



AIANE Council Meeting

February 10, 2021

9 – 11:15 am

Conference Call

Present:

Elizabeth Cox AIA
Mike Lassel AIA
George Fellner AIA
Helen Fantini AIA
Sarah O Donnell
Catherine Lange AIA
Jeannette Schram
Carolyn Isaak Hon. AIANH
Lorin Starr
Paul Hauser AIA
Roni Phipps
Tom Hartman AIA
Danielle McDonough AIA
Eric White
Russ Feldman AIA
Cris Salomon AIA
Gina Calabro
Monica Cunningham
Tom Chung FAIA
Bonnie Kastel
Angela Cahill AIA
Randall Anway
Mariana O'Brien Assoc. AIA
Dominique Moore, Assoc. AIA
Emily Grandstaff-Rice FAIA

AIANE President (BSA)
AIANE President Elect/Small Firm Exchange (ME)
AIANE Secretary/Treasurer (CT)
AIANE Past President (AIA WMA)
Executive Director, AIA VT
President, AIAVT
Executive Director, AIAME
AIANE Executive Director
Executive Director, AIA WMA
President, AIA RI
Executive Director, AIA RI
AIA Strategic Councilor (AIA WMA)
AIA Strategic Councilor (BSA)
Executive Director, BSA
President, AIA MA (BSA)
President, AIANH
Executive Director, AIA CT
Executive Director, AIA Central MA
College of Fellows Representative (BSA)
Executive Director, AIA NH
President, AIA CT
President-Elect, AIA CT
President, AIA Central MA
AIANE RAD (CT)
Candidate, 2022 First Vice President/
2023 President-elect for the AIA (BSA)

Absent:

Caitlin Osepchuk AIA
John Nunnari Assoc. AIA
Gregory Minott AIA
Kathryn Wise AIA
J. Christian Whittsett AIA
Jim LaPosta FAIA

NE Young Architects Regional Director (BSA) 2020-2021
Executive Director, AIA MA
President, BSA
President, AIA ME
President, AIA WMA
College of Fellows Representative (CT)

1. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Elizabeth called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. Introductions were made.
Called for acceptance of 2020 April, August, and November meeting notes. Moved by Mike L, seconded by Helen; accepted.

Elizabeth noted the following goals for 2021:

- Continue exploration, discussion of EDI in the region; have metrics from components in the region by end of the year – measurable information to discuss and bring into next year
 1. BSA and CT are in the lead here and offer to share information
 2. Elizabeth would like to bring in the right people to facilitate and enhance the discussion
- Region – State vote
Assuming the vote at the AIA Conference passes to eliminate regions and have state representation on the Strategic Council, what changes to AIA New England structure are needed? Do we bring in the rep from each State? Need to adjust RAD and YARD positions? Need to update MOU.
- Climate Change – Would like to find time to enter into this discussion
- Create space to talk about what we're doing and to share successes.

2. REGION REPORT UPDATE

- A small committee is working on the state-based model
- Document drafted in December...haven't seen it yet
- This will be a different model; what will it look like for us? (see above)
- Mike L. commented on SFX changes from this new model: for this year still have 22 members, next year will have 30, 8 states will have permanent reps. Massachusetts will be one of these, so the three components in MA will need to determine a process and select a councilor this year.
- Gina: Voting takes place in June. If it passes, each state does not need to supply a SC until 2022. Regions can continue, but will not be recognized as a region. Buzz is the vote will go through. By the end of 2021, each state should determine who the SC is for 2022. There is a transition period during which term lengths will be staggered, ultimately to point where terms are all 3 years. This allows existing SCs to fill out their terms.
- This model allows for greater representation and greater diversity (including geographic diversity)

A discussion ensued on "What do we want AIA New England to be?"

- It is a great system for discussions of concern to all NE states. Also valuable for developing leadership roles, RAD, YARD, and special interests, like Small Firms.
- Lorin: 2 functions for AIANE. Connection to National, so wise selection of Council members is important. How will they be selected?
- Helen: We are an informal group now, with an MOU. Our budget is what we spend. We've always been highly functioning.
- Mike: should take the best of what we've been over the years and make adjustments to this new structure for the SC. What will the make up of the NE Council look like, who will participate?
- Angela: we will need a separate discussion on this topic. Agreed that we should continue, as there is a lot we can do as a "region" to help each other.

- Randy asked about the various stakeholders that AIANE empowers; are there new activities or services that this will create, in New England or nationally? How do architects experience this within the region: How important is that?
- Helen noted that the rotating hosting of the NE awards program is a big boon, especially to the small chapters. Jeannette added that it is also a great service to members to be recognized over the six states.
- Gina said that the virtual format for the awards celebration this year brought in more attendees, so it was a plus. And the Awards program itself is a plus, she'd hate to see it go away.
- Monica: the awards program and conference is important to the viability of Central MA chapter. To lose that would have significant impact. We should focus on the benefits.
- Lorin: people in the region like to participate in the awards.
- Mike: we represent a cultural area, people working together, like a very big town. We are about building a better community.
- Mariana has lived all around the world. She has found the New England culture to be very open
- Randy: the NE Council has an important role in nurturing the smaller chapters and helping them grow.
- This is an opportunity to make both the National Strategic Council and the NE Council more diverse and representative.

3. EDI (EQUITY, DIVERSION, AND INCLUSION) DISCUSSION

- Elizabeth continued discussion on EDI. Who is missing from the NE Council?
- Angela: In CT they have launched a J.E.D.I. challenge for member firms. J.E.D.I. is an effort initiated by NOMA (National Organization of Minority Architects) with the goal of advancing issues of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion within the architecture profession. The AIACT J.E.D.I. challenge is to proactively increase diversion in firms and in the pipe line, through outreach, education, sponsorship, etc.
- Eric noted that he'd heard from LA to use caution with the term J.E.D.I. But Jay Stevens (legal counsel at AIA) has stated that it is okay as long as periods are included.
- At the BSA they have a number of programs underway on this theme, including a Race and Architecture series. They have a number of initiatives on equity and justice through the lenses of firms, architects, organizations, and communities.
- EDI is also a major platform for AIA National, so we'll see more resources coming out.
- EDI and the environment is the focus from National.
- Gina gave a shout out to Emily on the EQFA (Equity in the Future of Architecture) effort and making it a part of strategic planning.
- Emily: there is great opportunity in the land of Zoom! They are bringing in national voices that reach a wide audience (no travel fees opens up opportunities). She noted that all of the chapters in the region have been doing great work on this.
- Lorin: this is another benefit of the NE Council, to work together on some of these large issues.
- Catherine: AIAVT invited a NOMA representative to attend their board retreat.
- Cris: NH has created a learning session on EDI. Cris will send info about their speakers to Carolyn for distribution. If others will send their resources for EDI, we can create a document to share.
- Emily noted that they are starting to use the words "sense of Belonging" or "belonging" vs "inclusion," with the goal of everyone feeling comfortable.

4. AWARDS REVIEW AND UPDATE

- Mariana updated us on the 2021 New England Awards program, which will be hosted by Central MA. They are looking at Oct. 2 as the date, with a snow date of Oct. 9. They are hoping to have an on-site program and are looking at a venue in Worcester. The theme of the event will be “Placemaking: How Architects Make Place,” and will focus on how we can create places to live with environmental sustainability, social justice, and economic development. They have 3 potential speakers.
- Monica: Worcester has a rich history of architecture. They will draw from the past and look to the future.
- They are keeping COVID in mind. There will be some virtual programming and that can expand depending on the situation closer to October. October for an in-person event is a good option, as it allows for outside programming.
- Sarah reviewed the 2020 program in Vermont. Elizabeth noted that the all-virtual program worked really well for her! It was agreed that a virtual portion is now very important.
- Sarah gave numbers at the last meeting; revenue wise they did very well. They saved money by not needing a venue. People enjoyed the virtual format, but did miss getting together in person. The program was well received. The Awards presentation was also well received. People like hearing the jurors’ comments.
- Lorin congratulated VT on a great job. They had to pivot many times! She also urged Central MA to be very cautious. This will be a tricky year. Looking to fall there is a tension between feeling comfortable and the desire to see people.
- Tom H. noted that knowing who the jury is early on is important for those planning to submit.
- Gina: what they’ve learned from 2020 is that they engaged more people with virtual programs. May have to do both live and virtual in the future.
- Mariana and Monica noted that they are considering all the factors and stresses of the situation with COVID. More to come...

5. COMPONENT FINANCIAL HEALTH

Elizabeth asked how the components are doing financially and with membership renewals.

- Mariana: Central MA has not lost membership. Only one person applied for a waiver. They saved money by having virtual meetings. As a small chapter, they are always in the red. Monica said that they also added new members this year, 8-10, which is a lot for their small chapter.
- Lorin: Western MA membership was pretty even. The question is about 2021. There were lots of directional changes last year, but financially they did okay.
- Mike: Maine’s membership increased by a few. They had invested money over the past 10 years and are in great shape financially.
- Paul: RI gained a few members coming into 2021. They had prepared for a 10% decrease, but it looks much better than that.
- Sarah: VT cut back on expenses where they could. They have not seen a significant change in member dues, but she’s not sure about 2021 yet.
- Gina: CT took a hit because their October conference was virtual. They’ve held many virtual webinars and have had sponsors and dropped location expenses. But, they’ve also had new subscription fees (Zoom, etc.). They are feeling their way this year. The first half of the year will be all virtual; she is hoping the summer will bring some in-

person events. They issued a few waivers, but not too many, and they have also had new members join.

- Bonnie: NH is holding steady. A few new members have joined, mostly Associates. They didn't spend as much last year, as they too went virtual. Those events were mostly free, but they got sponsors for them. They will continue this pattern for the year. They were fortunate to get a PPP loan.
- Eric: The BSA had a 1.5 million loss. But they made a 1.3-4 million in expense reduction, so closed the gap quite a bit. They have lost rental and sponsorship revenue. Membership: too early to tell. He noted that this is the first year the AIA National is managing their dues collection, they've always handled it themselves. So it's hard for them to track against last year. The number of waivers has increased significantly. They also received a PPP loan and a grant from the MA Cultural Council.
- Eric noted that nationally membership is at an 8% decline; they had anticipated about 14%. There have been no spikes in renewal this year, as there usually is, so it's hard to anticipate the trend for the entire year.
- Russ asked if the BSA has been able to monetize online programs. Eric said, for some. Others they rely on sponsorship and not charging members. It is a different world in regards to registration for programs. They are seeing 500+ at some programs.
- Lorin: WMA has presented programs for nominal fees, about \$10. It makes people commit, but is not a deterrent.
- Gina: CT is seeing numbers they've never seen before. They held 72 webinars last year. More allied members are involved, and they see registrants from all over the country.
- Eric: they have set up revenue sharing on some programming. If you promote the program and members from your component attend, you will receive a percentage of any registration fee. This is for larger programs.
- Lorin: there is a flip side to virtual benefits. What keeps members attached to YOUR chapter?

6. STRATEGIC COUNCILORS REPORT

- Danielle reported that the AIA SC is looking at ways to support more rural chapters, particularly in environmental, housing community structure areas; how technology is impacting practice; climate action; equitable communities; and system disruptions.
- If there are topics AIANE thinks the SC council should look at more, let Danielle and Tom H. know. They'd also like to know what chapters are doing.
- The next SC Council meeting will focus on Climate Action.

7. RAD

- Dominique: noted that Caitlin (YARD) is on maternity leave. Dominique has been doing a lot of "onboarding." There is a lot to put together. She is working on getting the EPN website page updated with current EPN reps from each chapter.
- They are getting ready to update and distribute the EP Friendly Firm survey for 2021.
- Last month there was a NAC and YARD conference call, getting work groups in place: knowledge, advocacy, mentorship, innovation.

8. SFx

Mike: Goal of the Small Firm Exchange is to align each board member with a Knowledge Community, with a rep on each one. They are still working to get content on social media sites so they can get all the work of the KCs into the hands of small firm practitioners.

9. College of Fellows

Tom Chung: today is his first meeting with the NE Council and also with the COF. So nothing to report yet!

11. GRASSROOTS

Lorin: suggested that we set up time for New Englanders to meet during the conference. Will be set up by email.

12. AIANE FINANCIAL UPDATE

Carolyn presented a financial report. Account balance is \$11,309. Anticipated expense and income for 2021 is similar to 2020. Expenditures for 2020 were \$10,166.24. Accepted.

13. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.

2021 Meeting Dates

AIA New England

June 2	9 am – 11:30 am
August 25	9 am – 11:30 am
Oct 2	To be confirmed

AIA:

Grassroots 2021: Feb. 16-19 (Virtual)

AIA Conference on Architecture: June 16-19 (Virtual)