



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

ACTION MINUTES

APA California Board Meeting and Retreat

The Mission Inn – Riverside, CA

January 24th - 25th, 2020

ATTENDEES:

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President	Julia Lave Johnston
President Elect	Ashley Atkinson
VP, Conferences	Hanson Hom, AICP
VP, Diversity and Equity	Miroo Desai, AICP
VP, Marketing and Membership	Marc Yeber, ASLA
VP, Policy and Legislation	Eric Phillips
VP, Professional Development	Sharon Grewal, AICP
VP, Public Information	Ellie Fiori, AICP
California Planning Foundation President	Juan Borrelli, AICP
Student Representative	Elizabeth Owen

SECTION DIRECTORS

Central	Jennifer Clark
Central Coast	Rachel Raynor
Inland Empire	John Hildebrand
Inland Empire Section Director Elect	Christine Saunders
Northern	James Castañeda, AICP
Northern Section Director Elect	Jonathan Schuppert
Los Angeles	Tony Mendoza
Orange County	Amy Vazquez
Sacramento Valley	Yassi Sarvian
San Diego	Nancy Graham, AICP

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Distance Education Director	Greg Konar, AICP
National Policy and Legislative Representative	Nicholas Maricich, AICP

PEN President
Southern Chapter Historian
Young and Emerging Planners Coordinator

Bob Paternoster, FAICP
Steve Preston, FAICP
Molly Wagner

GUESTS

2020 Conference Co-Chair
2020 Conference Co-Chair
Planning Conference Ad Hoc Committee

Chris Gray
Aaron Pfannenstiel
Betsy McCullough

STAFF

Stefan/George – Executive Director/Lobbyist
Stefan/George – Administrative Director/Lobbyist
Pending Membership Program Manager (North)
Pending Membership Program Manager (South)

Sande George
Lauren De Valencia
Ben Morrison
Karolina Gorska

ACTION ITEMS FROM THE BOARD MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Julia Lave Johnston called the meeting to order on Saturday, January 25, at 9:00 am.

II. APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda. The Board also approved the Consent Items: Minutes, Membership Report and Board & Commission Training. *Unanimous vote.*

III. ACTION ITEMS

Conference Registration Website Proposal: Hanson Hom presented recommendations to the Board related to the conference registration portal, website and mobile app. For the past three conferences, APA California has engaged with different vendors to manage the Chapter's conference registration, website, and mobile app. In 2017, the Chapter used Cvent for registration, Vieth Consulting for the conference website hosting, and Certain for the mobile app. In 2018, the Chapter switched from Cvent to APA National for conference registration, and in 2019 the Chapter switched again to Vieth for registration. The Chapter has used the same but different vendors for the conference website (Vieth) and mobile app (Certain) for all three conferences.

The results have yielded mixed reviews and have been a learning experience. Hanson said that although APA National offered a very enticing introductory offer to provide the conference registration, he unfortunately found that their program, which they offer to all APA Chapters, was less robust than the program they use for the National conferences. Their registration technology cannot handle APA California's more demanding registration requirements. With the desire to integrate various technology tools, Hanson then contracted with Vieth to develop the registration portal and also designed a more robust conference website to replace the printed program.

Eliminating the printing of the conference program recently was a move towards greener practices and eliminated about a \$10,000 expense. Vieth was very reasonable cost-wise, but their service is a “do-it-yourself” (DIY) approach, which proved inefficient and time-consuming to set up. Considerable credit deservedly goes to Francine Farrell for assuming more work than expected to get to the finished products, but the process and outcome were less than optimal.

Event management software has advanced considerably in recent years, and with the Chapter’s conferences growing in attendance as well as complexity, Hanson told the Board it was time to step back and reassess the technology tools currently being used and explore what the marketplace currently offers to support the Chapter’s event management needs. This has been identified as a priority goal by the Conference Planning Ad Hoc Committee. Hanson, along with Francine Farrell, who oversees the registration, website and mobile app, and Deene Alongi, Conference Manager, have spent the last several months after the 2019 conference to critically examine the processes, to identify areas for improvement, and explore possible third-party solutions. Hanson also reviewed past user complaints and suggestions offered by attendees in the post-conference surveys. Finally, Hanson inquired into technology tools used by other organizations that hold conferences comparable to APA California. Based on all of this, Hanson made the following recommendations to the Board:

1. Authorize entering into a five-year contract with Cvent for conference-only services to develop and support a conference registration program, website, and enhanced mobile app at a cost of \$21,937 annually, with an additional one-time expense of \$5,000 to build these features. The annual cost would be borne by each of the conferences whereas the one-time expense would be spread among the next eight conferences.
2. Authorize entering into a five-year contract with Cvent for their “OnArrival 360” onsite registration and badge printing package for a cost not to exceed \$15,905 annually.
3. Authorize entering into a contract with Digital Gear for a one-time expense of \$3,432 to improve our API integration with the APA California membership database for conference and event registration.
4. Pursue reduction of duplicative conference expenses to offset the above contracts.

Board members generally supported the recommendations but asked Hanson to look further into the following items:

- Assess whether Digital Gear has the capability to integrate the APA membership database into the new Cvent registration system before contracting with them for that service, given the past rocky history with the Chapter website that Digital Gear created and currently hosts.
- Contact Cvent to investigate the possibility of increasing the 5,000 registrants allowed in the contract to use the new registration system, to allow the Sections to potentially use the Chapter registration system for Section events, and report back to the Board and Sections for comment.
- Work with the Sections to determine how best to split the costs associated with the Cvent contract to determine whether the costs should be split among the next 8 Conference Host Sections, or just the next 5 given that the contract is a 5-year contract that may or may not be extended.
- Work with Marco Martinez, APA California’s attorney, to review the contracts.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to accept the four recommendations, including the additional research and discussions that Hanson will facilitate before finalizing the contracts, as outlined above. Unanimous vote.

2020 Budget and 2019 Budget Overage Approvals: Sande George reviewed the 2020 Budget, which had previously been approved during the December 2019 Executive Board call but was still subject to changes or updates during the Board retreat and Board meeting. The Board discussed three budget items that needed to be finalized since the December meeting:

1. A dues increase for Chapter-Only members to better reflect the costs of services that the Chapter provides, from the existing \$115 to \$125 (Budget LI 4120). The Chapter-Only dues have not been increased since 2007 and no longer reflect the cost of providing services to these members, so the draft budget approved in December included a suggested increase to \$125, subject to Board approval in January. A few Board members asked if the dues increase could be increased above \$125 without creating a profit for the Chapter. However, after further discussion, the Board decided to approve the increase as proposed to \$125.
2. The allocation of the Chapter's share of the excess 2019 conference profit amount beyond the required \$120,000 base conference profit (Budget LI 4126). Sande explained that the Chapter's share of the base \$120,000 conference profit required of each conference is kept in the Chapter checking account to pay for normal operating expenses throughout the year. The Chapter's share of the excess conference profits above that \$120,000 base however can be moved to reserves, or allocated for special projects, or a combination of both. The Board last year for instance allocated the excess conference profits from the 2018 conference for various special projects, including diversity training and hiring two new membership program managers. This year, the Chapter's share of the conference profits above the \$120,000 base required profit is \$54,000. Because one of the Chapter's next major projects is the update of the Chapter's website, and the costs for that update are not yet known, Sande asked the Board to consider maintaining the \$54,000 rather than spending it on other projects this year. This amount could then be used to offset the costs of the new website after a contract is signed with a new website company. The \$54,000 can be moved to the reserves fund and held until it is needed for the website or for other purposes approved by the Board during the year. The Board agreed to move the \$54,000 to reserves.
3. The approval of the 2019 overages and final 2019 Profit and Loss Statement. Sande asked the Board to approve the final list of line item overages for the 2019 budget, which are all minor and based on normal cost increases, and to approve the final 2019 Profit and Loss Statement.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the final 2020 Budget with the Chapter-only dues increase to \$125, to transfer the excess 2019 conference profits of \$54,000 to the Chapter reserves fund until needed for the new Chapter website or other items approved by the Board, and approve the final overages and Profit and Loss Statement for 2019. *Unanimous vote.*

2020 Conference Budget and Registration Rates: The 2020 APA California Conference Co-Chairs updated the Board on the 2020 Conference. The conference will be held from Saturday, September 12 to Tuesday, September 15 at the Riverside Convention Center in downtown Riverside. Several hotels have been secured including room and the historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa. Conference and hotel registration are expected to open on or about May 1, 2020. Planning for the conference is well underway by the Inland Empire Conference Host Committee (CHC) with monthly calls occurring between the CHC Cochairs, subcommittees, conference contractors and VP of Conferences.

The Co-Chairs told the Board that the proposed 2020 conference budget is based on 1,300 attendees. A gross income of \$801,570 is estimated which includes registrations, sponsorships, mobile workshops and other incidental income. Projected income consists of \$662,220 (line item 4600) from registration

and \$143,250 (line item 4700) from sponsorships. The recommended conference registration rates are as follows:

FULL CONFERENCE	2020 Rate
Member – Early**	\$545
Member – Regular**	\$575
Member – Late**	\$650
Non-Member - Early	\$750
Non-Member - Regular	\$800
Non-Member - Late	\$875
Life/Retired Member - Regular	\$300
Student – Regular	\$100
Young Planner - Regular	\$375
Speaker - Regular	\$450
ONE-DAY RATE*	2020 Rate
Member – Regular**	\$375
Non-Member - Regular	\$450
Student – Regular	\$50
Young Planner - Regular	\$250
Speaker – Regular	\$300

The Co-Chairs also discussed a request for a change in the Conference budget for the California Planning Foundation (CPF) auction event. Juan Borrelli discussed the CPF request that APA California amend its annual conference budget in LI 6420.8 to eliminate the live auction and instead provide the funding that normally paid for the costs of the live auction event for food, venue and drinks to the students directly. CPF also requested that the amount of \$20,000 be earmarked for student scholarships out of the Chapter Conference budget each year going forward. While this line item for live auction costs is currently estimated at \$14,200 for the 2020 conference budget and has ranged from \$15,000 to \$23,000 since 2015, the intent of this request is to provide a dedicated and stable source of funding for scholarships from the Chapter/Conference for CPF scholarships by swapping it for the amount the Conference previously spent on the live auction event costs.

Juan reminded the Board that the Chapter has always hosted this event to allow CPF to fundraise. He said that CPF is not proposing to eliminate the event entirely but instead to direct the money used for the event paid for by the Chapter towards scholarships directly.

Sande George told the Board that mandating a fixed amount that the Chapter must give CPF before the conference profits are either known or distributed to the Chapter and Sections, regardless of the final conference profit, might mean that the Conference couldn't make adjustments in order to ensure the minimum conference profit amounts are met. Recent conferences have been very successful, and an allocation to CPF for scholarships are a good use of a portion of those profits. However, a profitable conference is not always the case and the Chapter and Sections also need to count on that profit to pay for Chapter and Section operating expenses. She suggested instead giving a possible percentage of

the final conference profits to CPF. A previous additional fee on membership dues to provide an ongoing source of scholarship funding for CPF was also discussed. Other members raised concern with foregoing the event all together, because many conference attendees do typically enjoy the event.

Julia Lave Johnston said she would like CPF to look at how current CPF donations and fundraising are structured and how the money is actually used and given to students. Julia said the Board needs to have a broader discussion on how CPF will be funded in future years in a way that the CPF Board can plan for effectively. Further, Julia asked Juan to put together a report on how students are currently supported with the scholarships and if there are other ways to provide that support, outside of a scholarship. That could include research on mentorships, funding conference lodging attendance, developing university leadership training programs, etc.

Hanson told the Board he would like the 2020 conference budget to include funding for a small reception after the awards event. The CHC said this could be done for a reduced amount of around \$5,000, while still providing direct funding to CPF for scholarships.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the 2020 conference registration rates. The Board also approved the 2020 conference budget, removing the budget for the CPF live auction, adding \$5000 for a smaller reception after the awards event, and allocating \$20,000 to CPF directly for scholarships for 2020. Changes to the live auction event and funding options for CPF scholarships for future conference budgets after 2020 will be discussed later this year. *Unanimous vote.*

Conference Handbook Revisions: Hanson Hom asked the Board to approve the revisions to the Conference Planning Handbook (previously entitled Conference Requirements Handbook). The last time the Handbook was updated was in February 2018 following the 2017 conference. Since that time, procedural changes to improve efficiency were enacted for the 2018 and 2019 conferences that should be incorporated into the Handbook. Additional items also arose that warranted clarification or revisions to the Handbook. Many of the changes are simply grammatical or wordsmithing in nature. Additionally, the Appendices have been updated with more recent examples.

Julia added that she would like future conferences to ensure panel participants for sessions at the conferences are diverse. She told the Board that the Sacramento CHC had a question on the call for sessions asking how the panel addresses equity and diversity. Julia said there should be a specific question about the diversity of sessions in the session applications moving forward, and that requirement should be referenced in the Handbook. This will be brought back for discussion at a future Executive Board Meeting.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the 2020 Conference Handbook revisions. The Executive Board will discuss additional changes to the handbook at a future Board call to ensure conference sessions address equity and diversity in their panels. *Unanimous vote.*

Distribution of the 2019 Conference Profit: Hanson Hom asked the Board to approve the 2019 Conference Closure Report and the final Profit and Loss Statement. He also asked that the Board approve the distribution of the 2019 conference profit split to the Chapter and Sections in accordance with the profit distribution policy in the Conference Requirements Handbook, as follows:

APA California Chapter \$48,000 + \$54,206.78 = \$102,206.78

Central Coast Host Section: \$48,000 + \$54,206.78 = \$102,206.78

Other 7 Sections

\$24,000/7 = \$3,428.57 each Section

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the 2019 conference profits and split as outlined above. *Unanimous vote.*

Conference Program Coordinator: Hanson Hom asked the Board to approve the appointment of Tess Harris as the APA California Conference Program Coordinator, which would be effective immediately.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the appointment of Tess Harris as the APA California Conference Program Coordinator. *Unanimous vote.*

Bylaws Amendment: Beginning in 2019, APA National now requires all APA Chapters to report on designated baseline member services. Julia Lave Johnston recommended changes to the bylaws to reflect this responsibility, which currently falls on the Chapter President. The Vice President for Administration is responsible for collecting information for the California Chapter's Annual Report. Much of the information collected for the Annual Report and the Performance Report is duplicative. Because of this overlap, the change will make the completion and submission of the Annual Chapter Performance Report the responsibility of the Vice President for Administration.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the Bylaws amendment to require the Vice President for Administration to complete and submit the National APA Annual Chapter Performance Report. *Unanimous vote.*

Awards Program Revisions: Ashley Atkinson presented changes to the awards program in place of Derek Wong, who could not attend the meeting. Ashley let the Board know that in October 2018, a committee was appointed to review the awards selection criteria at both the Section and Chapter level. The subcommittee met in June 2019 to discuss potential changes to awards policy and process. Among the issues, the committee was asked to suggest ways to provide more consistency and structure to the awards policies and provide a final recommendation to the Board. A post-Chapter conference awards program debrief also occurred with the VP Administration and co-awards coordinators to review and suggest additional proposed changes to be recommended. Changes were also shared with the Section Directors for their input. To implement the changes recommended by the subcommittee, Ashley shared Derek's recommendations with the Board, which were as follows:

Adopt awards program changes to 1) Increase State awards jury to 8 appointed members representing each Section; 2) Standardize the timing of annual State awards application submittal to be in mid-May (generally May 15th). Require each Section to notify local award recipients no later than 30 days before May 15th to give time for State award submittal, and; 3) Require that all State award applicants must first apply at the Section level where the project, plan or work occurred in order to be eligible for a Chapter award.

The Board discussed the recommendations but suggested modifying the language as follows:

Adopt awards program changes to 1) Increase State awards jury to 8 appointed members representing each Section; 2) Standardize the timing of annual State awards application submittal to be in mid-May (generally May 15th). Require each Section to notify local award recipients no later than 30 days before May 15th to give time for State award submittal, and; 3) Require that all State award applicants must first apply at the Section level where the project, plan or work occurred in order to be eligible for a Chapter award, unless the award is not offered at the Section level or the project is of significance in multiple sections.

The Board also discussed that APA National is converting to an awards portal soon. The Chapter will need to update its word limit for applications so that the Chapter word limit is the same as National's.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the changes to the awards program as outlined above in the modified actions. *Unanimous vote.*

Contractor Review Protocol ACTION: Julia Lave Johnston asked the Board to review the Contractor Review Protocol document provided to the Board. She asked VP's with oversight for specific contractor work to make sure they are familiar with that contractor's scope of services, which are all available online. The VP's were also asked to let Julia know if there are any issues of concern.

Archives ACTION: Steve Preston reminded the Board that an email related to the Chapter's archives has been sent to all Board members requesting records for the Chapter archives, however not many records have been sent in yet. Steve asked that members with records please send them asap in accordance with the Chapter archives policy. For future email reminders, Steve will let the Board know which Board members are behind in sending their records for the year.

Sections Affiliate Organizations ACTION: Julia asked the Sections to email her all affiliated organizations and nonprofits that each Section works with. This should be sent to Julia by the middle of February.

2020 June Board Meeting: Julia let the Board know that the June Board Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 27th in Sacramento. Details about the time and location will be forthcoming.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM THE BOARD MEETING

The following items were also discussed during the Board Meeting:

1. PEN Update
2. Contractor Review Protocol

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The Board Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm