

ALBERTA PLANNING EXCHANGE

The Newsletter of the
Community Planning Association of Alberta



August 2012

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In this Issue...

Message from the Chair

Meet Your 2012 CPAA Board of Directors

Winning Student Scholarship Essays

2012 Annual CPAA Conference Highlights

Upcoming Events

Message from The Chair

Gloria Wilkinson

Summer greetings! I hope that your summer plans are going well. I'm thrilled that my family will be having our family reunion in August at the ranch.

Thank you for your feedback from the 2012 conference! Board Director Elizabeth Armitage has analyzed the results of your survey input, and your feedback is key to continuously improving our conferences. We have already begun a lively discussion around themes and ideas for the 2013 conference.

Our strategic retreat in June enabled us to become acquainted with our new board members and move our rolling three-year strategy forward. Our volunteer working board reallocated our workforce under several standing committees:

- The Education and Conference Committee will be building on your feedback in putting together the 2013 conference.
- The Alberta Planning Exchange is now compiled and edited by the Outreach Committee. Article submissions are accepted on an on-going basis; if you're interested in submitting an article, please contact us: cpaa@cpaa.biz.
- The Governance Committee has formulated and adopted a number of written policies and procedures that were formerly handled according to common practice. We will now review our written policies and procedures on an ongoing basis for currency.

In other notes, our student directors continue to be actively engaged with the board, and we continue to be dedicated to raising funds for STARS emergency medical transport system. We re-adopted our budget strategy of holding in investments one year's advance operating funding. We will be having a resolution on this decision at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 16, 2013.

We are working towards key goals including enlarging our membership base and connecting with post-secondary campuses across Alberta. In doing so, we hope to increase awareness of CPAA, and to encourage course content on planning in rural environments.

If you have questions or comments for the board or any of the standing committees, please send us an email with your thoughts!

Meet Your 2012 CPAA Board of Directors

On April 16th, 2012, CPAA's annual board of directors elections took place. We would like to thank outgoing directors Jamal Ramjohn, Lynn Dale, Beth Sanders, Richard Neufeld, and Kayla Rogers for their service and dedication to the CPAA. Lynne will be sincerely missed.

We would also like to thank our returning board members for their continued service to the organization.
Our returning board members are:

Gloria Wilkinson, Chair

Gloria is a retired municipal politician who has been active with CPAA since 1989.

Leanne Beaupré, Vice-Chair (North)

Leanne is a third-term Elected Official for the County of Grande Prairie. She is also Chair of the County's Municipal Planning Commission.

Elizabeth Armitage, Vice-Chair (South)

Elizabeth is a Project Planner with ISL Engineering and Land Services in Calgary. She provides land use planning services to a variety of municipalities and land development clients throughout Alberta.

Jolene Tejkl, Director

Jolene is a Planner with Parkland Community Planning Services in Red Deer. She provides planning services to a variety of Towns, Villages and Summer Villages throughout central Alberta.

Peter Lehner, Treasurer

Peter is a Technician with Plasser Canada. He is a graduate of the College of Marine-Technology in Austria and worked as a Marine Engineer until moving to Canada. He joined Plasser Canada in 1998 and has done consulting work for major railroads and transit systems.

Lesley Vandemark, Director

Lesley is a Councillor for the Municipal District of Greenview #16. Municipal work, along with family, (husband, daughters and grandchildren) yard work at a new home and running her own business keeps her very busy.

Meaghan Albrecht, Student Director

Meaghan is an undergraduate student at the University of Calgary, currently in her fourth year of study, in both Urban Studies and Political of Science degree programs. She grew up in Calgary and currently resides in Cochrane, Alberta.

The board welcomed seven new board members this year:

Drew Hyndman, Director

Drew Hyndman is a graduate of the University of Victoria and has been practicing professional planning at Rocky View County since 2001. Raised in the Calgary area, Drew has always maintained a strong passion and personal connection to the rural areas surrounding the city. Given the recent growth pressures, he recognizes the significance of these natural landscapes and their distinct communities. He is a strong believer in planning education, new and innovative solutions to development challenges, and the importance of community engagement

Patricia Matthews, Director

Patricia Matthews attended Carleton University and worked for various technology companies in Ottawa and Calgary before starting her own company. She has resided in Chestermere with her family since 1998, and in 2004, Patricia was elected as a Town Councillor. In 2007, she was elected Mayor. She also serves on the Chestermere Utilities Incorporated Board, the Chestermere Planning Commission, and the Calgary Regional Partnership.

Sylvain Losier, Director

A graduate from Laval University Planning Master's program, Sylvain has been practicing professional planning for more than a decade in three different provincial jurisdictions, and has been a member of the Canadian Institute of Planners since 2003. He grew up in a rural setting in Northeastern New Brunswick, and he is highly passionate about the interaction between rural and urban areas. As the Long Range Planning Manager with Leduc County, he is a strong believer in stakeholder engagement.

Henry Doeve, Director

Henry has been a Councilor with the County of Lethbridge since 2007. He has also served on the Lethbridge College Board of Governors from 2001 to 2007, the Alberta irrigation Council from 1996 to 2007, and the County of Lethbridge Subdivision Development appeal Board from 1994 to 2000. Henry is passionate about long-range planning, economic development, partnerships with municipalities, and the sustainability of Alberta communities.

Jamie Doyle, Director

Jamie is an Associate with Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Fort McMurray Office). He is a Lead in Urban Land Development and provides planning and project management services. He is a graduate of Dalhousie University and holds a graduate diploma in Professional Project Management.

Cam Lang, Director

Over the past 15 years, in Ontario and later Calgary, Cam has worked in both the public and private sectors and in urban and rural settings. He has held positions in federal and regional governments, private consulting, and as a planner/development manager with a land development company. Cam's current focus lies in community planning and public engagement, to help facilitate information exchange between communities and its stakeholders and to provide communities the resources needed to assist them with solutions and approaches to sustainability, economic survival and identity retention. He holds a Bachelor of Environmental Studies degree from the University of Waterloo.

Jack Moddle, Student Director

Jack Moddle is currently completing the Master of Planning program at the University of Calgary, where he previously completed his Bachelor degree in Urban Studies. He grew up on acreage near Airdrie, and now resides in Calgary, where he stays active in volunteering with his community association and city issues. Jack is pursuing a career in community planning in Alberta or overseas, and plays hockey and Australian football in his spare time.

Winning Student Scholarship Essays

We are pleased to announce this year's recipients of CPAA Scholarship valued at \$1,000 each. Applicants attended the 2012 Conference and wrote a 1000-word essay on their conference experience. The recipients of this year's awards are Jennifer Black and Angela Eaton.

Angela graduated from the Bachelor of Urban Studies program at the University of Calgary in May. Her scholarship essay will be published in our upcoming fall issue.

Congratulations, Jennifer and Angela!

Scholarship Essay by Jennifer Black

Building Complete Communities: How do We Get There From Here?

Those who had the pleasure of attending the CPAA conference in April will recognize Michael von Hausen's "complete community": he defines a complete community as one where people can live, work, learn, and play within their community. In essence, complete communities are places where residents can meet their daily needs and enjoy their surroundings.

Michael, who is the head instructor of the award-winning urban design certificate at Simon Fraser University, described the many building blocks of a complete community, including: a sense of ownership, "eyes on the street", destinations with walking distance, aesthetics, compactness, intensification, mixed uses, open space, and community volunteerism. Most importantly, Michael noted that where there are people, there is fun.

The whole conference wove a narrative of how to achieve complete communities through tools, designs, and processes, and shed light on the importance of all parties playing a role, from municipal staff, to consultants, to the elected council, to an actively engaged community.

Tools

There are several financial tools available to help communities model and predict the impact of decisions. Jeff Greene of the City of Lethbridge insightfully noted that communities pay a high price for unplanned growth, which results in the inheritance of unintended consequences including congestion, pollution, and infrastructure maintenance. As Jeff showed, fiscal impact analysis modelling can be used to show the all-in costs of planning decisions in order to make better judgements.

Design

Michael Von Hausen offered a number of practical ideas for designing more complete communities in his enlightening seminar "Urban Design 500". He illustrated how downtowns may be enlivened by relatively simple measures such as a fire pit to create a warm milieu for public gatherings. He noted that transit waiting areas should be complete with seating, windscreens, and heaters to keep transit users comfortable. Pedestrian downtowns help to build a sense of community, and important services such as libraries provide key anchors to the core. He noted that strategic wayfinding is also an important element, which was echoed by Mayor Real Forest, who noted the importance of elements such as a "welcome" sign greeting visitors to the community.

Real Forest described the success of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan in maintaining historic elements, and tapping into local place-based assets. Michael Von Hausen echoed the significance of place-keeping elements, but stressed that it was important to maintain the character of a neighbourhood while simultaneously intensifying its use.

He correctly identified that it is important that multi-family development match the character of the surrounding neighbourhood. Michael showed that subtle considerations such as matching the peaked roofs of the surrounding single-family homes in a multi-family development can make a significant difference. The length of row houses should also be limited to provide more human-scale edges, and wide, safe, lit pedestrian cut-throughs between the row houses can increase connectivity.

Scholarship Essay by Jennifer Black cont.

He noted that it is important for early forays into multi-family developments in any community to be successful, otherwise community support for multi-family development will diminish. Michael also described how coach houses can subtly increase neighbourhood density without changing the fabric of the neighbourhood.

According to Michael, community builders should work to integrate public and private uses, and ensure that developers are providing amenities for the community such as schools, information kiosks, cultural activities, public washrooms, outdoor music, or fire stations. He argues that developers should help pay for growth in general. Nevertheless, he also noted that it was important to consider efficiencies, and to pursue opportunities to maximize resources by combining community centres and schools, for example.

Trees are important elements in the pedestrian realm, as is the elimination of setbacks in order to create an interesting, active, pedestrian edge. Michael also described how one can create human scale by i) reducing the bulk of the building; ii) decreasing the massing with different materials and textures, or offsetting part of the building; iii) orienting the building and entrances to pedestrians on street; and iv) ensuring at least 50% visual transparency of the building at ground level. Michael also noted that building height should be proportional to width of street.

Michael argued that there exist straightforward, inexpensive urban design options such as using soil excavations from the construction site to create soft landscaping, storm water management, and pedestrian circulation connections, rather than removing the soil offsite. He believes that connectivity of pathways and pedestrian safety are both highly important, and we should strive to include natural elements such as indigenous plant species and rain gardens.

Process

Mayor Real Forest emphasized that it was important to harness and nurture local stock of social capital, and to be inclusive. Michael suggested one means of gathering input is to show ideas visually and ask people what kind of design they would support and why. People know what they like, and they are usually right. He felt it was important to retain existing businesses in the community, and collaborate across groups.

Brenda Herchmer noted that communities get better when their leaders do, and leaders can be (and often are) unofficial leaders. She stressed that it was our task to work with the early adopters, and to recognize leaders as agents of change. Community building and citizen empowerment resonates with the public.

Issues and Challenges

It was noted by the Town of Chestermere panel that it can be difficult to get people involved and excited about the planning process. In their case, a complicated planning aspect (i.e. revising the land-use bylaw), conspired with poor weather to result in poor turnout at an important public consultation. I believe this exemplifies the first of two key issues that came out of the discussions at the conference: how do we rally public interest around important issues?

There are many aspects to making public engagement work, but a number of key ideas include i) ensuring that there are a number of different avenues to accommodate public participation, and that participation is broad based and includes stakeholders with different interests; ii) that the process is transparent and there is a real opportunity for participants to affect the outcome iii) that there is a diversity of information sources, and participants can exchange knowledge with one another.

Other challenges that were highlighted included a lack of institutional memory: in the discussion with the Chestermere panel, it was noted that staff did not know why things were the way they were, and that without this historical knowledge, it is possible to make big political mistakes. Kirby Wright and Neil MacAlpine also pointed out that there are issues with fair sharing of costs between municipalities and nearby rural areas. In the first example, a good solution was to work together with council during the process, because council, unlike staff, did have a strong degree of historical knowledge. I believe the overarching issue in both examples was: How do we collaborate between staff, council, and neighbouring jurisdictions to generate healthy working relationships and practical solutions?

Communication and mutual respect are key to collaboration. As with public consultation, it is important to focus on issues rather than positions, and ensure various viewpoints are heard and understood.

Scholarship Essay by Jennifer Black cont.

Opportunities to interact and share ideas outside of politically charged situations is important, which is why the CPAA conference is a significant opportunity for planners, consultants, elected officials, and both urban and rural representatives to come together, share their views, and generate emergent learning.

Conclusion

I see my future contribution to planning as striving to use the best possible tools, design approaches, and processes, while simultaneously managing the issues of i) rallying public interest and ii) collaborating with staff, council, and neighbouring jurisdictions, in order to create complete communities where people can live, work, learn, and play.

Jennifer Black, B.Sc., Grad Dipl., LEED Green Assoc., EP(CEA), CSP, GIT completed her B.Sc. at UBC in 2005. Since then, she has worked as an environmental scientist and certified environmental auditor in environmental consulting. She earned a post-baccalaureate diploma in Sustainable Community Development at Simon Fraser University in 2009, and returned to school again in 2011 to pursue the Master of Planning program at the University of Calgary. She is passionate about vibrant, healthy communities centered around walking, cycling, and public transit. She can be reached at jennifer.n.black@gmail.com.

2012 Annual CPAA Conference Highlights

The CPAA 2012 conference was another success! With close to 200 attendees, we explored the theme of *Planning for Complete Communities – How to Get There*. The conference was kicked off by the charismatic and energetic keynote speaker, Michael von Hausen. The conference offered attendees insight into how to create a complete community including what design elements are needed and advice on how municipalities can make it happen. The session topics included project management for municipalities, fiscal challenges facing municipalities, wildfires, working with your environmental footprint and even inter-municipal relationships. We had two days filled with education, networking, and fun! Thanks to all who joined us!

2012 CPAA Conference & Education Session Sponsors

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CPAA is grateful for the support of its sponsors, who made our conference possible. Thank you also to those who donated quality prizes to the bag auction, and to our delegates who supported the bag auction. All funds raised were in support of our student scholarships.

Upcoming Events

CIP/APPI Conference - The Great Exchange: Putting Ideas Into Action

October 9-12, 2012 - Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, Banff

The conference will bring together a wide array of professionals involved in planning to discuss how we are getting things done on the ground. For more information and registration: <http://cip2012.cip-icu.ca/english/index.htm>

Alberta Recreation & Parks Association Conference – A Catalyst for Creating our Future

October 18-20, 2012 – Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, Jasper

The 2012 ARPA Conference sets the stage for recreation and parks to be a key author in writing the story of Alberta's future. The conference theme reminds us ultimately that "quality of life" is an outcome we share. For more information and registration: <http://arpaonline.ca/events/arpa-annual-conference/registration/>

Emergency Social Services Forum "Sharing Solutions"

November 6, 2012 – Woodvale Community Facility, Edmonton

For more information please contact: Bonnie Stearns, City of Red Deer Social Planning
bonnie.stearns@reddeer.ca

Sustainability Resources Seminars

Dates and locations vary

Sustainability Resources has developed a suite of learning resources and tools that were designed in consultation with municipal leaders, respected water managers, and skilled practitioners from across Alberta. For upcoming seminars: <http://www.sustainabilitycircle.ca/>

University of Alberta Regional Planning Speakers Series

Dates and locations vary

The City-Region Studies Centre at the University of Alberta will be presenting a speaker series framed within two broad topics: Innovation and the Planning Community and Development of Sustainable Cities. For upcoming seminars: <http://www.crsc.ualberta.ca/>

University of Calgary Sustainability Seminar Series and Design Matters Series

Dates and locations vary

The Faculty of Environmental Design will be inviting sustainability and design professionals throughout the year to discuss their ideas, projects, and career experience in global thinking & environmental stewardship. The series engage interested citizens, students, public officials, and planners. For upcoming seminars: <http://evds.ucalgary.ca/event>

CPAA Annual Planning Conference

April 15-17, 2013 - Black Knight Inn, Red Deer

Please save the date! We are currently gearing up for the 2013 conference. Check out the next newsletter for information on next year's theme!

The CPAA's mission is to provide opportunities to share, promote, and encourage sound community planning among a full range of stakeholders.



We provide a forum for the discussion of community planning-related concepts, ideas and issues with a view towards solutions. We are a volunteer-based organization, comprised of members from diverse backgrounds and interests; the diversity of membership provides unique opportunities for exploring various aspects of community planning.

We Invite You to Get Involved!

Become a Member:

Membership affords students, professional planners, elected officials, development officers, development boards, and municipal committee members the opportunity to learn, express their viewpoints, and network. We offer three membership types:

- Students \$25/year
- Individual \$60/year
- Group \$180/year

To download our Membership Registration Form, please visit our website:

<http://www.cpaabiz.com/>

Write:

The Alberta Planning Exchange offers a forum to express your organization's views on community planning and provincial legislation, as well as a means of sharing the innovative planning projects you are involved with. We publish case studies, analyses of trends, profiles of noteworthy planners/policy-makers, summaries of best practices, book reviews, and editorials. Three print issues are published annually. Article submissions are accepted on an on-going basis; if you're interested in submitting an article, please contact us: cpaa@cpaa.biz.

Volunteer:

Volunteering provides members with a unique opportunity to contribute to the CPAA and the network of planning which broadens all professional networks. If you are interested in serving on one or more of the standing committees, you are encouraged to apply to these exciting and challenging volunteer roles by submitting an expression of interest letter to cpaa@cpaa.biz summarizing your interest and suitability for the role.