

ALBERTA PLANNING EXCHANGE

The Newsletter of the
Community Planning Association of Alberta



In This Issue

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Alberta's Planning Education Crisis

On September 25, 2009, the CPAA Board of Directors approved a motion "that CPAA make connections and cooperate with other like organizations concerned about planning education in the province to increase planning education funding."

For the past several years, CPAA has actively supported planning students and planning education through our Education Sessions, Board of Directors "meet and greet" sessions with university planning students, involvement of student volunteers in our Conferences, and more recently, awarding scholarships to the most deserving of our student volunteers. Our ongoing support for planning education and planning students has been a cornerstone of CPAA's dedication to the promotion of community planning in the Province of Alberta. Consistent with that mission, CPAA has continually provided a forum for the discussion of community planning-related concepts, ideas, and issues with a view toward solutions.

Two years ago Alberta lost its only fully accredited professional planning degree program, which was housed in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. Although a small number of students are completing their thesis work under the auspices of the planning degree that the Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners (AACIP) had accredited before the demise of the University of Calgary planning program, Alberta will no longer be producing planning graduates with degrees accredited by AACIP after those students defend their theses. The Universities of Alberta, Calgary, Lethbridge are all responding to this crisis by trying to build new planning programs, but none of those programs yet has sufficient resources to offer a fully accredited professional planning degree.

Alberta's Planning Education Crisis - continued

The collapse of the University of Calgary planning program occurred as a result of a complex series of events and circumstances. Although CPAA does not take a position on what parties or decisions may have been responsible for those events, one critical issue has become apparent through the loss of Alberta's only planning education program: a severe lack of funding in this Province for planning education.

A number of institutions are working to fill the void in planning education created by the loss of the University of Calgary program. The most active efforts to build (or rebuild) planning programs are being undertaken by the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta, and the University of Lethbridge. Other institutions such as SAIT have also investigated the possible creation of new programs in planning education. These institutions have taken slightly different approaches to the creation of planning programs, but they all share a common challenge: insufficient funding to establish programs with enough rigour and depth to satisfy the accreditation requirements of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

CPAA continues to offer support and encouragement to the institutions and students across Alberta that are attempting to re-establish planning education programs. Lately, however, CPAA and other like organizations have come to realize that offering support and encouragement to the universities is akin to treating the symptom rather than curing the disease. Our universities cannot hope to provide comprehensive education in professional planning practice without adequate financial support from the body with the responsibility and authority to provide higher education in this Province: the Government of Alberta.

CPAA is taking a lead role in a coalition of organizations that is becoming organized for the purpose of urging a number of Provincial Ministries to get involved in creating a solution to this crisis. CPAA is now working most actively with the Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners (AACIP) to develop an advocacy campaign to promote full funding of a university planning program in Alberta. Other organizations we have contacted include the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C) and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA). We are also contacting other organizations such as the Alberta Urban Development Institute (UDI), the Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators' Association (ARMAA), the Local Government Administration Association (LGAA), the Alberta Development Officers Association (ADOA), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Society of Local Government Managers (SLGM).

Please contact CPAA if you, your community, your municipality, or your organization is interested in joining our advocacy campaign to promote full funding of a university planning program in Alberta. We all recognize how critical planning is to the vitality of our communities. Financial support for planning education is a direct investment in the sustainability of our communities.

Don Schultz, Treasurer

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW PLANNING GRADUATES

The CPAA board wishes to congratulate recent graduates of the University of Calgary's Master of Environmental Design Planning program. Many of the graduates at the November convocation volunteered at CPAA conferences and two of them served on the board: Candace Lee Banack, Blake Richard Collins, Lisa Nadine Eshpeter (see her essay in this newsletter), Natasha Vera Marie Kuzmak, Rodney James Loring (formerly CPAA student director), Shana Leigh Roberts (former CPAA student director), Alexandra Marion Driver Rowse and Erin Elizabeth Stapleton.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

In the last newsletter I promised you more details on the new three-year strategic plan. We set four goal areas, each to be handled under a committee structure in order to share the workload evenly amongst the 12 on the board.

Educational and Conference Initiatives

This committee will investigate the possibility of other locations for the annual conference, will review various methods to increase attendance and membership from a wider sector of professionals, and will target new municipalities for attendance.

Membership Development

Some of the work of this committee will overlap with the above but one focus will be on students; e.g. contacting all student groups in planning related programs through Campus Alberta, holding board meetings at various campuses, and other initiatives.

Communications and Marketing

This committee will develop a strategy to ensure CPAA uses consistent and professional marketing tools in support of other goals and activities. This will include improving the website to better serve our audiences and improving the newsletter.

Outreach Activities

The fourth committee will develop a strategy to increase networking opportunities throughout our membership, with other like groups and other audiences. One early idea is to involve students in display-board presentations at the Conference.

I look forward to providing updates to you all, plus I would welcome any suggestions you have for our working board on these initiatives.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from your CPAA Board.

Gloria Wilkinson, Chairperson

A WORD OF THANKS

The Association wishes to acknowledge the Directors who have recently left the board: Carla Semeniuk of Edmonton, and student board members Shana Roberts and Rod Loring who recently graduated. On behalf of our members, we thank our departing board members for their commitment, dedication and contributions to the Association and wish them well.

SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS

Are you interested in joining the CPAA Board? New board members will be elected at the spring conference. Please contact Vicki at the CPAA office to inquire about board opportunities and be connected with the Nominations Committee.

2010 Conference and Education Session APRIL 12 – 14 in Red Deer

Greetings from the chairs of the CPAA Conference.

We are moving along very well with a number of presenters already confirmed. The theme of the conference is **Impacts and Implications of Growth and Development for Alberta Municipalities**. We are sure there will be lots of interesting dialog for everyone to evaluate. Setting the stage for the Conference is the Education Session with the very timely subject of **Community Planning and the Land Stewardship Act**.

As we move through this recession we will need to look at better and more diverse ways for growth and development to occur. At the same time, we have to navigate the new planning regime that is evolving in Alberta. This year's agenda will include some new voices, refreshing ideas and opinions, as well as some valued voices of experience.

Topics include *A Watershed and Landscape Approach to Regional Planning*, *Regional Delivery of Municipal Services*, the *Future of Agriculture in Urbanizing province*, and more... Our keynote speaker is Mark Seasons, Associate Dean with the University of Waterloo. Professor Seasons will provide his expertise on growth and development today.

We have altered our session format slightly and are looking forward to the outcome of the new design, which we think will provide a little more interaction with our presenters.

More information will soon be provided on the website at www.cpaa.biz, and also in the Conference package that will be mailed in early 2010. Again, we will be at the Black Knight Inn in Red Deer. The Conference and Education Session is from **April 12 – 14**, so save the dates.

We will see you in April and we are sure you will once again enjoy our efforts in providing you with an informative and thought provoking conference.

Thank You

*George Gehrke and Leanne Beaupré,
Vice Chairs*

Conference Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a great way to support CPAA and also promote your business, municipality or organization to hundreds of councilors, planners, administrators and other decision-makers and professionals from across the province of Alberta. Opportunities are available from \$100 to \$2000. For information on sponsorship opportunities, contact the CPAA Office.

Support our Students with a Silent Auction donation

Proceeds of the Conference's popular Silent Auction go to support student participation in CPAA and our three \$1000 scholarships. We rely on the donations of CPAA members and friends to make the Auction a success. If you want to donate a Silent Auction Item, contact the CPAA office.

Scholarship Essay:

THE LAND USE FRAMEWORK AND THE BALANCE OF GOOD PLANNING

Lisa Eshpeter

Editor's Note: This is one of the winning essays submitted for the CPAA 2009 Conference Scholarships competition. Lisa recently graduated from the Master's Degree Planning program in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. Three \$1000 scholarships are available for students attending the Conference and submitting a short paper. For more information on the scholarships, contact the CPAA office.

The Community Planning Association of Alberta (CPAA) works diligently to provide municipal representatives with information on a variety of important topics in the field of community planning at their annual conferences. Considering the changes that are currently occurring in the province, including the drafting of the Land Use Framework and the reinstatement of regional planning, it is important that the CPAA continues to provide members and delegates with access to relevant subject matter.

The province of Alberta has historically been associated with wealth from its rich oil deposits. Due to this, Alberta has created a long history of provincial wealth as well as individual prosperity. This situation, although viewed as beneficial by many, also contributes to the neglect of many aspects of community planning in the province's multiple municipalities. Dependence on natural resource consumption for economic growth has focused attention on industrial growth, and away from community.

There is an important balance to be made between economic prosperity and ecological sustainability in this province that needs to be addressed through a variety of means. Open space planning and community design is one aspect that was addressed at the 2009 conference. The various topics covered at the conference are evidence that this is a broad ranging subject. The process by which municipal planners must address these topics is ongoing and iterative. It is important to continuously readdress these issues on a regular basis as legislation, ideologies and economics change.

The conversation with conference attendees about the Land Use Framework (LUF) draft was an example of the type of open communication that needs to occur more regularly. When given the opportunity to comment on a particular part of the Land Use Framework in small groups, it was clear from my experience as a facilitator that the general levels of understanding the Land Use Framework were variable throughout the attendees. Without proper education of the province's municipal representatives, the Land Use Framework will not be successful in its goal of being collaborative and transparent in its development and implementation processes. The divide between agriculture-based versus resource-based economies was obvious in the division in the room. In a municipality that has been dependent on natural resources with little regard for ecological ramifications, the LUF brings up some issues that are not favourable.

Although the process of designing and implementing the Land Use Framework has not yet been perfected, the plan itself contains many concepts that are important in community planning. With a successful implementation process, many of the concepts that are being proposed in the LUF will

help the province to develop sustainable local communities, a successful economy and a healthy environment.

One of the best tools, in my opinion, for accomplishing these goals, was the subject of a session by Guy Greenaway and Kimberly Good from the Miistakis Institute of the Rockies. The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) in the province of Alberta could be a tool, if properly implemented, that can save valuable agricultural land, ecosystems and important natural areas from development. The TDR system allows owners of land in the province to sell development rights from the land that they want to remain undeveloped to someone who wants to develop in a different area. This purchase, of varying values depending on the specific TDR guidelines that are employed, would allow the developer to build more in the development area than originally allowed, protects another area within the municipality, and helps to cluster development (Greenaway & Good, 2009). This important tool could help to protect Alberta's proud agricultural heritage, and conserve economic and natural resources through the clustering of development.

The TDR tool may be an integral aid in the communication between urban and rural municipalities. Since most of the protected land will be within rural municipalities and the majority of the development will most likely occur in the urban areas, open lines of communication between rural and urban municipalities will be essential for this tool to work. With the increasing pressures of urban municipalities to decrease built area, increase densities and conserve resources, the TDR tool can serve to increase the financial rewards to developers for making these positive changes. The recent implementation of regional planning entities is an indication of the importance of inter-municipal communication and agreement on planning policies.

An interesting issue pertaining to community planning and social well-being that was brought up by the keynote speaker, Dr. John L. Crompton was the importance of parks. TDR can also be used to preserve areas to be utilized as parks in the future. The health benefits that are associated with living near parks are well-known, and it would be beneficial to community planning that parks be included in all developing and redeveloping neighbourhoods (Crompton, 2009). The proper design and implementation of parks in this province needs to be discussed further through public forums and planning conferences in the future as the understanding of the benefits of parks continuously changes. The economic benefits for a municipality have been assessed by various researchers, but the formula by which to most efficiently utilize parks planning has not yet been set. The process of parks planning must be continuously revisited.

Although it is important to look specifically at the issues that were addressed at the conference, it is also important to note that community planning encompasses a broad spectrum of concepts, not all of which could be explored at the conference. As a community planner, it is important to understand the broad spectrum issues that affect all of the small decisions that are made about community planning as a whole. In my opinion, it is the job of the community planner to synthesize the values and objectives of their municipality into the land-use plans that they create. In order to do this, they must be aware of what is important to the citizens in their municipality. I believe that a planning process that involves a comprehensive public participation program at various levels would increase the likelihood that the values and objectives of the general public would be better served in community planning.

With most land development in the hands of private developers, it is often the economic issues that have the decision-making power in the designing of a new development. I believe that it is the role for the community planner to look past the immediate economic issues and ensure that the plans benefit the community at large. As learned from the conference, the development of park spaces is important to a healthy community. It not only increases the social health of a neighbourhood, there is an economic benefit to the municipality as well (Crompton, 2009). The TDR program is a valuable tool that can be used to cluster development and save open spaces within municipalities

that can be utilized for parks. On a broader spectrum, it is important for urban community planners to understand the value of the TDR program for the preservation of agricultural lands in rural municipalities. All community planners need to understand the bigger picture when designing the future of land-uses in Alberta.

The Land Use Framework attempts to formalize some of these concepts into a provincial document. With all of the conflicting pressures of the economy and the environment on community planning, it is important that this document is written to reinforce the values of the province in the areas of economic and ecological sustainability for our future success. "The Land-use Framework sets out an approach to manage public lands and private lands and natural resources to achieve Alberta's long-term economic, environmental and social goals. It provides a blueprint for land-use management and decision-making that addresses Alberta's growth pressures" (The Province of Alberta, 2008). If the provincial government succeeds in providing an implementation process that is manageable by municipal representatives and community planners, there is a great chance for the LUF to create tremendous success in our province.

The contributions of open space planning, preservation of natural areas, and the overarching legislation that will uphold these principles are very important current topics. It is important for community planners not only to understand the specific issues that the 2009 conference addressed, but also the broader picture in the province. For a community planner to be successful, they must recognize the importance of public participation, communication between municipalities, and the understanding of provincial goals in economic, social and environmental sustainability.

References

- Crompton, D. J. L. (2009). Community benefits of parks and open spaces. *Open Space Planning and Community Design*, Red Deer, Alberta.
- Greenaway, G., & Good, K. (2009). Using development credits to preserve sensitive land and farmland. *Open Space Planning and Community Design*, Red Deer, Alberta.
- The Province of Alberta. (2008). *Land-use framework* (Draft No. 978-7785-7713-3) The Province of Alberta.
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BIG SKY PERMACULTURE is holding a two day course "**Introduction to Permaculture**" **January 9 & 10, 2010**, in Calgary. This is a holistic design course in permaculture, which directly concerns planning, particularly on a local and economic development level. Register before December 29th for the early bird rate. www.bigskypermaculture.ca info@bigskypermaculture.ca

EMERGING TRENDS - THE LATEST ISSUES IMPACTING MUNICIPALITIES

Thursday, February 4, 2010 in Calgary and **Thursday, February 11, 2010** in Edmonton. Topics: The Alberta Land Stewardship Act, Development Agreements in Troubled Times, The Art and Science of Collective Bargaining and FOIP Compliance; and a Bear Pit Session.
Contact Crystal Power cpower@brownleelaw.com 780.423.7514



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2010 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Organization/Employer: (for Group Membership)			
Contact Name for group: Others in Group:			
Name: (for Individual or Student Membership)			
Job Title:			
CONTACT INFORMATION FOR All Types of Membership			
Street Address:			
Employer:			
Location:		Province:	Postal Code:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mails: Multiple email addresses are welcome for group members	
Type of Membership (Please mark with "X")*			
<i>* memberships are valid from January 1 to December 31 each year* GST not applicable</i>			
Group (\$180/year)	Individual (\$60/year)	Student (\$25/year)	
Fees enclosed (please make cheques payable to the Community Planning Association of Alberta). Credit card payment is not available. GST is not applicable.			
Invoice the above organization.			
Note that contact information may be shared with other CPAA members to facilitate networking. If you do not wish your contact information to be shared, indicate with an X in the box at left.			