



## APA California Northern Minutes of the March 7, 2012 Board Meeting

Meeting Location: the City of Union City, 34009 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City, CA

*Board meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.*

### 1. Introductions/Welcome

Roll call:

p	Alexandra Barnhill		David Keyon		James Castañeda	p	Kristine Gaspar	x	Ronny Kraft
p	Andrea Ouse	x	Don Bradley	x	Janet Palma	x	Laura Thompson		Ruth Miller
x	Andy Waggoner	x	Eileen Whitty	x	Jeff Baker		Miroo Desai		Scott Davidson
x	Avalon Schultz		Elizabeth Caraker		Joanna Jensen	x	Naphtali Knox		Scott Edmonson
x	Brian Soland	x	Emy Mendoza	x	Juan Borrelli	x	Natalie de Leon		Stephen Avis
	Bryan Wenter		Erik Balsley	x	Justin Meek		Pierce MacDonald	x	Tania Sheyner
p	Colette Meunier	x	Hanson Hom		Katja Irvin		Rob Eastwood		Theresa Alster
p	Darcy Kremin	x	Hing Wong	x	Kay Cheng	x	Rodrigo Orduña		

x = in person | p = phone

Guests:

Devin Dombrowski

### 2. Website Preview

Devin provided a presentation on the Section’s new website. The site is not yet live but can be visited at [apa.devindombrowski.com](http://apa.devindombrowski.com).”

The Section’s current website is mostly viewed by planners (and no one else) during the weekday (and not the weekend). With this in mind, Devin created a home page with a number of “quick links” to make it easy for visitors to navigate the site. Links at the top of the home page are repeated at the bottom as well.

Devin and Ronny noted that additional content is still needed to fill in empty webpages and/or flesh out draft webpages. For example, while the North Bay and East Bay pages have content, the remaining RAC regions pages are blank. Ronny commented that Kristine devised a good look and style for her page that other RAC Chairs could use as a template.

Hing noted that an APA Chapter button is needed in addition to one for APA National.

Hanson requested a page to post meeting agendas and minutes.

Devin stated that the plan is to allow Board members to edit and add content to the website. He provided an example on how this could be done for upcoming events. The process would involve using a database in WordPress that links to the website, which in turn would be linked to the Section's LinkedIn blog. This option would allow event organizers to submit events that the Administrative Director (Justin Meek) and Newsletter Editor (Naphtali Knox) could then edit before approving – i.e., draft events would not be published directly to the website without administrative approval. This would take the place of the current procedure of using a Google Doc to keep track of upcoming events.

Board members expressed an interest in having a calendar on the Upcoming Events page.

The Board discussed how to directly post job postings to the website that would also be populated on the Section's LinkedIn and other sites. Devin, Ronny and Darcy will coordinate on this aspect of the website's functionality.

Ronny reiterated that not every Board member has sent her information needed for the website. She directed Board members to review the spreadsheet that lists out responsibilities. Ronny and Devin will give permission for Board members to edit their pages directly.

Hanson asked if there will be any training available. Devin noted that he can offer a class on how to edit and update the website. He further commented that he would like to establish rules on "how to make it look good," such as providing rules on "do's and don'ts." Topics will include writing styles, paragraph lengths, et cetera.

Naphtali asked if there is a target date for going live. Hanson asked about the content needed. Ronny noted that she wants everyone to have his or her content ready, and she outlined the following steps that will be taken: (1) provide members the ability to edit the website; (2) conduct a training; (3) insert content; and (4) then go live.

Devin said that he would have the site ready to be edited within two weeks, after which we can have the training and detailed directions.

Board members discussed with Devin different ideas and requests they have for the webpage. Ronny asked that Board members provide her with requests on what "subpages" they would like to have for their section of the webpage.

Ronny offered to send out an email with possible dates for holding an in-person training session.

### **3. Adoption of January 21 Minutes**

**January Meeting Minutes Review and Approval** – A few corrections were identified. On page one, the previous meeting minutes date (November 2, 2011) was listed instead of the correct date (January 21, 2012). On page two, the unidentified Handout number is 7. At the bottom of page five, the motion to take a straw poll on whether fees should be collected at a flat rate or on a tiered (percentage) basis was seconded by Eileen Whitty. Also on page five, Colette clarified that she thinks paying AICP dues – not National – is of little value to her. No other text edits, issues or questions were raised regarding the previous minutes.

*Motion by Juan Borrelli to approve the January 21, 2012, meeting minutes with the aforementioned corrections, seconded by Eileen Whitty, approved unanimously.*

#### **4. Board Director Update**

Hanson provided an update on Section positions potential membership dues increases and subvention reductions. Most Sections agreed that fee increases by the state Chapter are premature at this time, and that efforts are needed to further membership development. A follow up discussion among Section Directors will occur at an upcoming Budget Subcommittee meeting.

APA National will increase *national* fees in the Fall (October). Hing informed the Board that our Chapter president, Kevin Keller, has talked with National about the possibility of basing California Chapter fees on a percent of National fees other than current system of 25, 35, or 45 percent – 40 percent should be possible.

On the issue of reduced subventions, our Section voted to reduce subventions by \$4,000, with the understanding that other Sections would do the same. Three Sections favored the idea, three opposed it, and two provided no comment on the matter.

#### **5. Awards Program Update**

Eileen noted that the deadline is in another week, on March 16, 2012. Judges and facilitators are lined up. Volunteers too. The Awards Ceremony venue is scheduled for Friday, May 11, 2012, in San Francisco at Park 55 Wyndham Hotel, located at 55 Cyril Magnin Street near Market and Fifth Streets. The cost to attend is \$40 in advance and \$50 at the door. Eileen and Darcy are seeking event sponsors. According to Hing, Kevin Keller, APA Chapter President, is confirmed to attend.

The following Board members have volunteered to be on the Awards Subcommittee: Darcy, Juan, Hanson, Hing, Emy, Ronny, Andrea, and Eileen. This year's Awards Jury includes Yatman Kwan, Viktoriya Wise, Charles Bryant, Paul Waddell, and Daniel Zack. Kathryn Studwell has agreed to serve as Facilitator.

Juan inquired if a special eBlast could be sent out to remind people to submit an application. Andrea noted that she has fielded "a typical amount of inquiries" at this point in time, suggesting that the Section will receive a typical number of submissions by March 16. Nonetheless, Rodrigo will send out a special eBlast, after Andrea provides a short write-up for him to use.

#### **6. Mentorship Program Update**

Andy recounted how he kicked off another year of the Section's mentorship program. This year has one more mentor and fewer mentees, which makes the ratio of mentors and mentees closer to 1:1. Altogether, 16 mentors and 19 mentees are participating in the program. Andy praised Natalie for her help in ensuring the evening kick-off event went well, noting that the program is off to another good start. In addition, AICP members will receive one CM credit for attending

the kickoff event. More networking events are planned, and many of them will offer CM credits, too.

Andy discussed the possibility of revising how mentors and mentees are brought into the program. In the future, he suggested opening the application process in October for mentees only; close the application window; determine how many mentees signed up; and then open another window for mentors. This would allow the program to better match the mentees' needs with appropriate mentors.

Emy commented that this is how the WTS sets up their mentorship program: first mentees and then mentors.

## **7. eNews Responsibility/Membership List**

Naphtali reiterated what he provided in the Board meeting agenda packet (see Handout 6, pages 7-8). Three more eNews will be sent out this year as compared to last year's number of eNews blasts, for a total of 33 for the year. The next one will be on March 21 – just to announce *Northern News*, and nothing else. The amount of material typically in eNews is driving the decision to have eNews for just *Northern News*. Naphtali noted that the second announcement that included the latest issue of *Northern News* saw a 25 percent bump in viewership (“clicks”).

Hanson remarked that members have come to expect eNews to arrive in their inbox on a regular timeframe and the Section should be careful to not send out too many “special” emails.

Rodrigo made sure at the meeting to find out that everyone received the most recent eNews, since some had not received eNews in February.

The Board discussed who should be on different lists for receiving eNews blasts (e.g., YPG, BAPDA). Rodrigo will explore options to “clean up” the numerous lists – there are 16 in total.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of restricting access to *Northern News* as a form of membership benefit versus the objective of increasing the number people who read the newsletter. The general consensus among Board members is that increasing readership is of most importance, and actions that would reduce readership should be avoided.

## **8. San Jose State Sponsorship Proposal**

Hanson made known that SJSU Urban and Regional Planning Department's planned trip to Biloxi, Mississippi, for a team of graduate planning students to develop a Post-Katrina Economic Development and Housing Assessment Plan fell through. The Executive Committee had allocated \$1,000 to help fund this trip. SJSU is working on developing another proposal that they hope to apply the \$1,000 towards, which is envisioned to involve students working with Greenbelt Alliance on public advocacy concerns. Hanson will talk with Laurel Prevetti about her thoughts on Greenbelt Alliance. Specifically, they will discuss concerns about supporting an advocacy group. Otherwise Hanson commented that the proposal sounds like a worthwhile project.

In response to a question about the Section's non-profit status, Naphtali noted that it is "501.C6" which allows for public advocacy activities that inform, educate, and promote the organization's professional interests.

Juan discussed the plight of AICP members who need help obtaining the required number of CM credits before the grace period ends on April 30<sup>th</sup>. He suggested RAC Chair consider having events before this date to help people that need CM credits obtain them. More local event opportunities are needed for those individuals who cannot make the National Conference in mid April, helping ensure they do not lose their AICP status.

## **9. Board Retreat Follow-up Items**

Hanson brought up recent Board vacancies. Since Pierce MacDonald resigned as Co-Webmaster, Ronny will take on the big task of being the sole Webmaster until someone elects to help take on the shared responsibility of managing the Section's website.

Kay Cheng resigned as Planning Diversity Co-Director. Hanson will talk with Miroo Desai to see if she feels another person is needed to assist her as a Co-Director.

### **Adoption 2012 Goals and Assignments**

Hanson directed the Board's attention to Handout 4 (APA Northern Section Goals). In discussing this year's goals, Andy noted that the membership flyer needs to be updated. Emy commented that there should be something on the Section's website that describes membership benefits. Similarly, many Board members expressed support for the idea that a brochure highlighting member benefits at the state level should be produced for all California Chapter members.

*Motion by Rodrigo Orduña to adopt the Board 2012 goals, seconded by Jeff Baker, approved unanimously.*

### **Advertising/Revenue Enhancement Subcommittee**

Scott Davidson notified Hanson in advance of the meeting that he would not be able to attend to discuss calling card advertising. He plans to organize a subcommittee meeting and report out at the May Board meeting.

### **Membership Program Subcommittee**

Rodrigo stated that he would like to distribute the eNews to a broad audience, which would include non-APA members, in order to publicize the Northern Section and outreach to potential new members. He intends to send an eNews with an updated flyer, which will direct members to the new website. He mentioned that the notion of a "teaser article" is new to him, and he would like some help in learning how to do this. He restated what he heard from Naphtali, namely the newsletter readership is low and creating a "membership wall" may be counterproductive. He plans to think carefully about potential tradeoffs between membership numbers and advertising revenue.

Hanson, in recapping the ideas discussed at the meeting, such as charging non-members to attend Northern Section events, stated that he would like to give the committee more time to develop a report for the Board to review. These good ideas could then be discussed at the next Board meeting in May.

### **Professional Development Subcommittee**

Tania discussed the goal to further simplify event logistics. She recommended using Eventbrite.com to organize and publicize events, which she said was a better online tool than PayPal for organizing and publicizing events because it has more logistical functions. She also mentioned that Scott is “a wealth of information” on using Eventbrite.com.

Colette and Tania talked about holding ethics events “one per cycle.” Colette expressed the desire to give people enough lead time for them to make plans in their schedules to attend. She also noted that while there is not enough time to organize an event by April, she is in the beginning stages of organizing one for the Fall. Like before, this event will be a combination of ethics and law.

Tania noted that she will explore webinar options, too. She has heard good things about GoToMeeting.com; however, the expense of this online conferencing tool may be prohibitively costly.

Tania is working with YPG on organizing events. They plan on holding an event in June to help recent graduates review their resume in preparation of finding work.

### **Photos Storage**

Natalie has looked into different options for storing photographs. The main criteria she used in evaluating different options were (a) was the site easy to use?; (b) can it store a large number of photos?; (c) does it allow for photos to be organized into folders?; (d) could photos be transferred to the Section’s website?; (e) does it allow for captions to describe the photos?; and (f) would it be easy to draw from to produce the end-of-the-year slideshow? She recommended using Picasa. It is inexpensive and meets all of the aforementioned criteria. She noted that the YPG have been using Picasa for some time without any problems.

Natalie will create a new Gmail address (norcalapa@gmail.com) to allow the Board to upload image files into Picasa for storing photographs.

Hanson requested Natalie and James to prepare guidelines/recommendations for review at the next Board meeting.

## **10. Directors’ Reports Highlights/Announcements**

Hanson reminded Board members that the SPUR San Jose Launch Party will be on March 8 in downtown San Jose. Several Board members indicated that they would be attending the event. He also thanked Avalon for hosting tonight’s Board meeting.

Janet noted that the recent planning commissioner event was a hit, and more are planned. A nominal fee will be charged for the next event to ensure everyone who RSVPs shows up. (Six out of 30 people cancelled for the previous event.)

Naphtali requested that future agenda packets be readable/searchable PDFs, rather than scanned images saved as multiple PDF files. Hanson explained he does not have the Adobe software to combine PDF files nor to convert Word files into readable/searchable PDF files. To

rectify the issue, Hanson will provide Ronny the Word files for her to convert into PDFs and then compile them into a single PDF document.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:38 p.m.**

**Next Meeting: Thursday, May 3, at TBD**

**Summary of Action Items:**

1. Ronny to send out an email with directions for adding content and possible dates for holding in-person training.
2. Board members will provide Ronny with content for their assigned web pages.
3. Natalie and James to prepare guidelines/recommendation on uploading photographs to Picasa.
4. Rodrigo will convene the Membership Subcommittee to develop a recommendation for Board review.
5. Scott Davidson will convene the Advertising/Revenue Enhancement Subcommittee to develop a recommendation for Board review.
6. Tania will convene the Professional Development Subcommittee to develop a recommendation for Board review.