

ALBERTA PLANNING EXCHANGE

The Newsletter of the
Community Planning Association of Alberta



July 2010



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Gloria Wilkinson

Thank you to our delegates for a hugely successful conference in Red Deer again for 2010. It is so much fun to revisit with friends and make new ones each year, as our Association delivers the learning experiences for the Community Planning scene in our province. Please all take time to go to our updated website to view the presentations from the Conference. By your feedback forms, the conference will again be held in Red Deer; April 4 – 6, 2011, at the Black Knight Inn.

I want to recognize our retiring Directors for their hard work. As you know CPAA is unique in that we are not only a governance Board but a working Board. Our retiring Directors are: Past-Chair, Tim Burton; Student Director, Drew Gale; and Directors Lloyd Giebelhaus, George Gehrke, Nick Paladino, and Bob van Wegen. In particular we need to recognize the huge amount of work contributed by Tim Burton while he was Chair. It is too bad he had to miss all our “remarks” at the conference!

We are off to another great year with enthusiastic Board members and lots of new ideas. We will hold a retreat in September to firm up our strategic plan (2009 – 2012). Moving forward this year, we will continue our outreach efforts with the universities to encourage more rural components in their programs. Stronger canvassing efforts will also be made to increase our membership.

Stay in touch – we are your conduit for Community Planning communication.

MEET YOUR 2010 CPAA BOARD & STAFF

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 second-term Elected Official for the County of Grande Prairie. She is also Chair of the County's Municipal Planning Commission. Leanne is serving her second year on the CPAA Board and is a newly elected Vice-Chair of the Board.

Liz Austrom, Vice-Chair (South)

Liz is a recent graduate of the University of Calgary's Master of Environmental Design Program and is employed as a Project Planner with the Town of Chestermere. This is her first term on the CPAA Board and is a newly elected Vice-Chair South of the Board.

Don Schultz, Treasurer

Don is a planning consultant working out of Calgary with both private and public sector projects and clients across Alberta. He served as a CPAA Director for two terms from 2001 through 2007 and returned to the CPAA Board of Directors last year.

Lynne Dale, Director

Lynne has more than 25 years experience in planning, working with a variety of clients including the Cities of Ottawa, Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta Municipal Affairs, and the Calgary Regional Partnership. During the past year, she has become certified to teach English as a Second Language.

Glen Lawrence, Director

Glen Lawrence was first elected as a Councillor for Strathcona County in 1998 and was most recently re-elected in 2007. He has his own business, Energy Smart Homes, engaged in building energy efficient houses. He also raises saddle horses on his 200-acre Ministik area farm.

Beth Sanders, Director

Beth is a freelance community planner working across Alberta with a focus on strategic community initiatives and leadership development.

Jolene Tejkl, Director

Jolene graduated from the University of Waterloo's School of Planning in 2006 and has been employed with Lacombe County as an Assistant Planner/Development Officer ever since.

Jamal Ramjohn, Director

Jamal is a rural and regional land use planner and an Associate with Dillon Consulting Limited. He is a former Council Member and Past-President of the Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners.

Richard Neufeld, Director

Richard is currently in private practice serving both municipal and private developer clients. He has more than 21 years of planning experience in Alberta, primarily in the north central and northwestern areas of the province.

Peter Lehner, Director

Peter Lehner is a Technician of Plasser Canada. He is a graduate of the College of Marine-Technology in Austria and has 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. Peter is married to his lovely wife Geri and has four children. For the last ten years they have lived in Stony Plain, AB.

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.

Kayla Rogers, Student Director

Kayla is studying planning through the University of Alberta's Augustana College Campus in Camrose.

Vicki Hackl, Association Secretary

The CPAA Secretary, Vicki Hackl, is a person on whom the Board depends to get its work done. Vicki has been Secretary since July 2006 and has been indispensable in helping us put through many improvements in the activities and operations of the Association and the Board.

2010 ANNUAL CPAA CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Jamal Ramjohn

(adapted from Dr. Tim Burton's Comprehensive Evaluation Report)

- **Introduction**

66 / 155 registered Conference Delegates submitted an evaluation.

- **Pre-Conference Education Session**

70% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Plenary: A Watershed and Landscape Approach to Regional Planning**

80% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Plenary: From Term Papers to Planning**

86% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Q & A Panel on Municipalities: Amalgamation and Dissolution**

93% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Why Planning Matters**

100% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

Concurrent Sessions

- **1A. Balanced Rural Communities**

56% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **1B. New Tools for Community Planning**

85% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **2A. Expanding the Boundaries of Planning**

95% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **2B. Getting to the Heart of Sustainable Urbanization**

97% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **3A. Regional Delivery of Municipal Services**

72% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **3B. Making Space for the New Family farm**

94% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

Social Functions

- **Conference Reception**

98% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Conference Luncheon**

96% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Conference Banquet**

100% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

Conference Organization

- **Pre-Conference Information**

84% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Conference Registration Process**

98% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Services Provided by the Host Hotel (Black Knight Inn)**

95% of those who gave a rating thought it was Very Good or Good.

- **Things Liked & Disliked About the Conference**

46% of the respondents commented on things they liked.

42% of the respondents commented on things they disliked.

Conference Format & Location

- **Concurrent Sessions**

82% responded in favour of staying with two Options in each Concurrent Session Period.

Conference Location

- Delegates were invited to share their preferences for the location of the Annual Conference. The most preferred location by far is Red Deer, with 62% of respondents giving it as their first preference.

CPAA wishes to thank all of the speakers who took time to present their ideas, thoughts and experiences for the consideration of our members.

2010 ANNUAL CPAA EDUCATION SESSION COMMENTS

Gloria Wilkinson

I sincerely apologize for the lack of delivery on the promise for the education session. I was extremely disappointed. I advertised that the government would be able to deliver on the draft regulations that are intended to give us all guidance on how to implement the four tools for agricultural land holders under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. That did not happen – instead we received the same information as last year – which I found out on the Friday before the conference. Please attend again as that is the first time in a long time CPAA has not been able to deliver.

BITS & PIECES

Free 2011 Conference Registration

As in previous years, a draw was made among 2010 Annual Conference delegates who completed Conference and Education Session evaluations and who provided contact information. The prize was one free Registration for the 2011 Conference. And the winner is...**Marg Lowen** from Rosemary, AB. We look forward to seeing you at the 2011 Conference, Marg!

CPAA Conference Scholarship Winner

We are pleased to announce this year's recipient of Community Planning Association of Alberta Conference Scholarship. Applicants were required to attend the 2010 Conference and to write a short (3 to 5 page) essay discussing the Conference experience and how it relates to their planning education and career intentions. Scholarships are valued at \$1,000 each. The sole recipient of this year's award is Kate G. van

Fraassen, enrolled in the Planning program in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. Congratulations, Kate!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Gloria Wilkinson, CPAA Chair, for her dedication (over six years!) to the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC). On June 10, 2010, the BRBC was presented with an Emerald Award in the Category of “Community Group” for their Water Management Plan Implementation initiative. The Emerald Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements by Albertans committed to protecting, preserving, enhancing and sustaining our environment. www.emeraldfoundation.ca.

Administration Contract Renewed

On behalf of Gloria Wilkinson and the rest of the CPAA Board, we are very pleased to announce that the Association has renewed our contract for another two years with Vicki Hackl, CPAA Secretary.

2010 CPAA CONFERENCE & EDUCATION SESSION SPONSORS

Diamond Sponsor

Dillon Consulting Limited

Platinum Sponsors

United Communities
Red Deer County
Qualico Communities
Armin A. Preiksaitis & Associates
Strathcona County
The City of Calgary

Gold Sponsors

Brown & Associates Planning Group
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O2 Planning + Design
County of Grande Prairie
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County of Lethbridge
Northern Sunrise County
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Bronze Sponsors

City of Red Deer
Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation
Catalyst Solutions
Rocky View County
Brownlee LLP
Millennium Geomatics
MMM Group

Contributing Sponsors

MD of Greenview
Parkland County
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada

Conference Grant

Alberta Municipal Affairs

CPAA is grateful for the support of its Conference and Education Session Sponsors whose total contributions of more than \$25,000 enabled us to continue to offer registration fees that make ours the best-value-for-money Planning conference in Canada.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 18, 2010

Red Deer, Alberta

CLEAN Technologies Convention

Former Moderators, Panelists, Attendees and other clean-tech interests will be gathering to review, revise and cast their votes for approving panel resolutions and the merit of a binding industry resolution "a new found respect for the environment" proceeding to an election of the proposed Alberta Clean-tech industry Alliance.

www.abctech.ca

October 4 - 7, 2010

Lloydminster, Saskatchewan

26th Annual, Alberta Development Officers of Alberta (ADOA) Conference "Changing Borders" at the Lloydminster Exhibition Association.

www.adoa.net

October 17 - 20, 2010

Lake Louise, Alberta

Alberta Association Canadian Institute of Planners, Conference 2010

The AACIP 2010 Conference will take place at The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise.

www.aacip.com

CPAA Scholarship – Winning Essay Submission

Kate G. van Fraassen

Adapting to Growth and Change in Alberta: Opening the box to new ideas and approaches

Three days spent with Albertan planners, civic politicians, community leaders, and fellow planning students has reinforced one major point for me; Albertans have a strong ethic of conservation and dedication to their communities. A commitment to community was strongly evident in personal conversations shared with community planners, civic politicians and community leaders working hard to keep Albertan communities vibrant, healthy, and ecologically sound. This personal dedication is not only admirable, but one of the greatest resources of this province. Community planning is not a science; it is a human activity of balancing countless interdependent variables while making decisions about things that do not yet exist. For this acrobatic policy making action to be successful committed and passionate individuals such as those that attended the 2010 Community Planning of Association of Alberta Conference are crucial.

Human capital of passion and commitment is becoming increasingly important as the complexity of planning issues and challenges continues to expand. Albertan communities are facing a number of challenges ranging from global economic shifts, to ecological pressures, to demographic changes in response to urbanization. A major theme I took from the conference is the importance of enabling adaptation to these complex challenges while not compromising the way of life in Albertan communities. Two responses to these challenges stood out: re-visiting regional planning and governance, and out-of-the-box thinking. Incorporating these approaches into community planning can raise the resilience of Alberta's communities and empower them to be proactive vis-à-vis the complex challenges they face.

The planning challenges of today are not only complex, they are multi-scalar and interdependent; a sound planning response needs to mirror these characteristics. The conservation of water resources depends upon responsible usage in urban centres, agriculture practices, appropriate allocation to industry, low-impact recreation, etcetera. Attacking the problem from just one of these entry points will not ensure adequate water supply for future generations. Similarly, if the desired outcome is preservation of Alberta's natural capital, responsible planning solely at the rural scale will not be adequate. Coordination between denser urban planning and thoughtful land-use at the regional scale will be necessary. However, as brought up at the conference, until recently little attention in Alberta was given to regional planning.

The result of this lack of attention is evident in the expanding suburban fringes of Calgary and Edmonton, the fragmentation of natural spaces, and in the eating up of agricultural land. As discussed, the new provincial Land Use Framework is nudging our communities towards more regional planning, however much work is needed. The framework provides an opportunity for community leaders and planners to re-think the human-made boundaries we have assigned to our province and consider how our communities fit into the greater whole. In short it is an opportunity to think big, an opportunity we need to take seriously.

The sessions by Brian Austrom, and Dave Dittrick and Mark Seasons drove home the importance of regional governance and planning. The discussion of municipal amalgamation and dissolution described the dire state of many small communities in our province, and how a lack of consideration for regional planning or governance has left some communities with little choice. This is not where we want communities to end up, planning should be proactive not an act of survival. An honest discussion about the state of our regions and how communities of all sizes can work together is needed. These conversations are not necessarily straight forward nor void of emotion, they involving asking tough questions. But by asking the questions we may find we share more in common than we once thought, and our collective efforts and learning will bring us closer to innovative solutions.

I also came to realize through the tales of struggles in small rural communities that there are no purely urban or rural issues; the actions in one affect the realities of the other. We need to expand our thinking and considerations beyond political boundaries to the greater regions are communities are nested within. A reconsideration of regional governance and embracing regional planning is a step towards more comprehensive planning solutions for our province and all its communities.

Part of asking ourselves the tough questions is opening up to out-of-the-box thinking. While the stories of municipal amalgamation and dissolution tugged at our heartstrings, many of the presenters encouraged creative thinking and unconventional solutions. We, as a province need this if we are going to adapt to the complex contemporary planning issues we face. Jane Dauphinee's discussion of her experience with Smokey Lake County was both inspiring and intimidating. Inspiring in that her ability to work with the county to tackle big issues in new ways pushed many of the conference delegates to reconsider their conceptions of rural planning approaches, intimidating in that many questions remain unanswered.

This shaking feeling of being pushed out of our comfort zones is a necessary sensation in Alberta. Farms are going up for sale, young people are migrating to cities, and watersheds are continuously being over-tapped. We need some new ideas. I recognize that these new ideas still have some maturing to do, as the discussion following Jane's presentation attested to. But that is okay. If we are willing to work cooperatively and divorce ourselves of preconceived ideas of *what we should do* I am confident that the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of Albertans will lead us to many sound planning responses. We just need to open ourselves up to the possibility.

Being open is critical to the evolution of creative planning responses. While Jane pushed us to think about adapting smart growth concepts to a rural setting, and to think of agricultural land not as a commodity but as a working cultural landscape, Mónica Heincke encouraged delegates to think big and embrace all stages of the planning process for what they are. Thinking big is not easy, as anyone who attended Mónica will tell

you. Thinking big means allowing yourself to be imaginative, to play a little, and to let go of what you think you should do and what should happen. Through her touching stories of working with Northern communities Mónica shared what is possible if we allow ourselves to think big. Communities she has worked with have been able to tap into the creativity and innovation held by the citizens of all our communities.

This creativity and innovation amongst citizens is equally important to the human capital of commitment and passion held by community leaders. We need to give them the opportunity to contribute to the future of their communities. As many of the communities Mónica has worked with, numerous community representatives at the conference had various experiences with community visioning processes. Some of these have been more successful than others, but we should not let that deter us. It takes work to develop new ideas and approaches. For example many of us had a challenge doing the activities during the education session, thinking of how to use new conservation tools. But, trudging through the challenges of developing a community vision or rethinking what tools are available to us can bring to light opportunities not previously recognized. There is a time for practicality and there is a time for open creative thinking. Opening ourselves and our communities to creative thinking can offer so much more than tried and tested planning solutions. Are communities are not where they were 20 years ago, our planning approaches need to align with where are communities are. As the experience in Smokey Lake illustrates, just thinking about agricultural land in a different way or using different language can expose possibilities overlooked before and provide a struggling community with some hope.

The stories shared during this conference and the ideas presented have provided a map for navigating the difficult task of adapting to impacts and implications of growth in Alberta. For me it has reinforced the complexity of the community planning challenges in Alberta, but at the same time emphasized two major routes for developing solutions: re-visiting regional planning and governance, and out-of-the-box thinking. While I left the conference a little overwhelmed by the task at hand, I was inspired by the ability, passion, and commitment of the people I met. Personal conversations with Councilors about what they are facing in their communities put a human face to situations I have only read about in journal articles and textbooks. While I may not remember every planning tool discussed, I will carry the impact of these conversations with me for many years. For me, it is these experiences that provided the biggest lesson. The lesson that behind every issue, every statistic, every community planning process there are fellow Albertans working hard to improve the futures of their communities.

Editor's Note: The above is the winning essay submitted for the CPAA 2010 Conference Scholarship Competition – see page 5 for details.

BILL GILLESPIE, HONORARY DIRECTOR

Gloria Wilkinson



Bill Gellespie was inducted as an Honorary Director of the Community Planning Association of Alberta, on May 23, 2009. He was formally presented with this honour at the Banquet of the 2010 CPAA Conference in Red Deer, AB.

Bill is only the eighth person to be awarded Honorary Directorship during the 30 years of CPAA's existence. Bill accepted this award in front of friends and colleagues, including Honorary Director colleagues Jean Lewis and Archie Grover.

