



American Planning Association  
**California Chapter**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

## ACTION MINUTES

### APA California Board Meeting

### Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

### June 25 - 26, 2020

#### ATTENDEES:

##### EXECUTIVE BOARD

President	Julia Lave Johnston
President Elect	Ashley Atkinson
VP, Administration	Derek Wong, AICP
VP, Conferences	Hanson Hom, 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
Commission and Board Representative	Jay Higgins, 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	Jonathan Schuppert
Los Angeles	Tony Mendoza
Sacramento Valley	Yassi Sarvian
San Diego	Nancy Graham, AICP

##### APPOINTED MEMBERS

CPR President	Bill Anderson, FAICP
Distance Education Director	Greg Konar, AICP
National Board Representative, Region 6	Kristen Asp, AICP
National Policy and Legislative Representative	Nicholas Maricich, AICP
Northern Chapter Historian	Larry Mintier, FAICP
PEN President	Bob Paternoster, FAICP
Southern University Liaison	Mirle Rabinowitz Bussell
Transportation Planning Division Representative	Katie Witherspoon

##### STAFF

Stefan/George – Executive Director/Lobbyist	Sande George
Stefan/George – Administrative Director/Lobbyist	Lauren De Valencia
Membership Program Manager	Ben Morrison

## ACTION ITEMS FROM THE BOARD MEETING

### I. CALL TO ORDER

President Julia Lave Johnston called the meeting to order on Thursday, June 25, at 5:30 pm.

### II. APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda. The agenda was reorganized on Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> and an action item was added to approve the 2023 conference location. The Board also approved the Consent Items: Minutes, Membership Report and Financial Reports. *Unanimous vote.*

### III. ACTION ITEMS

APA California Transportation Planning Division Representative VOTE: Julia Lave Johnston explained to the Board that APA National has a number of divisions on various planning issues. Currently there are 21 divisions ranging from city, regional, rural, federal, environmental, hazard mitigation, housing and transportation planning. The Transportation Division, one of the largest existing divisions, reached out to the Chapter Sections to solicit liaisons, however Julia would like to have a liaison to represent the Chapter, rather than having a representative at each of the Sections. That person would be appointed by the Board as a new appointed position that would work under the VP of Marketing and Membership. Like the other appointed positions on the Board, this would be a two-year position with no direct Chapter funding for attendance at Board meetings.

After soliciting potential APA California members to fill this position, Julia received interest from Katie Witherspoon, who is a current planner in San Diego. Julia asked the Board to approve Katie's appointment to this new position on the Board.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to create a new APA California Transportation Planning Division Representative on the Board as an appointed position. The Board also approved the appointment of Katie Witherspoon to fill that position. *Unanimous vote.*

Awards Selection Criteria Updates: In October 2018, a committee was appointed to review the awards selection criteria at both the Section and Chapter level, including when it is appropriate to require those submitting awards to win at the Section level in order to be considered for corresponding Chapter or National awards. The members of the original committee were Derek Wong, Ashley Atkinson, John Hildebrand, Kristen Asp, and Marc Yeber. Since there is no consensus yet, the committee delayed providing a recommendation specific to requiring a win at the Section level. However, a number of new awards policies were adopted by the Board in January 2020 to:

- Increase the State awards jury to 8 appointed members representing each Section
- 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
- 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

These new policies were implemented during the 2020 awards process. Derek Wong and Ashley Atkinson told the Board that there would not be a specific action at the meeting today, but they hope to have additional recommendations ready to be brought back to the Board for the fall Board meeting. Possible recommendations being considered are to:

- Expand the “Section-Chapter Awards Committee” to include the following members: Chapter Awards Coordinator, Section Awards Coordinators, and other association members (e.g. Historians).
- Provide recommendations to the Board regarding the awards selection criteria at both the Section and Chapter level, alignment with National planning awards, and to provide more consistency and structure to the awards policies prior to the 2021 awards.

Membership Dues Assistance for Chapter-Only Members and Unemployed Planners VOTE: To acknowledge the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting hardships experienced by many in the planning profession, Marc Yeber and Tony Mendoza outlined a proposal to the Board that would offer temporary relief to those members who have lost employment over the last three months. Considering that there is significant uncertainty in the near future, a Chapter initiated measure may be warranted to assist and retain members. Similar efforts were put in place in the 2008/2009 Great Recession. Marc and Tony reviewed the following with the Board:

- Current Fee: The current fee for Chapter-only membership is \$125.00 and there are just under 200 current Chapter-only members.
- Employment Impacts: Many public and private employers have responded to shrinking budgets by either delaying hiring and/or letting go of the most recent hires, often those with the least experience.
- Target Audience: Recent (2020 or 2021) Bachelor, Master or Doctorate graduates in planning or affiliated planning program. Also, members who can demonstrate a recent loss of job due to the COVID-19 slow down.
- Chapter Fiscal Impact: Not fully known since membership numbers for APA National are calculated and reported quarterly. However, it is suspected that the Chapter will experience a significant loss of memberships in subsequent membership reports.

To assist members experiencing hardship at this time, Marc and Tony asked the Board to consider several options. One option is to suspend the fee for Chapter-only Memberships offered to Planners seeking employment within in the planning field. This would be intended to benefit recent (2020 or 2021) Bachelor, Master’s or Doctorate graduates in a planning or affiliated planning program as well as those recently unemployed planners that can demonstrate loss of job or work due to the COVID-19 slow-down. This action was proposed to be in effect at least through December 31, 2020 and could be extended longer, if needed. This would be a similar option to what the Chapter offered in 2008-2009 during the Great Recession.

The Board discussed this proposal and other options that could assist APA California members. However, the Board also had a number of questions:

- How would a fee reduction work with what APA National is currently offering?
- Should the Chapter also offer assistance to students?
- How many members applied for financial assistance in 2008/2009?
- How would this impact the Chapter’s budget and subventions from APA National?

The Board also discussed various ways to implement financial assistance to members, including whether or not the Chapter should offer a voucher towards their membership, offer a reduced fee, suspend the fee, or ask members to reach out to the Chapter to let members determine what works best. Ultimately the Board was not ready to take an action on this issue. The Board determined that more work and

research needed to be done before making a final decision. Marc and Tony will work with the VP of Administration, Executive Director and Chapter bookkeeper to discuss the fiscal impacts. After that discussion, Marc and Tony will put together a revised proposal for the Board based on the various options discussed. This will be done in time for review and vote at the July Executive Board Meeting.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to table the proposed action to offer APA California Chapter-only members a reduced membership until the Board has financial information to consider before taking an action. The Board tabled this vote until the next Executive Board meeting in July at which time a final proposal to assist APA California members will be considered. *Unanimous vote.*

**Bylaws Amendment – Young and Emerging Planners Name Change VOTE:** Marc Yeber asked the Board to approve a Chapter Bylaws amendment to change the name of the “Young Planners Group” (YPG) to the “Young and Emerging Planners” (YEP) to be consistent with previous actions the Board has taken to amend the name. All Sections will also need to ensure their Bylaws are amended to reflect this change.

Marc also noted that he would like to meet with Section YEP members to refine the Bylaws amendment and to outline what the Board responsibilities for the YEP position will be. The YEP Board positions is currently vacant. Julia suggested that the YEP representatives coordinate like the section directors and nominate one of them to serve as a liaison to the Board. Elizabeth Owen and Julia both noted that they would additionally like to review the interaction between the Student Representative and YEP position on the Board. Julia also noted that the Bylaws state that the President-Elect is directed to work with the Student Representative, however that may not be the best process for communication. She suggested the Board should also look at other ways to engage students now that more virtual communications and events are necessary and available, given the impacts of COVID-19.

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve the Chapter Bylaws amendment to reflect the new name for “Young and Emerging Planners” (YEP), as previously approved by the Board. Marc, Elizabeth and Julia will further discuss the responsibilities of the YEP position, the Student Representative and how best to serve both sets of members. *Unanimous vote.*

The meeting was recessed on June 25 at 7:15 pm and resumed on June 26 at 12:30 pm.

**Planners4Health:** In a partnership between the California Planning Roundtable and APA California, the Planners4Health initiative was created in 2017 to help build local capacity for integrating planning and public health. The Planners4Health initiative is part of APA California’s Plan4Health program to help communities combat determinants of chronic disease. Funding for the initiative was provided through a grant from the national Centers from Disease Control and Prevention.

Planners4Health has started a second round of grants and would like the Chapter to formally recognize the organization as a statewide advisory group. The Board has already previously approved Planners4Health as an affiliate organization to APA California and listed it as an affiliate on the APA California website. Julia asked the Board to approve a new Planners4Health liaison position to work with the VP of Diversity and Inclusion on the Board. This new liaison would not be a new appointed position but rather an opportunity to periodically coordinate with the VP of Diversity and Inclusion and keep the Board updated on Planners4Health activities. Like other affiliate organizations, a representative from Planners4Health would be invited to participate in Board meetings and listed as a non-voting member on the Board roster.

While this action does not require a Board vote, Julia noted that she would like to amend the Bylaws to add Planners4Health as an official affiliate organization. She also suggested that a policy should be included in the Bylaws to discuss how APA California affiliate organizations engage in communication and advocacy on legislative and policy issues that the Chapter is also engaged in. Julia will work with the VP of Policy and Legislation to create this new policy and bring it back to the Board for approval.

**APA California 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Larry Mintier reminded the Board that 2023 will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of APA California. At the January 2020 Board Meeting and Retreat, Marc Yeber suggested a number of initiatives that the Chapter might undertake to celebrate, promote and market the Chapter's anniversary. During that discussion, it was suggested that it would be appropriate to form a planning committee that could work together to ensure all relevant parties have an opportunity to participate in the planning process.

The Chapter Historians have developed an outline of activities that was presented to the Board. They proposed appointing a committee to outline its goals and targets. It is important, however, that the committee be formed in such a way as to ensure that all entities with an interest have an opportunity to participate, and that the project include diversity and equity as underlying principles.

Larry recommended the following members be appointed to this new planning committee: Chapter President, VP Conferences, VP Membership and Marketing, VP Public Information, VP Diversity and Equity, 2023 Conference Representative, Section Directors or Section Historians, Chapter Historians, PEN and an APA California Archives Ex-Officio. The committee should also be prepared to consult with staff, with the Vice President for Administration concerning budget, and other Board members as needed.

While the formation of the committee did not require a Board vote, the Chapter Historians will convene this ad hoc planning committee to develop and present a recommended plan for the Chapter's 2023 anniversary, no later than July 1, 2021, with initial recommendations to be approved in conjunction with the FY 2022 budget (adopted in December, 2021 or January, 2022).

**Legislative Platform:** Eric Phillips reminded the Board that in October of 2018, the Board approved "Plan California," which is the Chapter's official legislative platform, for the 2019-2020 Legislative Session. The Platform outlines the Chapter's professional views on priority issues, and it informs the positions the Chapter takes with respect to specific legislative proposals and for advocacy positions in the California State Legislature.

The Chapter adopts a new Platform prior to the start of each two-year Legislative Session. Accordingly, the Chapter has the opportunity to update the Platform in advance of the 2021-2022 Legislative Session to reflect current Chapter priorities and incorporate insights related to the Chapter's work over the past two years and beyond.

The current Platform identifies eight topics. Each topic includes one or more "Planning Principles" that establish general outcomes that the Chapter supports, as well as specific actions and positions that advance the Planning Principles. The eight topics are:

1. Housing
2. Density
3. Hazards
4. Infrastructure, Services, and Fees
5. CEQA
6. Neighborhood Vitality and Healthy Communities

7. Inclusion and Social Justice
8. Coordinated Planning

Eric suggested there are several ways to refine the Platform. First, “Inclusion and Social Justice” should be elevated as a topic and enhanced with more specific recommendations to improve equity in communities, promoting responsible development that learns from planning’s past and reverses institutional and structural barriers some planners helped create. Second, the “Housing” and “Density” topics may be able to be combined and should reflect evolving positions on by-right and streamlining requirements. Eric also suggested that support for increasing context-sensitive density be amplified in light of the anti-density and anti-housing arguments that certain interest groups are beginning to foment in the wake of COVID-19. Third, the Platform should discuss transportation and mobility issues, particularly as they relate to COVID-19, remote working, and California’s climate goals. Finally, and most importantly, Eric would like to include Planning Principles and actions that help affirmatively make the case for why planning matters. As the state continues to override local development regulations, it can be easy to succumb to cynicism about the planning profession and the value of certain planning exercises. Eric proposed the following schedule to update the Platform:

7/20/20	Initial Board comments due to the Vice President for Policy and Legislation Board feedback and Vice President for Policy and Legislation edits incorporated into Draft Platform
8/17/20	Draft Platform sent to Legislative Review Team and Sections
9/21/20	Comments from Legislative Review Team and Sections due Legislative Review Team’s and Sections’ comments incorporated into Revised Draft Platform
10/16/20	Revised Draft Platform presented to Board for approval

Eric also noted that there might be an opportunity to host a zoom meeting open to all APA California members to offer comments and suggestions on the Platform before it is adopted. Eric will discuss this in further detail with Julia.

**Legislative Position Letters on APA California Website VOTE:** Eric reminded the Board that each year, the Chapter drafts and sends scores of legislative position letters providing analysis of, and comments on, pending legislation relevant to APA California members and the planning field in general. Currently, these position letters are only accessible to members on the APA California website. While understanding that the Chapter seeks to provide value to its members by including exclusive content to those members, having the Chapter’s legislative positions and analysis be accessible publicly may help broaden APA California’s reach and expose more people to the breadth of the Chapter’s positions. Eric also noted that it appears to be common practice for advocacy groups to make their positions and letters public. Given this, Eric asked the Board to approve making the Chapter’s position letters public on the APA California website, effective immediately.

**The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve making all APA California legislative position letters on the APA California website accessible to the public. *Unanimous vote.***

**Diversity Training:** Julia discussed with the Board the importance of highlighting more prominently at the Chapter level the importance of diversity, particularly given the state of events that have happened over the course of 2020. Julia would like to offer diversity training, similar to what was offered at the conference in 2019, for the entire APA California membership. She noted that the costs to offer the training is high and the Board should look at other ways the Chapter could fund this important training.

Julia noted that she has also discussed doing a joint fundraiser with the Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) and open the training up to both APA California and AEP members.

The Board was very supportive of the training and looking for other ways to educate members on the importance of diversity and social equity generally. Board members felt strongly that the Chapter needs to be clear that the social injustices that the world is experiencing right now are being taken seriously and that the Chapter should be a leader for resources on issues of diversity and inclusion in planning.

Julia will share more information with the Board on the costs associated with the diversity training and start strategizing on ways to fund this project. Julia will also convene a group of Board members to start discussing how the Chapter can lead on these issues. That group will include Ashley Atkinson, Ellie Fiori, Rachel Raynor, Yassi Sarvian and Elizabeth Owen.

**Future Board Meetings:** Julia asked the Board to consider whether or not future Board meetings should continue on the same schedule or be changed to allow more frequent meetings. She also suggested that the Board could break up into smaller committees to meet and focus on issues more frequently. Currently the Executive Board meetings are held every third Friday of the month for an hour and the Full Board is scheduled to meet in the Fall, coinciding with the conference, as well as a June full Board meeting and the January retreat. While the Executive Board has been meeting so far this year via Zoom, the next Full Board meeting at the conference was previously scheduled to be held in person the day before the conference. Given that the Full Board meeting will be held virtually this year, the fall Board meeting does not need to be scheduled in line with the conference dates. Julia also noted that the meeting could be broken up over a few days, as was done for this meeting. However, it might be better to meet on a Saturday so that there are fewer conflicts with work schedules.

Board members had mixed opinions on the best way to meet for the Full Board meeting in the fall, as well as whether or not the Executive Board should meet more frequently. Julia did ask that the Full Board be prepared to meet on August 21<sup>st</sup> (instead of just the Executive Board) so that the Board can meet in advance of the conference.

Julia and Ashley will work together to discuss the future Executive Board meeting schedule and fall Full Board meeting date(s). More details will be shared with the Board soon.

**2023 Conference Location Approval VOTE:** At the end of April, the Board approved shifting to a virtual conference in 2020 and postponing the Riverside Conference to 2021, given the impacts of COVID-19. The Board also approved moving the 2021 conference in Fresno from 2021 to 2023. The 2022 conference would remain in Anaheim.

Hanson Hom let the Board know they the Virtual Conference Committee has reached an agreement with all parties on the date changes except for the Fresno Hilton which would only agree to shifting the conference contract to 2023 subject to a penalty fee of over \$70,000 based on lost hotel revenue. That penalty fee was not acceptable to the Committee, so the Committee looked at moving the Riverside conference to 2023 as an alternative.

After working further with the Hilton, assisted by a letter by APA California counsel, Fresno Hilton has agreed to the shift of the conference date to 2023 subject to a significantly reduced change fee of \$10,000. Hanson recommended the Board approve this condition, which both the Inland Empire and Central Sections agree is the preferred solution. The \$10,000 fee would be debited to the 2023 Fresno conference. The conference schedule will be as follows:

2020 – Virtual  
2021 – Riverside  
2022 – Anaheim  
2023 – Fresno

The Board moved, seconded and passed to approve moving the Fresno conference to 2023 and to pay the \$10,000 change fee that would be required to be deducted from the 2023 Fresno conference. *Unanimous vote.*

#### Other Items Discussed on the Agenda (Without Actions)

1. Strategic Plan Update
2. Chapter and Section Coordination & Policy Development
3. 2020 Virtual Conference Planning and Update
4. Communications Plan Update

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

The Board Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm on June 26.