Information Only Items

1. Briefly describe committee activities since your last report.

The Legislative & Law Committee completed the remaining Focus Group Listening Sessions in Greater Minnesota. January 8, 2015 marked the end of this almost yearlong effort of conducting these programs with the District Directors statewide. The phase II White Paper outreach effort marked an end with our last stop in St. Cloud. About 14 were in attendance which was typical in all 5 programs with participants ranging from 12-24 folks. Participants ranged from various disciplines including planning professionals, legal, and citizen planners. This group conveyed yet another varied range of interesting topics and issues from the Central Region. The feedback we received throughout all of the Minnesota regions has been so different. No particular major overriding theme has emerged, but a large list of important ‘subtopics’ pervade the list of notes. Since March of 2014 the core team consisted of Bob Patton, Suzanne Rhees and Andrew Mack.

At the last board meeting the chapter approved the Legislative Committee work plan for 2015. Item #9 of the work plan reads as follows:

Planning Enabling Law Reform White Paper. Phase II of this project involves district wide listening session focus groups. This initiative began in spring of 2014 and will conclude on or about the first of the year. This information is being compiled for inclusion in the White Paper and will conclude this 2nd phase of the project. Upon completion the committee will conduct a careful examination and discussion of where the project needs to go from here with an agenda item before the chapter board as a next logical step in this work.

The question of where we need to go from here is now before the board. The Committee Leadership feels strongly that a process should be undertaken as part of the updated Legislative Platform effort with Planning Enabling Law Reform as the overarching objective. We believe that the updating of the platform statements is a series of sub-elements which can support the larger subject. In short, we think that the committee can develop an effort to frame the discussion for the membership to decide on where we should go from here. Perhaps a number of steps could be taken between now and the fall conference where a session could be devoted to presenting the findings of the White Paper and having members weigh in on next steps. A survey to the effect in advance of the conference could also be developed ahead to allow the same opportunity. This is principally the area in which the committee seeks feedback from the board during the annual retreat.

The White Paper will incorporate the final elements of the phase II outreach effort. It will be completed in advance of the Planner’s Day program at the capital and used as a basis for talking points. The main point here being the fact that we carried this effort throughout the entire state and learned some very interesting stories about some successes and obstacles regarding how planning works throughout Minnesota. We think this is an important story to share at the Legislature and will work toward developing this as a part of this year’s program. The fact that we are developing a process to gain membership involvement centering on whether or not the need exists to advance planning enabling law reform will also be an important part of the story.
The following draft list may be considered a tentative outline of 2015 Action Plan.

1. Finalize whitepaper with the addition of a summary of findings from the statewide listening sessions. Feb. 2015

2. Develop platform process with goal of board approval (of process) prior to Planners Day at the Capitol. March 2015

3. Conduct Planners Day at the Capitol March-April 2015. Focus on:
   a) Wrapping up and summarizing all of the findings of the white paper and listening sessions (to both the attendees and any legislative audience we can muster)
   b) Introduce and kick off the platform process for the membership.
   c) Network, educate and outreach to collaborative organizations
   d) Conduct presentations where invited


4. Prepare for fall conference and any other platform outreach efforts over the summer. July-August 2015

5. Develop and initiate chapter legislative priority platform survey for membership. July-August 2015

6. Conduct fall conference track/session with focus on platform development. September 2015


8. Proceed with Legislative Priority Initiatives. December 2015