

**Upstate NY Chapter of the
American Planning Association**

January 16, 2014 Meeting, Syracuse, NY

Present- Judy Bresslor, Patricia Tatich, Ellen Parker, Jaclyn Hakes, Angela Kappel, Rich Guarino, Art Buckley, Mark Castiligione, Ken Kovalchik, Katie Evans, Jennifer Yonkoski, Jason Haremza, Ben Syden, Steve Willis, Tom Knipe and Diane Carlton

Overview

The meeting took place at the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board offices in downtown Syracuse. David Bottar, Executive Director of the Board, gave a welcome to the group. He explained the regional planning board's role and mission and that his office includes 24 employees, which includes the regional MPO. He said the Upstate Chapter was welcome to use the Board's facilities in the future.

New members to the Board introduced themselves. Jennifer Yonkoski is the new Southern Tier Section Director (along with Tom Knight who was on the phone). She is a transportation planner in Binghamton. Ken Koswelcik is a senior planner in Bethlehem, NY and is the Capital Distinct Section Director. Angela Kepple is the new Section Director for the Western Section.

Ellen Parker- President

Ellen discussed the Region 1 Conference and the need to sign the contract with National. There is a \$500 down payment that is required of the Chapter. Other chapters have kicked in money as well. This conference will serve as our yearly conference in 2015. The Buffalo conference would defer to 2016. Ellen asked if anyone had any issues with the contract.

Art noted the contract indicates the Chapter is responsible for uniformed officers at the event for all three days of the conference. There is no cost estimate on what this will cost us. This was a concern for all.

Jackie noted the contract calls for a 21% gratuity and some fees are on a sliding scale based on the number of rooms that we fill. The rooms cost \$159-\$174; attendees may go to other hotels or motels that are less expensive, so this "requirement" could hurt us financially. It was also noted that if we don't fill all 460 of the rooms we pay for them in full. It was agreed that the expectation we would fill 460 rooms was unreasonable.

The main portion of the conference will be at the Hilton in Saratoga Springs. The City Center will do the lunch event. It is connected to the Hilton as one building. Pat and Jackie said they could devote time to working on the event.

Ellen noted that she still needs to talk with Angela Vincent, our APA coordinator about the event. We have other chapters who will provide staff help. Someone who planned the Rhode Island Conference will be on the planning committee. Ellen noted there is a MOA between the Chapters who are sponsoring this event, but getting them to cover expenses that fall in the red may be difficult to enforce.

Ellen asked everyone to read the contract carefully and to get back to her with concerns before she meets with Angela.

2013 Budget- Last year we budgeted a deficit in order to keep Tanya. We did hit a deficit, but not as badly as we feared. We are about \$3700 in the red whereas we had budgeted to be \$6000 in the red. The funds to pay the amount in the red will come from our savings. A motion was made by Art to close out the 2013 budget. It was seconded by mark. All approved.

2014 Budget- Members agreed that our expectations for the “members only” category needs to be reduced, as we haven’t received as many members as we thought we would through this category. The Conference Speaker was set at \$0. Katie said she is okay with that for the Rochester conference. It was noted that National is hitting us with a lot of extra fees. While the sections are sitting on money and not using it, the Chapter is starting to use up savings. We may have to go to the Sections and ask for funds for certain speakers.

Contingencies was zeroed out. The Legislative Officer was cut from \$1000 to \$500. Andy would like this to back to \$1000, as he is going to the National Conference and the Washington, DC Conference. Ellen noted that we can carry a deficit for another two to three years before we’re out of money. The expected deficit for 2014 would be \$3500.

There was a discussion about putting money back for Andy and Ben to to the conference. It was agreed that the Washington, DC conference is the more important of the two. It was agreed to put money back in the budget for the legislative officer. This provides more flexibility. \$500 was put back in the legislative officer line item bringing it back to \$1000 in total. In addition, \$200 was put back into contingency, as the Board felt this item shouldn’t be zeroed out.

Jackie noted the Chapter ends up paying for the lunch at the accreditation for the colleges each year. Last year SUNY/Buffalo brought in a big expensive lunch and we footed the bill. Lunch was \$200. This needs to change. Jackie noted that it’s always an awkward conversation about who pays for lunch. One suggestion was that the sections should organize the events and get pizza which would be cheaper than the \$200. Another suggestion was that since we are reviewing and accrediting the colleges, they should pick up the tab for lunch, or if they can’t afford this, we all brown bag our lunch.

Ellen noted that the President’s \$2500 line item is really contingency money because most of her expenses are paid for by her company. It was agreed to drop the President’s line item to \$500.

The Professional Development/Sponsorship Line item was proposed for \$350. Katie noted that we should forward information to the groups that we sponsor- Empire State Futures and the Brownfield's group. We're not taking advantage of them enough. They can pass our concerns on to Albany since we can't lobby. We should also get them to write articles for our newsletter. It was agreed to leave this line item at \$350 as it probably includes the Utah CM webcasts.

Tanya's contract was reduced to \$10,000 from \$12,500. She brought in \$3000 in sponsorships for the Albany conference and the newsletter. The conference made about \$7500 which is a major part of her work. It was agreed to keep Tanya's line item at \$10,000.

The revenue side of the budget was straight forward. We should be able to get more than \$2500 in sponsorships. Our reserves that are in the bank aren't shown on the budget. Ellen said it's around \$25,000. This is where we are drawing from each year that we show a deficit.

It was noted that most APA Chapters don't have sections. Metro budgets everything for their sections. We're very liberal in that we send money off the Sections. It might be time to discuss this again and to hold onto the money, as we are working in the red now. Capital District has a new treasurer and new members; thus, it might be time to discuss this again. Ellen noted the Chapter is adding value to the sections by paying for CM Credits on the web and by paying for Tanya for the Sections.

Jackie said it would be best to have the Sections talk with us between our meetings about these issues. Ellen said we may want to reinstate the Development Committee and talk with the Section Directors about funding and adding value to members.

Jennifer and Mark moved the budget with the above amendments. All approved. The final budget will be attached to the minutes. Eve will provide clarification on the \$350 amount for Prof. Dev./Scholarships, the amount of money that each Section has and the total savings the Chapter now has.

Ben Snyder – Legislative Update

Ben noted that Andy made contact with the Assembly which is interested in receiving our policy list. We need a sub-committee to develop this list. Ben, Andy, Art, Judy, Jackie and Ellen agreed to serve on this subcommittee. A meeting of the sub-group will be scheduled shortly. Ellen said she'll send a doodle poll. Mark can participate in the discussion, but not on the hill.

Mark asked whether we could video our conference, post it on-line and charge for it. APA now requires that one do everything on-line and in real time. You can't view any training or education after it has occurred. This is a limiting factor for those who aren't available when a training occurs, or who can't access training from work during normal business hours due to policies or blocked software by employers. Mark noted, that even if we start small it could be a revenue maker. We could charge through PayPal.

Ellen will set a February meeting to discuss this along with the prior section issues as part of the development issue.

Jason noted that the newsletter went out. The next one is in February. Jason will circulate newsletter topics to everyone.

Sections

Katie- Genesee/Finger Lakes- The conference is coming along well. The conference is set for September 17-19th in Rochester.

Angela- Western- They are looking at the potential of chapter only members. She knows of about 50 persons that aren't APA members that might join with the Chapter only option.

Jennifer- Southern Tier- Her section will be meeting in Feb. to devise a work program. A local arts group is looking for a \$200 donation. Jennifer asked if there is a policy for this type of thing. Ellen noted that the section should have a budget which could have a line item for this type of thing. If it's in the budget and it's part of their work plan and the entity is a non-profit and non-political it's fine to fund it. It's important to have a policy in place about giving donations. A policy and a process are essential. Jackie will send Jennifer her policy that they use in the Capital District.. Ellen said she'll check with Eve as well.

Rich- Membership- Rich noted that there are 733 national members and 11 chapter only members for a total of 744. Genesee Finger Lakes leads in terms of Chapter Members only. There are 240 students; we need to make sure they join as full members when they graduate. There are also four certified economic development planners and one certified transportation planner in our Chapter.

Jackie- Education Officer- Jackie noted that communication with student representatives is difficult because they change so often. She plans on asking how she can be more helpful to the students.

Art- Professional Development Officer- Art noted that he had received a letter from a planner who told him that a degree in urban planning was not being allowed as a qualification to take the Environmental Analyst exam issued by NYS Civil Service. When the planner asked why, Civil Service gave a bogus reply. Urban planning, environmental planning, regional planning and urban and regional planning degrees are all very similar. Civil Service is discounting individuals that should be qualified to take such an exam and do such a job. We need to get through to them that is unfair and unjust. Mark said we need to write a letter and find out why such a degree is being disallowed. AICP should certify people to take the Environmental Analyst exam. We need to lobby for that. A subcommittee agreed to discuss this issue in February

Mark proposed that we set up an automatic post that would go out to all members once a week to keep them informed. Tanya doesn't need to do this manually. The only downside to this would

be that if you unsubscribe from the communications, you wouldn't get any e-mail from the chapter.

Judy noted that the New York Planning Federation will be submitting its sessions for CM credits and will be working with Art on this. There are two free conference fees and a free booth for the Chapter. If anyone is interested, let Judy know. The conference is at the Gideon Putnam Hotel.

Ellen said she will ask for another call with Angela next week, as we tabled the issue about the 2015 conference and didn't vote to have her sign the contract. We need to get answers to those questions that were raised. The three major issues to be answered are:

1. How much will security guards cost and how can we legally split this with the other partners for this conference?
2. Why are the room numbers so high that we are expected to fill; we can't accept numbers that high, as we know they won't be filled.
3. We need more information on the "floating fees based on room numbers secured" and the worst case scenario for the Chapter from a financial standpoint, as pointed out by Jackie.

Art and Mark voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 pm All agreed.

Respectfully submitted

Diane Carlton