

Date: October 6, 2018

To: Pete Parkinson, APA California Chapter President and Board of Directors

From: Hanson Hom, Vice President for Conferences

Subject: Conference Planning Updates – 2018, 2019 and 2020 and 2021 Conferences

**RECOMMENDATION**

*For information only for the 2018, 2020 and 2021 conferences.*

*For the 2019 conference, review and provide comments on the proposed Exhibitor and Sponsorship Program.*

**DISCUSSION**

**2018 Conference – San Diego, October 7-10, Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina**

The San Diego Section Conference Host Committee (CHC) has done an incredible job organizing this conference. Countless volunteer hours were committed to making this a highly successful conference. Much thanks are also extended to Chapter contract staff (Francine Farrell, Dorina Blythe and Laura Murphy) and Deene Alongi, our Conference Management Contractor, that did much of the behind-the-scenes work. An additional acknowledgement is extended to Kacey Lizon, the Chapter’s Conference Program Coordinator, for overseeing the production of the 2018 printed conference program. A status report from the 2018 CHC Co-Chairs is attached. A complete conference wrap-up report will be provided by the CHC for the January Board Retreat.

Registration for the conference will exceed expectations. As of September 29th, total registration was 1,475, of which approximately 85 percent were full conference registrations. This number does not include unregistered speakers. Student registration is also high with 147 currently registered, and additional are expected to register on-site. We expect registration to reach 1,600 by the day of the conference.

Along with approximately 100 sessions, the conference will offer 12 mobile workshops, which many are already sold out. Similar to last year, select sessions on Sunday are oriented to students or Planning Commissioners. A session was added at the request of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD): HCD Executive Director Ben Metcalf will discuss implementation of state housing legislation, grant opportunities and related matters. Staff from APA national will also be at our conference to unveil the APA Learn Program.

Total registration revenue as of September 29th was approximately $715,000. The Conference Host Committee was also successful in exceeding their sponsorship goal and has raised close to $140,000 in sponsorships. With the high attendance level, the conference is expected to easily exceed the minimum income goal of $120,000; the preliminary estimate is that net income will be $200,000 to $250,000. A final income/expense statement will be provided at the Chapter Board Retreat in January 2019.

**2019 Conference – Santa Barbara, September 15-18, Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort (former Fess Parker Resort)**

The Co-Chairs for the conference (Tess Harris, Bret McNulty and Jeffrey Wilson) will be attending the Board Retreat to provide a status report on conference planning to date and to discuss the proposed sponsorship program.

The 2019 CHC has been organized including the assignment of sub-committee chairs, and the CHC is already meeting on a regular basis to plan the conference. Monthly coordination meetings with the CHC Co-Chairs, VP of Conferences and Chapter contractors began in August 2018.

The CHC has prepared an exhibitor and sponsorship flyer with proposed sponsorship levels and categories (see attached). The categories are similar to past conferences with a goal of at least $120,000 in sponsorship income. Sponsorships include major sponsors for the hotel key, conference bags, lanyards and mobile app, combination table and event packages, and event only sponsorships. The sponsorship program will be finalized after confirming the number of sponsorship tables that can be accommodated in the hotel meeting space. As requested, the proposed sponsorship program is submitted for Board comments (see back page of flyer). Sponsorship outreach will begin at the 2018 conference.

In August 2018, the Chapter Executive Board approved the theme for the conference: “A Resilient Future.” A local graphic designer was recruited to design the conference logo. The selected logo is displayed on promotional drink coasters that are being distributed at the San Diego Conference.

The location of the Opening Reception has been reserved and will be held on the spacious landscaped grounds of the iconic Santa Barbara County Courthouse. Small group tours of the Courthouse, a National Register Historic Landmark, will also be arranged.

The next tasks for the CHC is to prepare the Call for Submittals for release at the end of November. A preliminary schedule for the conference program has been prepared. A site visit occurred in May 2018 to strategize ways to maximize the use of the hotel meeting space given the projected attendance level. The CHC has also identified mobile workshop destinations and these are already in the planning stage. Finally, a conference budget will be prepared for approval by the Chapter Board at the 2019 Board Retreat.

**2020 Conference – City of Riverside, September 12-15, Riverside Convention Center**

The Chapter Board approved the City of Riverside as the location for the 2020 APA California Conference in February 2018. The Conference Management Contractor proceeded to finalize negotiations with the City of Riverside Convention Center to secure the conference meeting space. Since one hotel will not be enough to provide the required hotel rooms for the conference, the Conference Management Contractor negotiated contracts with three downtown hotels that are within easy walking distance to the Convention Center: Mission Inn, Marriott Riverside, and Hyatt Place. The Convention Center and hotel contracts were signed by the VP of Conferences in Spring 2018.

With the conference site secured, no immediate action is pending. The next step for the Inland Empire Section is to select the CHC Co-Chairs for approval at the Chapter Board retreat. The Section will also start recruiting volunteers for the 2020 CHC and form subcommittees per the guidelines in the Conference Requirements Handbook. The VP of Conferences will provide guidance as needed during this phase of the planning process. The goal is to have a kick-off meeting in early 2019, which will include outlining the conference planning schedule and discussing the duties of each subcommittee. This meeting would also be an opportunity to introduce the newly formed CHC to the VP of Conferences and Chapter conference contractors.

**2021 Conference - Central Section**

The Central Section hosted the APA California Conference in 2013 in Visalia and are slated to host the conference in 2021. Following the completion of the 2018 conference, the VP of Conferences and Conference Management Contractor will explore with the Central Section leadership suitable venues for the conference. After researching potential facilities that can meet our conference needs, we will meet on-site with hotel and convention staff at the preferred option(s) to review meeting facilities, lodging accommodations and contract terms. This is expected to occur in November or December 2018. The goal is to provide a report and recommendation to the Chapter Board at its January 2019 retreat. With the approval of the Board, the Conference Management Contractor will negotiate the final contracts and agreements with the selected venue and hotel(s) for signature by the VP of Conferences by early 2019.

**Future VP of Conferences Action Items:**

APA Registration Program: In our first-year experience with the APA registration system, we have encountered technical and design limitations that have created more support work than anticipated for conference staff. We will discuss with APA staff a list of suggested program refinements, such as discount registration codes, customized reports, production of badges for attendees, and the ability to make donations to CPF and the Chapter’s Historic Archives.

Going Paperless: While many members appreciate the printed conference program, it is time we move in the direction of going paperless. We would like to eliminate the printed program and rely more on the conference website and mobile app for information. This also means exploring ways to improve both the website and mobile app, which may necessitate a supplemental budget allocation for upgrades. The 2019 CHC is committed to going paperless for the Santa Barbara conference to reinforce the resiliency and sustainability theme of the conference.

Conference Management Contractor: We are proposing to enter into a conference management contract with Deene Alongi for the 2019 Conference. She has done an excellent job and brings considerable expertise to the Chapter in conference and event planning.

Insurance Coverage for Mobile Workshops: APA currently has limited insurance coverage for conference mobile workshops which poses a liability risk to the Chapter. We will explore options for addressing this liability.

Conference Budget Template: The VP of Conferences is preparing an updated conference budget template that correlates with the reorganized Chapter budget for ease of accounting and improved transparency. This new template will be used for the 2019 conference.

Chapter Credit: We will explore establishing “credit” for the Chapter so that we can reduce the amount of required advance payments for conference contracts. This would improve our cashflow situation if we can delay or reduce early deposits and upfront payments in our contracts.

Attachments:

1. Quarter 3-2018 Conference Planning Update for the 2018 Annual Conference, San Diego – prepared by 2018 Conference Co-Chairs
2. 2019 Conference Exhibitor and Sponsorship Opportunities – prepared by 2019 Conference Co-Chairs