic was the use of historic rail at Liberty State Park.

Presentation on Arts Build Communities

Leo Vasquez asked for time to give a presentation on an initiative he is managing to use community cultural resources as a tool for economic development. He distributed materials describing the Arts Build Community program, outlining their efforts to create a cultural vitality index, and identify community to work with. He is asking for the participation of APA-NJ to help out, particularly with the focus group planning. Courtenay said she would prefer that the representative come from the Executive Committee. Any takers?

APA Conference De-brief

Courtenay and Chuck attended the conference on behalf of APA-NJ. Chuck said that there wasn't much of significance to report with regard to session pertaining to Professional Development Officers, but that it was very interesting working his way through Minneapolis' interior second-story walkways that take you throughout the city. Courtenay, through networking with other chapters, got a lot of ideas for how to restructure the Executive Committee.

Restructuring Proposal

Courtenay had distributed an overview of her proposal the morning of the meeting, for consideration by the Executive Committee. Right now, if all of the new committees that we intend to create are approved, we will have 17 voting members, plus the 5 area representatives. This is very difficult to manage; we need a structure for management and delegation. Her proposal is for 11 voting members, plus area representatives as follows:

- President
- Past President/President-elect
- Vice President of Policy, to whom chairs of policy committees would report – Legislation, Transportation, Housing, Redevelopment, Sustainability
- Vice President of Membership (non-CM activities), to whom chairs of Diversity and Young Planners Committee would report; also responsible for annual report
- Vice President of Conference Services
- Vice President of Public Relations – newsletter, website, press
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Professional Development Officers (2)
- Student Representatives (2) – they would be responsible for creating and participating in a student planners organization with members from each of the planning program in the state
- Area Representatives (5)

Vito expressed support for the concept of the committee chairs reporting to Vice Presidents, which would free them up to focus on policy rather than procedures.

The committee discussed whether to impose term limits, such as other state chapters have put in place, and there was not support for that. The committee did support the concept of the “ad hoc” or policy committees – Legislation, Transportation, Housing, Redevelopment, Sustainability, Diversity, Young Planners – terminating at the end of a sitting President’s term, so that the incoming President could appoint his or her own people or choose to extend the terms of sitting committee chairs.

Area representatives would continue to report to the President, but will also serve on the Professional Development Committee and decide amongst themselves which Vice Presidents they would also report to.

So that a slate of candidates could be considered in the upcoming election, Courtenay proposed moving quickly on holding a vote on a necessary bylaws change to enact the restructuring. A bylaws election would need to be held in June, with results available by August 1. If the restructuring proposal passed, then a call for nominations could be issued in August, with a ballot distributed by September 1, in accordance with the bylaws.

The committee also considered adding ex officio members representing NJPO, planning program faculty, and the County Planners Association.

Maura moved, and Lou seconded, a motion to approve the restructuring concept as proposed, which would be reviewed by a bylaws committee within one week (by May 22) of the meeting. The bylaws committee is Courtenay, Michelle, Maura and Katharine. The motion passed by voice vote.

New Meeting Schedule

Courtenay proposed that the executive committee meet just 6 times per year, in order to maximize the effectiveness of each meeting. Subject committees could meet during off-months. The Executive Committee also agreed to move the meeting up to the second Friday of each month, so that the meeting doesn't conflict with the monthly County Planners meeting. Michael will notify Rutgers and APA of the new meeting dates, to ensure room availability and conference call resources. The revised schedule is as follows:

2009: July 10, September 11, October 9

2010: January 8, March 12, May 14

Infrastructure Policy Forum – June 5

The goal of the event is to focus policy makers on the transportation, water and energy infrastructure needs of the region, including NJ, New York City and Eastern Pennsylvania. It will include invitation-only morning workshops, a lunchtime keynote speech by Tom Wright on RPA's America 2050 initiatives, an afternoon plenary session (open to the public at large) for presentation and discussion of workshop summaries, and a cocktail reception. John moved, and Maura seconded, a motion to approve \$2500 for the event, including \$1000 from the Legislative Committee line item.

Nominating Committee

Michelle will chair and Courtenay will serve on the nominating committee, which will issue a call for nominations after the bylaws vote.

Event Co-sponsorships

Courtenay has been speaking with the NJ Historic Trust on becoming a partner on their upcoming conference, so that some of their sessions can be eligible for CM credits. They understand that we would need to be an active sponsor in order for the chapter to include the conference on our overall chapter fee for CM credits.

Eric Snyder moved, and Rebecca seconded, a motion that –at the discretion of the President and Professional Development Officer responsible for CM - the Chapter will agree to serve as a co-sponsor of events, in order to make them eligible for CM credits, but only if the co-sponsorship role meets the AICP guidelines and doesn't cost us additional money. The motion passed by voice vote.

President's Report

1. Social Networking at APA-NJ: APA-NJ now has a Facebook page, thanks to John Reiser. The conference, the June 5 policy forum and the June 24 webinar are all posted there. The content will be monitored and controlled (if necessary) by John. An announcement about the Facebook page will be in the next webcast.
2. Strategic Plan: The Strategic Plan is on hold until after the potential restructuring.
3. Brownfields remediation legislation: A writer for Planning Magazine contacted Courtenay for a quote on the Licensed Site Remediation Professionals legislation that the Governor recently signed into law. There was a motion and a second, to provide a statement in support of the legislation. The motion passed by voice vote with two abstentions. Bill Purdie offered to get Courtenay additional information for her reference in preparing the statement.
4. FAICP: It's time again to consider nominations for FAICP. Courtenay will talk to Debbie Lawlor to see if she is interested in working on this again.
5. OSG Director: Stuart Meck contacted Courtenay about writing a letter to the Governor in support of conducting a national search for a new Director of the Office of Smart Growth. The Executive Committee discussed that a letter should also include support for the office and a proposal for how it could be restructured in order to more effectively manage growth and preservation in the state.

Members Reports

Bill Purdie: He held his first meeting of the Sustainability Committee at which they set priorities for the year. Top priority is creating a model sustainability land use element. They will also propose some sessions for the conference.

Vito Gallo: Vito recently held a meeting of the Housing Committee. They too will be submitting session proposal for the conference. The next meeting will focus on the State Housing Commission, and he has also requested that Jessica Caldwell, a member of the State Housing Commission, attend the meeting.

Zunilda Rodriguez: Zunilda would like to build on the chapter's Facebook page by creating a group discussion forum. Also, she will be holding a June kickoff event for the Diversity Committee – she will send Michael the details so they can be included in a blast e-mail and posted on the website. The committee also intends to submit a session proposal for the conference.

Katharine Otto: She has been coordinating with the NY Metro chapter, which has been successful in bringing in students from multiple colleges and universities. She intends to fill the Rutgers slot on the Metro chapter's student committee.

Rebecca Hersh: She has received about 10 session proposals so far. This is ahead of where we typically are at this time. The deadline is May 29.

Area Reps Update: Michelle would like to schedule her walking tour in Rahway in September. Maura will plan her Sourlands discussion and bus tour for October. Maura is also working on the June 24

Planning Law webinar, which will be held in the Special Events Forum at Bloustein at 4:00pm. [NOTE: Other Area Reps had to get off the phone prior to this.]

Michael's Report:

As of his most recent count, we have 1035 members. Six advertisers have dropped out this year and we picked up one new one. One topic that will be addressed at the next meeting is whether to stop charging for organizations to post job openings on the website.

Next meeting: Friday, July 10, 2009.