

APA Alaska Chapter Board Meeting/Teleconference
March 9, 2006

Present:

John McPherson
Lance Wilber
Laurie Cummings
Mitzi Barker
Suzanne Taylor
Caren Mathis
Toni Jones
Maryellen Tuttell

1. Elections - Elections close on the 15th. We will have a status report.

About 20-25 people have voted on-line thus far. Results will be disseminated soon after the 15th.

2. Newsletter - The winter newsletter was successfully sent, but it is not too early to start the next one.

Suzanne Taylor will contact Ruth St. Amour about an article on a mapping project underway. John McPherson will draft an article on an interview with George Canelos. Mitzi Barker will write about the national APA board meeting in San Antonio. If there are members with issues they should bring them to the board. Lance may do an article on the Hillside Sub Area Study.

3. Board retreat - When? Where? If at all?

Not discussed.

4. Web site update - Status report from Laurie Cummings

APA got a grant to upgrade the chapter web site. Web site redesign is in the final throes of construction. There will be places where text needs to be filled in. It will probably go live at the end of May. The new web site will include Online Planning Commissioner training – consisting of training material (Handbook) and quizzes. Will provide an opportunity for commissioners to get a certificate for completion of the training.

5. Lending Library

DCED gave APA-Alaska 3 sets of general planning books. APA–Alaska has also purchased training CDs from APA national office. These materials will all be made available for APA members to borrow.

6. Planning Commissioner Corner

Not discussed specifically.

7. Treasurer report - Status report from Suzanne Taylor

See attached.

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8. Planning commissioner training - We pulled off our first planning commissioner training since 2002. It was well attended. We will have a debrief of the success. Special thanks to Laurie Cummings for a session on ethics, and Toni Jones and Angela Chambers for sitting in on a panel discussion. Remaining tasks include

The Planning Commissioner training went very well. There was a good mix of new and experienced commissioners. Almost every seat was full for most of the day. Future sessions should be scheduled on an annual basis. Suzanne has deposited registration fees collected. John will send her APA letterhead and she will bill the remainder of the attendees.

9. Thank you letters to presenters

John will send a letter to each.

10. Payment to Anne Brooks for the public involvement trainer

Anne Brooks organized the public involvement trainer. John suggested that any extra over the expenses should be given to Anne to cover the trainer costs.

11. Posting materials to the web site

Not discussed.

12. APA Grants

There was some interest expressed over the last month in potentially applying for a National APA Peer-to-Peer grant to try to increase coordination with rural and Native groups on planning issues. The deadline for the grant application is April 3. It seems that about \$23,000 was available nationwide. Each grant may only be about \$1,000. For the effort required, this may not be worth it. The Chapter has plenty of money on hand, but needs more members to get involved and active to get programs going.

13. South-central lunch meeting

Maryellen and Caren are working on coordinating this. The BP Center does not allow "standing meetings" and John thinks it is really best to get a standing date/time/location set. There was discussion of having lunches sponsored by host firms, such as DOWL or HDR. On the other hand, a regular day and site may encourage more regular participation. There was discussion of having a buffet area available, or having it at a restaurant and requiring RSVPs to get the number count in to the restaurant that morning. Maryellen will check with Doriolas, on Tudor between Arctic and C Street. They have a back room that seats about 25 people. It was agreed to confirm the place and then send out notices for the next three lunches. Lance will be the first speaker, on the Hillside Plan, on April 19; Mitizi will give a presentation on the National housing policy on May 17. Maryellen and Caren will get others set up. Lunches will be advertised via e-mail and the web site. Anchorage land use boards and commissions members can be e-invited. (get list from Angela) Date - 3rd Wednesday of each month.

14. New business

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- Alaska Chapter needs to identify a delegate to go to the Chapter Delegate Assembly in San Antonio? John & Laurie are going to conference and Caren might go. Laurie will be going to the Professional Development Officer session. Mitzi is involved in the presentation. It was suggested that it would be good for Laurie to go as the delegate. Issues to be discussed at the Assembly: Housing, Planning & the Food System, Regional Planning.
- APA National housing policy guide is available for chapter comment now. It is available at Policy/Government Affairs section of APA National website. <http://www.planning.org/policyguides/>. Mitzi noted that it consolidates and updates many previous housing policy papers that APA has done over the years. It still is a little weak on rural issues. She asked that members please review and comment on it.

There was extensive discussion on the need for the Alaska Chapter to be more involved in participation, evaluation, and comment on planning issues in Alaska and beyond. Part of our reason for existence is to promote good planning. Toni noted that the Planning Commissioners often hear testimony from other non-profit groups in Anchorage, but has never heard APA put in their professional opinion on the larger planning issues that have come up in Anchorage. There was some discussion of the possibility of looking at a part-time paid position, but most of the discussion focused on more involvement by members who may have special expertise or special interest in any particular issue. Earl Finkler's proposed letter on the Dalton Highway was given as an example. The Chapter needs to be aware of opportunities for involvement or issues that members are interested in. If a member has an issue that they think APA should weigh in on, they need to let the board know and then the board can act. Similarly, the Chapter can use adopted National policies to have a higher impact by informing planning boards and task forces of these policies and why they are important. Toni noted that the P&Z Commission would be interested in how to successfully implement affordable housing policies. She gave an example of successful affordable housing in Iowa. Other recent issues where APA should have had some involvement include the local ordinance and state bill on eminent domain, the Coastal Trail, etc.

There was general agreement that planning in Alaska is often looked at as just a box to be checked for federal grant requirements. Mitzi has been working with the Denali Commission's planning group, but it is made up mostly of agency personnel with little planning experience and is not setting a high standard for rural community plans. Mitzi discussed the potential for a pilot project to get a handful of really good rural community plans to use as examples.

15. For next month's agenda

Mitzi suggested inviting Ruth St Amour to the next board meeting to update APA on what she is doing. Since Mitzi will not be available for the April meeting it may be best to do this for the May meeting.

Next meeting: second Thursday of April at noon.