

Northern Section Board Reports

November 7, 2012

Director – Hanson Hom, AICP

See email from Hanson.

Director Elect – Jeff Baker

Elections: We have one candidate running for the Administrative Director Position. Voting occurs in November and ballots are due by December 1st. Don't forget to vote!

Annual Board Retreat: The annual retreat is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, January 19, 2013.

Immediate Past Director – Darcy Kremin, AICP

No report

Administrative Director – Justin Meek, AICP

No report

Treasurer – Laura Thompson

The Northern Section's 2012 adopted budget has been posted on the website under "About Us" and a disclaimer has been added about our financial reserves.

Awards Program Directors – Andrea Ouse, ACIP & Eileen Whitty, ACIP

The Directors are preparing for the Planning Awards 2013 Program and to that end will have three posters ready for the Holiday Party on November 30th to advertise and remind planners to apply for awards as well as asking for those interested to apply to be considered as Jurors.

In December awards materials will be readied for posting on the website – application, rules, and instructions, and the list of categories.

In January the awards materials will be posted for use by planners with a due date of mid-March. The Jurors will be selected and reminded that they will be reviewing and grading applications between mid-March and mid-April. During this time we'll prepare flyers for online registration via Eventbrite for the Gala Event at Scotts in Oakland on May 17, 2013.

Mid-March will be the awards application submittal deadline.

In mid-April there will be a Juror Deliberation meeting to choose winners. Winners will be notified.

Communications Director – Erik Balsley

Facebook – Likes up to 121 from 105. Our maximum weekly reach went up to 220 and then went down to 59. At that time, I decided to focus posts exclusively on articles from the newspapers, blogs, and journals within our region. As of writing we have risen to 134 people on weekly reach. It appears that ideally this page should serve as a clearinghouse for our region.

Twitter – I obtained the account information to our Twitter account. I am using it to primarily send reminders of upcoming events. As it is a new platform for me – we'll establish its overall character in time.

LinkedIn – 727 members in our group, we had about 690 at the last meeting. Darcy and I are posting jobs as we find them, no one is directly posting. Often it takes a bit of time to format positions correctly and provide essential information. In the future we could make it so that outside firms can post directly. The

posts will have to meet certain format guidelines to be posted for free. If the guidelines can't be met, they would send the announcements to us and we would format for a small "format fee".

eNews – I accidentally missed one of the deadlines due to date confusion. The edition went out on a Thursday instead of Monday. We did not see complaints. We are generally stable at between 21.5% and 26.4% for our open rate. Some subtle differentiation in format and material listed might boost these numbers.

Section Historian – Juan Borrelli, AICP

No report

Membership Director – N/A

No report

Planning Commissioner Representative – Janet Palma, AICP

No report

CPF Liaison - Hing Wong, AICP

The California Planning Foundation (CPF) Auction which was held during the APA California Conference at Rancho Mirage, in addition to donations received in 2012, raised over \$31,000. This breaks last year's record and is an all-time high. All funds will be used for next year's scholarships. The Northern Section won the Section Challenge with \$2,050 raised from the three packages during the live auction. Special thanks to Juan Borrelli, Hanson Hom, Eileen Whitty, and Hing Wong for their contributions. Congratulations to a successful auction and for our Section getting top honors!

**Planning Diversity Directors: Miroo Desai, AICP & Kay Cheng
Report from the Diversity Group**

The Diversity Group hosted the last "Planners of Color" social mixer of the year on October 18, 2012 Comal restaurant in Berkeley.

In addition, I attended the state APA conference and assisted in putting together the Diversity Summit. This year's topic was "Census Trends for Planning and Policy" and the key note speaker was Dr. Leo Strada. The national APA president Mitchell Silver also gave a brief speech. The Summit was well attended with nearly 50 people in audience.

Young Planners Group Co-Directors - Natalie de Leon & Avalon Schultz

No report

Mentorship Program - Committee Members: Natalie de Leon, Kevin Gardiner, AICP, Hanson Hom, AICP, Darcy Kremin, AICP, Whitney McNair, AICP, Emy Mendoza, Andrew Waggoner (lead), and Hing Wong, AICP

No report

University Liaison – Emy Mendoza

No report

Student Representative: San Jose State University – Veronica Flores

The UPC held two successful events in September. Both PARK(ing) Day and the Fall Symposium were well attended. The UPC would like to thank the APA Board for their generous donation again.

The UPC also launched the Peer Advisor Connection (PAC). PAC is a peer mentorship program that pairs interested first year students with knowledgeable second year students. UPC hopes to continue and grow PAC in the coming years.

Upcoming Events

PARK(ing) Day

Following the success of last year's PARK(ing) Day, the UPC plans on building a temporary "parklet" for San Jose's annual PARK(ing) Day event on Friday, September 21st. The UPC will transform three parking spots adjacent to the campus into an interactive display visitors will gain a better understanding of what exactly urban planning is. Through a 3D-cardboard building charette, urban planning reading materials, and the "What would you want to see in your community?" opinion poster visitors can get a better idea of planning.

Fall 2012 Symposium

The UPC is planning a fall symposium focused on getting the public and private sectors to work together, specifically in the fields of transportation and transit-oriented development, affordable housing, and downtown revitalization. The symposium is scheduled for Saturday, September 29th on the SJSU campus from 11:00am-3:30pm. The keynote speaker will be Vice-Mayor Emily Gabel-Luddy FASLA. Emily has over 30 years of practical working experience and was instrumental in implementing the City of Los Angeles's Small Lot Ordinance.

Student Representative: UC Berkeley – Ruth Miller

No Report

AICP Director – Don Bradley, AICP

The Northern California Section of APA sponsored AICP Exam Prep Work Shop series has met 3 times at San Jose State University this fall to prepare candidates for the national exam being held throughout the nation from 5 - 19 November, 2012. We met on Sept. 15th, Oct. 6th, and Oct. 27th and will meet for the last session on Nov. 10th. While we have about 10 candidates enrolled only a few are planning to sit the exam this Fall. The others are preparing for the nation exam in May of 2013.

I attended the California APA conference in Rancho Mirage, CA from 20-24 October and attended several sessions on Planning Ethics and Healthy Cities as well as the AICP Planning Jeopardy (formerly the AICP College Bowl) and spoke to interested planners intending to sit the exam in the future. A former Nor Cal Sec AICP workshop attendee spoke on the panel and our own Past Director of the Northern Section and present VP for Professional Development was the score keeper for the teams.

Our Northern Section team won by a wide margin. I suggested to the candidates that they enroll in the work shop, find a study group or study-buddy, take the practice tests early, allow adequate time to study individually, get plenty of rest, relaxation, and exercise and do not try to cram for such a broad test, think like a liberal planner, concentrate on the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, brush up on their planning history, theory, and the classic planning and zoning law and important court cases.

I look forward to again inviting former work shop members and recent test passers, guest expert, pro bono, planners and lawyers speak at the Spring 2013 series covering each of the test domains on dates to soon be determined in Jan., Feb., March, April, and May next year for the 34th time and maintaining our 96% pass rate tradition.

Legislative Director – Alexandra Barnhill

2012 Legislative Year in Review for Land Use Planners

September 30th marked the end of another busy California legislative session. While it is not possible to summarize all the actions taken on bills that are relevant to land use planners, some of the most significant developments are described below.

Redevelopment-related bills vetoed as “premature.” The loss of redevelopment as a tool for economic development has deeply impacted local governments. Numerous bills were drafted this session to create a replacement tool for redevelopment; however, none of them secured the Governor’s approval.

- SB 214 (Wolk), AB 2144 (Perez), and AB 2551 (Hueso) would have modified the cumbersome rules for the establishment of Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs) by local governments.
- AB 345 (Torres) would have made changes to the Community Redevelopment Law regarding redevelopment agencies’ use of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund.
- SB 1156 (Steinberg) would have allowed local governments to establish a Sustainable Communities Investment Authority to finance activities within a specified area.

Though these bills were not signed into law, the Governor indicated via his veto messages that he is committed to working on revitalization efforts in upcoming sessions. For now, Brown wants local agencies to focus their efforts on the winding down of redevelopment.

Although the Governor does not yet broadly support the use of IFDs for redevelopment, one exception was made. Brown signed AB 2259 (Ammiano), which creates an IFD for San Francisco’s upcoming America’s Cup yacht race. This, along with the veto messages, signals that IFDs or other redevelopment replacement tools may be approved in the future.

Parking Reform measure fails. AB 904 (Skinner) would have imposed a single statewide parking standard for both nonresidential and residential infill and close-to-transit projects across California. Facing strong opposition, the author dropped the bill. Similar proposals also failed to gain support in prior sessions. APA California conceptually supports reduced or “smart” parking requirements near transit-rich areas and has agreed to work with the bill’s sponsors to develop a new parking proposal for 2013. Northern California APA will be hosting a forum representing all stakeholders’ views on this topic on November 9, 2012. More information on the workshop is available at <http://norcalapa.org>.

Wildfire Prevention Planning bill approved. After many unsuccessful attempts, Senator Kehoe finally secured adoption of a bill that requires local governments to plan for wildfire hazards. Senate Bill 1241 amends the Planning and Zoning Law, requiring cities and counties to review and update their safety element. The Office of Planning and Research will draft guidelines for how plans should identify and address fire danger. Then, local agencies must amend their safety element by 2014 to include detailed surveys and maps identifying areas of high fire severity zones and addressing the risk of fire in State Responsibility areas.

Housing Element Law clarified. Last year, SB 244 (Wolk) amended the Planning and Zoning law to require cities to update their land use element to plan for disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the city’s sphere of influence. It was unclear under the law whether local governments were required to undertake new studies or analysis to satisfy this obligation. SB 1090 (Committee on Governance and Finance), the Local Government Omnibus bill, contains a provision that clarifies that the responsibilities of each city to update their General Plan is based upon available information, such as the data and analysis provided by a LAFCo.

Solar Energy Permit bills signed. Under current law, local agencies must administratively approve applications to install solar energy systems and only charge a building permit fee that reflects the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service. The Governor signed into law two new bills relating to solar residential building permit fees:

- AB 1801 (Campos) clarifies that a local agency's solar residential building permit fees are an issue of statewide concern and must be based on the costs to issue the permit, not the value of the solar system or other factors.
- SB 1222 (Leno) places a cap on building permit fees on what local agencies can charge applicants to install solar residential systems unless the agency can justify their "reasonable costs" with detailed findings. This bill was controversial because it may establish a precedence of legislation placing arbitrary caps on permit fees for specific types of projects.

Together with the Office of Planning and Research's California Solar Permitting Guidebook and the County Planning Directors' California Solar Planning Guide, these legislative developments provide a base of information for local agencies to appropriately permit residential solar systems.

Cottage Food Operations bill approved. Under the gut-and-amend bill AB 1616 (Gatto), cities and counties must permit cottage food operations in residential dwellings by right. Alternatively, the agency may grant such operations a non-discretionary or use permit, so long as the operation complies with certain limited restrictions such as concentration, parking, and noise. The bill also effectively shifts the enforcement obligation of cottage food operations from local health departments to local planning departments. APA California has a number of concerns about the bill and is seeking clarification regarding this bill's implications for local regulation of the point of sale of cottage food products, application of home occupation standards, and permit fees.

CEQA only modestly reformed. In late August, SB 317 (Rubio) was introduced as a gut-and-amend bill that would have made significant changes to the enforcement of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). While the bill was ultimately killed, this effort highlighted the deep divide between labor and other groups seeking CEQA reform and environmental groups who are opposed to the weakening of CEQA.

Several modest changes to CEQA were able to survive the legislative process. Most notably, a handful of new exemptions were approved, such as AB 1665 (Galgiani) for railroad crossings, AB 1486 (Lara) for roadway improvements, and AB 2245 (Smyth) for bicycle lanes. Unless otherwise provided for in the law, the statutes enacted by this new legislation take effect January 1, 2013.

Sustainability Committee Co-Chairs – Scott Edmondson, AICP & Katja Irvin, AICP

WEB SITE. Worked with Ronnie and Devin to develop the Committee's web area further, including basic blog functionality: <http://norcalapa.org/sustainability-blog/>. Looking forward to the Discussion Board that Ronnie and Devin will implement for the whole section in the near future.

PLAN-IT. Prepared the November Plan-it sustainably column on San Francisco's recent initiatives: <http://norcalapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/PlanIT-Nov12.pdf>, and prepared a longer version with a more complete set of links to related sustainability plans and other resources on the new blog: <http://norcalapa.org/sustainability-blog/san-francisco-at-the-leading-edge-of-sustainability/>

TOUR. NASA has agreed to reschedule the Sustainability Base Tour. Date TBD, probably January/February.

RESEARCH. Continued the collaborative research project on state-level sustainability initiatives with the Colorado State Sustainability Committee in preparation for the 2013 National conference facilitated discussion.

Newsletter Editor – Naphtali Knox, FAICP

No report

Webmaster – Ronny Kraft

- Devin and I met with the Sustainability Directory to work on the Sustainability section of the website. As a result:
 - Sub-navigation was added to the Sustainability Page
 - A title and subheading were added to the Sustainability Blog
 - Comments were fixed on the Blog
- Created a new budget page on the site and added content.
- Added instruction for using Picasa to manage the Section's photos to the Board Information page.
- I spoke with Josh Hohn to plan the Energy section of the website. Devin is working on the improvements.
- Updated the bylaws documents posted to the website.

Web Stats for the last 30 days:

Traffic this October is the highest month of traffic on the site ever.

Total visits: 2,220

Average number of pages per visit: 1.97

Average visit duration: 00:01:50

Top Referral Traffic

calapa.org - 93 visits

eventbrite.com - 19 visits

linkedin.com - 12 visits

Social Media Traffic

LinkedIn - 70.59%

Facebook - 23.53%

Twitter - 5.88%

The most notable analytic is that the enews is generating huge spikes in traffic. Nearly 300 visits on those days compared to the typical 50-100.

Regional Advisory Committees

North Bay – Kristine Gaspar

North Bay RAC does not have any events for the remainder of the calendar year, but we are diligently working on setting the calendar for 2013 to start the year of right.

East Bay - Joanna Jansen/Andy Waggoner

No report

Monterey Bay – Elizabeth Caraker

No report

Peninsula – James Castañeda

No report

Redwood Coast – Stephen Avis

September

Monthly Brown bag lunch program – **Specific Plans 1.0** CM Pending

Humboldt county's first specific plan in recent memory is being prepared by LACO Associates a local engineering and planning firm, for an area within the City of Arcata. APA members Mike Nelson, AICP and Randy Rouda of LACO provided an overview of how specific plans can aid both the community and

future developers. Several examples of specific plans for small rural communities were reviewed. These events are free of charge. In attendance were 22 people.

October

Monthly Brown bag lunch program – Humboldt Bay and Sea Level Rise

Local environmental planner Aldaron Laird walked and traveled by kayak around the perimeter of Humboldt Bay to examine historic levees, marshes, tidal zones, creeks, and aging infrastructure in an effort to better understand the bay's dynamics and to help predict where future flooding and levee failure will occur. Because US Highway 101 passes adjacent to the bay, State and local planners will be confronted with transportation challenges for the next several decades. Seventeen people attended.

San Francisco – Brian Soland

August 22 – Discussion: SF's Climate Action Strategies

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently studied how strategies in San Francisco's Climate Action Plan could improve local and regional air quality by reducing other air pollutants that are typically released along with climate-changing carbon dioxide. Meredith Kurpius of the EPA, Richard Walter and Tony Held of ICF Consulting and Adam Stern, climate & energy program manager with the City of San Francisco, discuss this revealing study and the next steps for the city. This event had approximately 100 attendees.

September 26 – Planners Happy Hour

We joined up with the happy hour group T.O.B. (Transit Oriented Beer) at Local Edition, 691 Market Street, San Francisco. This event had approximately 50 attendees.

Upcoming Events

There will be upcoming SPUR Cosponsored events in November and December and potentially a happy hour during that time as well.

South Bay - Katja Irvin

1. Contributed article to Northern News about Bicycle Planning event.
2. NASA Sustainability Base Tour postponed for various reasons. Plan to reschedule for early 2013 and possibly combine with a social event.
3. Newby Island Resource Recovery Center Tour will not be full. We will have more to report at board meeting.
4. Got CM credits for two events sponsored by Sunnyvale Cool Cities (Sierra Club).