

# ALBERTA PLANNING EXCHANGE

The Newsletter of the  
Community Planning Association of Alberta



July 2009



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Gloria Wilkinson

I am honoured that the CPAA Board chose me as its new Chair at its Organizational Meeting following the 2009 conference. The other members elected to your Executive Committee are: Leanne Beaupré, Vice-Chair (North); George Gehrke, Vice-Chair (South); Don Schultz (Treasurer); and Beth Sanders (Director).

We have renewed our administrative services contract with Vicki Hackl, so that we can move forward seamlessly.

The new Board launched CPAA's next three-year Strategic Plan at a Retreat on June 19-20, 2009. A brief description of events is included in this Newsletter, with more detail to come in the next edition.

We look forward to continuing to serve our membership in a way that is useful to all. We count our Members as partners in our efforts to make sure that "community" remains in planning in Alberta.

## MEET YOUR BOARD AND 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.

### **George Gehrke, Vice-Chair (South)**

George is a fourth generation farmer living just west of Red Deer on the family farm. He has been involved with CPAA for about 11 years, having been introduced to CPAA through his role as a three-term elected Councillor for Red Deer County. George has also have been involved in land development and other planning activities over the years.

### **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 this year.

### **Tim Burton, Past Chair**

Tim is a retired University of Alberta Professor, living in High River. He is in his final year on the Board following six years as an elected Director, four of them as Board Chair.

### **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 – and has done so in both Calgary and Morocco.

### **Drew Gale, Student Director**

Drew is enrolled in the third-year of an undergraduate degree program in Geography at the University of Calgary. He has just joined the Board and looks forward to working with the Association.

### **Lloyd Giebelhaus, Director**

Lloyd is a newly elected first term County Councillor for Lac Ste Anne County. Previously, he operated a moderate sized beef cow-calf operation in the County and worked for Alberta Agriculture as a District Agriculturist and Beef Specialist for 33 years.

### **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.

**Nick Paladino, Director**

Nick has been employed with the County of Lethbridge as Supervisor of Planning and Development for the past 26 years. He is in his final term on the CPAA Board of Directors after serving for more than 10 years.

**Beth Sanders, Director**

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

**Carla Semeniuk, Director**

Carla has a Master's degree in Urban Planning from McGill University and worked with Armin A. Preiksaitis and Associates in Edmonton before taking her present position with the City of Edmonton Planning and Development Department several years ago. Carla is in her second term as a Director of CPAA.

**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. This will be her first term on the Board of Directors.

**Bob van Wegen, Director**

Bob is the urban planner for the Federation of Calgary Communities, an umbrella group for 143 community associations. He is also involved in heritage preservation advocacy with the Calgary Heritage Initiative, and has a background in communications as well as in planning.

**Shana Roberts, Student Director**

Shana is a graduating student from the Department of EVDS, University of Calgary, and a candidate for a Master's degree in Planning, living in Sustainable Okotoks. She has a great interest in water/watersheds and participatory planning.

**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 itself.

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## A WORD OF THANKS

The Association wishes to acknowledge the following Directors who retired from the Board at the 2009 Annual Conference: **Bill Gillespie, Mark Oberg, Philip Rowe, Halyna Tataryn, Rod Loring and Jonathan Schmidt**. On behalf of our members, we thank them for their commitment, dedication and contributions to the Association.

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## 2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Tim Burton

Total attendance at the 2009 Annual Conference was about 275, made up of 203 paid delegates plus members of the Board of Directors, volunteer students, speakers, and sponsors. The theme, *Open Space Planning and Community Design*, resonated well with delegates.

The Conference format was unchanged from 2008, consisting of three Plenary Sessions, a Question-and-Answer Panel, and three Concurrent Sessions each of which provided delegates with the opportunity to choose from among three different presentations. Sixty-six delegates, representing about 33% of the 203 paid delegates, completed conference evaluation forms.

The Keynote Address – *Community Benefits of Parks and Open Spaces* – was presented by Dr. John L. Crompton, Distinguished Professor at Texas A and M University and a Councillor for the City of College Station, Texas. Despite some audiovisual glitches, it was very well received, with 93% of evaluations rating the session as *Very Good* or *Good*.

The other Plenary Sessions – *An Open Space Planning Toolkit* by Carole Stark, Executive Director of the Chinook Institute for Community Stewardship in Canmore and *The Smart Code: Regulating Open Space and Community Design for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, by Geoff Dyer, Principal of Calgary-based T-Six Urbanists – were both highly rated with 93% and 86% of delegates ranking them as *Very Good* or *Good*, respectively.

All of the Concurrent Sessions received very positive ratings from delegates, with four of them receiving evaluations of *Very Good* or *Good* from 100% of those who attended and completed evaluations!

Perhaps the hit of the Conference was the Question-and Answer Panel on *Open Space Planning: Opportunities and Challenges*, featuring Harry Harker, Town Manager for the Town of High River, Jamal Ramjohn, Associate with Dillon Consulting in Calgary, and Don Schultz, Associate with Romanesky Urban Planning and Management also in Calgary. This Plenary Session might still be going on if some delegates had their way: 95% of those completing evaluations thought the session was *Very Good* or *Good*.

Perhaps the best way to summarize the predominant reaction of those who completed Conference evaluations can be found in the words of a couple of delegates. *Thank you for putting on such a nice, information-packed conference. It was great!*

CPAA wishes to thank all of the speakers who took time to present their ideas, thoughts and experiences for the consideration of our delegates. We were indeed fortunate in the quality of their presentations.

## 2009 ANNUAL EDUCATION SESSION OVERVIEW

George Gehrke

The 2009 Education Session of the Community Planning Association of Alberta, held on the morning of Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, was a resounding success. A record number of 167 delegates – municipal councillors, administrators, planners, development officers, members of planning commissions and subdivision appeal boards, and others - attended this half-day educational session on *Open Space Planning, Community Design and the Land-use Framework*.

The presenters, Dave Bartesko and Glen Tjostheim from Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, did an excellent job. Although the primary focus of their presentation was on progress made in the development of the Provincial Land-use Framework and only limited connections were made to the broader issues of open space planning and community design, it was very well received: 47 evaluations were completed (representing about 28% of participants at the Session), with 92% of them rating it as *Very Good* or *Good*. Three respondents rated it as *Fair*. Nobody rated it as *Poor*.

CPAA is grateful to Dave and Glen for taking time out of their frantic schedules to speak to our delegates about the Land-use Framework, a pivotal exercise in forging Alberta's future.

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### BITS AND PIECES

#### **Free 2010 Conference Registration**

As in previous years, a draw was made among 2009 Annual Conference delegates who completed Conference and Education Session evaluations and who provided contact information. The prize is one free Registration for the 2010 Conference. And the winner is ... **Margo Auger** from the MD of Opportunity. We look forward to seeing you at the 2010 Conference, Margo.

#### **CPAA Conference Scholarship Winners**

We are pleased to announce the following recipients of Community Planning Association of Alberta Conference Scholarships. Applicants were required to attend the 2009 Conference and to write a short (3-to-5 page) essay discussing the Conference experience and how related to their planning education and career intentions. Each scholarship is valued at \$1,000. They are **Cathy Taylor**, **Lisa Eshpeter** and **Rod Loring**, all enrolled in the Master's Degree program in Planning in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. Congratulations, Cathy, Lisa and Rod.

#### **CPAA Tom Baldwin Scholarship Winner**

We are pleased to announce that Kate van Fraassen is the recipient of the Tom Baldwin Memorial Graduate Scholarship in Planning.

## 2009 CONFERENCE AND EDUCATION SESSION SPONSORS

**Diamond Sponsor**  
Bordeaux Developments

### Platinum Sponsors

Armin A. Preiksaitis & Associates  
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### Silver Sponsors

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Municipal District of Rocky View

### Contributing Sponsors

Millennium Geomatics  
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### 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.

## 2006-2009 CPAA STRATEGIC PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS

Tim Burton

The 2009 Annual Conference saw the completion of the CPAA 2006-2009 Strategic Plan. Conceived at a Board of Directors Retreat in September 2005, the Plan included development of Vision and Mission Statements, as well as achievement of major objectives in four broad goal areas: governance and management; educational initiatives; membership development; and outreach activities.

### **Vision**

CPAA envisions cooperative planning throughout Alberta that leads to viable and liveable communities

### **Mission**

Providing opportunities to share, promote and encourage sound community planning among all stakeholders.

### **Governance and Management**

The Plan saw the following achievements in Governance: revision of the Association's Bylaws; creation of four Standing Committees of the Board of Directors; and the adoption of job descriptions for Directors, Officers and the Association's Secretary.

Achievements in Management included: completion of an administrative services contract with *Vici Designs*; re-location of the Association's office to Edmonton; implementation of annual budgeting processes for both the Association and the Annual Conference and Education Session; and development of a long-term sustainable financial strategy for the Association.

### **Educational Initiatives**

Educational initiatives achieved included: formal evaluations of the Annual Conference and Education Session; development of a Conference and Education Session sponsorship program; expansion of the Association's scholarship program; a revision of the format of the Conference and Education Session; and re-alignment of Conference and Education Session registration fees.

### **Membership Development**

Membership development objectives achieved included: introduction of a simplified membership system; a closer link between membership and registration fees for the Annual Conference and Education Session ensuring greater financial benefits for membership; and a modest increase in membership levels in both 2008 and 2009.

### **Outreach Activities**

Five initiatives were undertaken in Outreach Activities: improvement of the Association's website; revival of the Association's Newsletter; active participation in development of the Provincial Land-use Framework; a growing interest by the Board in the state of formal planning education in Alberta; and, specifically, ongoing monitoring of changes in the Planning program at the University of Calgary.

## 2009-2012 CPAA STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Tim Burton

The Board of Directors convened at Buck Lake, Alberta, June 19 and 20, 2009, to begin development of the Association's *2009-2012 Strategic Plan*. Following a brief review of the development and achievements of the Association's *2006-2009 Strategic Plan* (outlined elsewhere in this Newsletter), the Board reviewed and confirmed the current Vision and Mission statements.

The Board then turned its attention to examination of major goal areas, before breaking into smaller groups each of which then set about developing specific objectives within one of the goal areas. The Board then reconvened as a whole to discuss the work of the smaller groups.

Overall, there was consensus that there are no pressing concerns in the area of governance and management, since a great deal was done on this in the *2006-2009 Strategic Plan*. Numerous possible directions were discussed in the areas of educational activities and membership development. As well, there was considerable discussion about next steps in the Association's outreach activities.

The suggestions made in small group and general discussions will be further reviewed, consolidated and evaluated over the summer months with the objective of presenting a draft Strategic Plan for consideration by the Board at its upcoming Meeting in September.

Watch this space!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Alberta Development Officers Association Conference 2009**

**Black Knight Inn, Red Deer, Alberta, September 27 - 30, 2009**

*Celebrating Diversity* is the theme for this year's ADOA Conference. Understanding and respecting diversity is a common thread that links us on many levels. We will celebrate our diverse roles and communities, the advancement of the ADOA and those that helped build our success! Planning for the conference is well underway with an assembled group of individuals eager to make next year's conference enjoyable and successful!

### **Alberta Association Canadian Institute of Planners Conference 2009**

**Sawridge Hotel, Fort McMurray, Alberta, October 18 - 20, 2009**

For the first time ever, the AACIP Conference will be held in Canada's energy capital – Fort McMurray. The theme this year of *making it work – making it last – making it home* directly addresses the challenges that we face as planners in improving regulatory practices and public education, in sustaining the environment and natural resources, and in molding cities and towns into true communities that people will call home. With the current economic situation around the globe, there has never been a more challenging time for planners. No other community offers the opportunity for professional development like Fort McMurray does.

## MOVING FROM POSITIONS TO INTERESTS: ENABLING A PLANNING DIALOGUE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Cathy Taylor

This year's CPAA Conference on *Open Space Planning and Community Design* led me to thinking about another kind of open space – the space for dialogue and discussion as we seek to address the emerging issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Monday morning session on the new *Provincial Land Use Framework* started my thinking along this path. I had recently reviewed the Framework for a municipal law paper and was encouraged by the themes, language and direction of the document. As an urban dweller, it struck me as an attempt to set reasonable limits on the growth of large municipalities while preserving precious resources like agricultural land and environmental reserves. I was astounded when the discussion group I was in seemed divided along urban and rural lines. The urban participants liked the framework. The rural participants felt it was not reflective of their communities and would limit economic opportunities that they sorely need. Had I not been in that group for that particular session, I would not have had the opportunity to hear the very different understanding rural communities had of the potential impacts of the Framework.

In the session on *Visioning for Community Open Spaces*, the more intriguing portion was the post-presentation discussion. Several people in the audience were providing perspectives about why certain types of street design were more difficult to service post-construction than others. It got me thinking about the importance of integrated discussions between disciplines at the civic level and how these discussions need to inform academic work. It is important to understand how street design impacts snow removal, emergency services, waste removal and other services that communities expect will be delivered efficiently and effectively. We have arrived where we are because of the complex interaction of multiple forces. A planner needs to be insightful about the layers and interplay of these various forces to improve community design. This requires an open space for dialogue with other disciplines that does not assume or judge.

Dr. Crompton's presentation on the *Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space* brought to mind the accountability required in the dialogue for change. It is not enough to be critical of the past and demand the implementation of what we perceive to be the solution to good community design. For a dialogue to have integrity there needs to be accountability for the cost of those changes. Otherwise, the discussion is merely an academic exercise. If we as planners believe strongly in a particular direction for change, we need to be prepared to make an economic, as well as a social and environmental case for that direction. One participant shared with me a discussion in a separate session where multi-family houses were being enthusiastically presented as the solution to sprawl. The participant asked how many people in the room were living in multi-family housing and only a handful of participants put up their hands. Insisting that others live differently than we ourselves are willing to live shows a lack of integrity in the dialogue. Constructive dialogue requires accountability for the cost and impact of the changes we are proposing.

The session by Jamal Ramjohn and Alex Taylor on *Community Open Space: From Planning to Implementation* involved a very telling role-play where we were asked to take the part of residents, municipal planners, interest groups and developers in discussing a proposed residential development. In all of the five or six groups formed during the role-play, the developer was the target for the most criticism. The assumption was that the developer was looking after their own interests and that the development would necessarily have a negative impact on other stakeholders. In our role-play we needed to understand and acknowledge the values and priorities of the other members of the group, including the developer or come to a stand still.

All of this led me to consider how my experience in community development work and my training in mediation and conflict resolution can be applied in the planning context. There is perhaps no other theme as dominant in the planning community currently as sustainability. The implications for designing sustainable communities are significant. People will be asked to live very differently than they currently do – less personal space, more public space. This transition cannot be successful unless planners are able to effectively engage those who actually build communities and all of us who live in communities in a dialogue that takes place in open space.

Carole Stark's *Open Space Planning Toolkit* presented Tuesday morning speaks to this. It is critical, in any discussion to start, not with positions, but interests. What are people's values? What is it that they want to preserve? What is it that they wish to create? Only by starting with interests can people see the shared values and a shared direction. From my community development and facilitation experience, it has always intrigued me how people from disparate backgrounds line up side by side on an issue when they share common cause. This alignment often comes through oppositional issues – sharing opposition to something – but the skilled facilitator and planner knows how to help people align with each other because of what they are for, rather than what they are against.

During the Land Use Framework discussion it would have been interesting to hear what it was that people want to preserve in their communities, what they want to create and what values underlie these desires. I am certain that there would have been many points of agreement between the rural and urban participants, and with the values and intent of the Framework. Unfortunately, the discussion was focused on positions and so it created a sense of opposition.

Dr. Crompton's discussion was encouraging in demonstrating that the economic, social and environmental are inextricably linked and that by pursuing all three we can have positive outcomes. By reframing our approach to planning – broadening the space for discussion to include the accountant and concerned taxpayer – we can achieve outcomes that enhance the quality of life through better community design.

I have been in several meetings and workshops where planners ask in frustration, how can we get people to think the way we do? The question needs to be reframed. How can we develop a better understanding of people's hopes and fears so that we can implement sustainable community design that best meets those hopes and alleviates those fears?

How can we communicate in a way that acknowledges those hopes and fears and demonstrates, in an accountable way, that sustainable design will address both?

We live in a privileged province where we are fortunate to have the opportunity to insist on open space and design interesting and liveable communities. As the global community addresses the environmental, social and economic issues that face us, we cannot take for granted the lifestyles we enjoy. As push comes to shove, the most critical space will be the space for dialogue – for being able to understand each other, for being accountable in the information we share and in listening to the communities we work with.

Both years that I have had the opportunity to attend the CPAA Conference I have come away with my head spinning with new ideas and ways of understanding the role of planners in the community. I think this is because CPAA brings together a broad spectrum of people and creates an open space for dynamic dialogue. There is much to be learned in these discussions. It is an essential classroom – an open space for productive dialogue.

Editor's Note: The above is one of the winning essays submitted for the CPAA 2009 Conference Scholarships competition – see page 5 for details. Cathy Taylor is enrolled in the Master's Degree Planning program at the University of Calgary.

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## BILL GILLESPIE, HONORARY MEMBER

At its Meeting of May 23, 2009, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the following Motion.

*In recognition of his extraordinary Commitment to the Community Planning Association of Alberta over the past 30 years and his continuous dedication to the objectives of the Association throughout that time, the Board of Directors is pleased to confer on William C. Gillespie the status of Honorary Member of the Community Planning Association of Alberta.*

Bill Gillespie has been a member of the Community Planning Association of Alberta since its inception in 1979. During his 30 years with the Association, he has served on the Board of Directors on three separate occasions, totalling 16 years: from 1982 to 1986, 1994 to 2003, and 2006 to 2009. Throughout his time as a Member and a Director, Bill has been an active participant in the work of the Association, serving as Conference Convenor and Education Session Organizer (each of them several times), Editor of the Newsletter on numerous occasions, and most recently, Association Treasurer for the past three years. He was a constant supporter during the Association's early years as it struggled to become established – even stepping in as a last-minute speaker at annual conferences! His involvement never wavered. Bill has shown extraordinary commitment to the CPAA over an enduring period.

Bill is only the 8<sup>th</sup> person to be awarded Honorary Membership during the 30 years of CPAA's existence. Bill will be formally recognized at the 2010 Annual Conference.



**Community Planning Association of Alberta**

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**2009 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM**

Organization: (for <b>Group Membership</b> ) Contact Name for group:					
Others in Group:					
Name: (for <b>Individual or Student Membership</b> )					
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION FOR All Types of Membership</b>					
Street Address:					
Location:		Province :		Postal Code:	
Phone:		Fax :		E-mail:	
<b>Type of Membership</b> (Please mark one box 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 <b>Community Planning Association of Alberta</b> ). Credit card payment is not available.					
Invoice the above organization.					