Planning Minnesota

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Submissions: We welcome articles, letters to the editor, photos, calendar items, project profiles, planners on the move items, and other news. Send all submissions via e-mail to: apamnnewsletter@gmail.com.

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On the Importance of Mentoring

Hello Fellow Planners:

One primary goal of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association is to connect professional planners and planning enthusiasts with each other in an exchange of ideas and best practices in the field. Whether you are a recent graduate, a young planner, a mid-career professional, or a seasoned veteran in the field, you have a crucial role in helping us further this goal. The best way to accomplish this is through mentoring.

In her book “Lean In,” Sheryl Sandberg (CFO of Facebook) highlights the importance of mentoring. However, she emphasizes the difference that informal relationships can make in our careers. While there’s an increasing popularity in formal mentor programs (and there is a role for these) she asserts that contrived mentorships are not as valuable as the informal and sometimes impromptu mentorships that come from your colleagues through the exchange of ideas and experiences. I have found this to be true in my life as well.

Here’s my challenge to you. Seek out people you can mentor and people who can mentor you by having coffee or lunch with other planners or by attending APA-MN’s wonderful and well-attended events (Twins games, brown bags, and the conference of course!). These opportunities do not have to be formal relationships (aka “will you be my mentor?”).

Ask questions of other planners regarding issues you are struggling with. Ask them how they navigated the ladder of their career, or the best way to study for the AICP test. Share your stories of successes and failures with sign ordinances or code enforcement. This is how true mentoring happens. No matter what your age or where you are in your career, you know something someone else can benefit from, and you have a lot to learn from others as well.

So engage with each other!

Breanne Rothstein
Duluth Project Gets AIA Green Project Award

The American Institute of Architects selected a Minnesota project, the Swenson Civil Engineering Building, as one of its Top Ten Green Projects of 2013.

The Swenson Civil Engineering at the University of Minnesota Duluth is a two-story structure wrapped around double-height laboratories. The program called for 35,300 s.f. of space for instructional, research, and administrative functions. Spaces include faculty offices, student workspaces, classrooms, and centrally located structural and hydraulics laboratories.

The building is located on the north end of campus, adjacent to an existing engineering building. Engaging the adjacent building and responding to existing pedestrian patterns presented challenges. The site sloped significantly from east to west, while access was required in both locations. The project team successfully designed a building that seamlessly engages the adjacent structure, reinforces existing circulation patterns, and mediates grade changes.

Designed to display systems as a pedagogical tool, the building showcases structural and mechanical processes and stormwater management techniques. It acts as a working classroom where design plays an integral educational role, and civil engineering processes are illuminated.

Sustainable strategies were incorporated into the design process and aesthetics. The University and State required that the building meet LEED Silver standards. The University encouraged incorporation of sustainable principles to foster development of civil engineers as responsible environmental stewards. The final design achieved LEED Gold certification, coming within four points of Platinum.
Here Comes the Upper Midwest Planners Conference

This year’s conference will take place on September 18 - 20, 2013 at the Rochester Civic Center. More importantly, we will be hosting the Upper Midwest Planners Conference. As part of our conference planning efforts, we are excited about the opportunity to work with our neighboring chapters to offer a conference program that highlights planning efforts throughout the Midwest. We encourage everyone from the Dakotas, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, and Illinois to participate in this exciting event.

This year’s conference theme, "Operation: Plan! Prioritizing Community Vitals" takes a playful spin on Rochester's health industry. This theme provides a foundation for a conference program that emphasizes how communities are tackling their planning needs in a new era. We have also built a program that offers multiple opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and explore the streets of Rochester. In that respect, we are shaking it up a bit with a revamped program that offers more mobile tours and networking opportunities. To help spark your interest, here are a few events you can expect at this year’s conference:

- Wednesday Night Awards Banquet at the Rochester Art Center – Meet the 2013 winners, while enjoying some appetizers, drinks and the D’Sievers (a jazz trio);
- Key Note Speaker Ron Sims – Ron Sims is the former Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Executive Director of King County, Washington. Based on his experience in those roles, he will speak about the importance of local and regional planning as a contributor to the economic vitality, social equity, and population health of communities;
- A panel discussion with Christopher Leinberger (2011 APA MN Conference Keynote Speaker). APA MN Program Committee anticipates Rochester Staff, Mayo Clinic Representatives, and Community Leaders to participate and reflect on the important factors to consider within the context of Rochester’s planned development;
- A Night on the Town – Join colleagues and sponsors Thursday night at two local establishments for drinks and networking opportunities;
- Two GTS trainings;
- Over 50 sessions, including multiple ethic and law trainings, as well as speed sessions;
- Mobile tours, walking tours, a morning 5K and a bike ride; and
- Exhibitor space, activities and prizes.

On behalf of APA Minnesota, we are pleased to host this year’s Upper Midwest Planners Conference. Please visit the conference website at www.plannersconference.com to learn more about hotel reservations and how to become a conference sponsor.

Lance H. Bernard and Melissa Poehlman, AICP, Conference Co-Chairs.

Operation: Plan!
Prioritizing Community Vitals

Upper Midwest Planners Conference
September 18-20, 2013
Rochester Civic Center
Watch for further updates at www.plannersconference.com

Anyone interested in exhibiting or sponsoring an event at the Conference, please get in touch with Lance Bernard at lbernard@srfconsulting.com
A Closer Look at Wabasha

The City of Wabasha, population 2,521 is on the Mississippi River about halfway between Red Wing and Winona. With the only bridge across the Mississippi River between these larger regional neighbors, Wabasha finds itself as a regional player in the service industry. As the County Seat for Wabasha County, government is one of the larger employers in town. Others include Wabasha-Kellogg public schools, the hospital and clinic, and a variety of manufacturers, several in the medical industry. Many residents commute to work, in particular to Rochester which is about 45 minutes away. Another source of employment comes from the entertainment and recreation industry.

Wabasha was incorporated the year of Minnesota statehood, 1858, but its history as a community starts at least 30 years before, when homes started to spring up around the fur trade post of Augustin Rocque. By the early 1850’s commercial buildings had formed along the Mississippi River and Main Street and the town began to take shape. The community grew slowly around this central business district. Today, Wabasha has an active, three-block historic business district.

The population declined slightly in 2010, but new homes continues to be built. The town is a popular place for secondary residences. There is a growing number of retirees, both new residents and those who grew up in the community and are returning home for their golden years. While this aging population brings its challenges, it also brings opportunity. These residents bring a lifetime of experience and are still youthful enough to participate in community activity. This has helped to spur on a growth of recreation industry in the region with the Mississippi River, state forests, and bluffs providing the perfect venue for boating, golf, skiing, hiking and other activities.

How long have you worked for the community?
I have been with the City of Wabasha for almost 9 years now, since November of 2004.

What is the greatest part of your job?
I love the variety of my job. Being in a small town one has to wear many hats. These include standard planning and zoning activities, economic development, and historic preservation and public arts projects.

What is a unique fact or characteristic about your community?
The people in this small town have the uncanny ability to make great things happen when they put their minds to it. There are many examples of this, but the most notable is the National Eagle Center (building constructed in 2007) located on the Riverfront in the historic Downtown. It started in the 1980’s as individual volunteers talking to passersby about the majestic birds following the Mississippi River flyway. It’s a wonderful example of what can happen where there is public/private partnership. It inspired several following projects such as the Dr. Bert and Dorothy Bouquet and Gus and Vivian Marmesh Memorial Fountain.

Current Projects and Issues?
The big issue in the Southeast region of the state has been the frac sand industry. For the City of Wabasha mining has not been proposed, but two truck to rail transfer facilities have been. It is anticipated that this will continue to require ongoing work for the City.

Molly Patterson-Lundgren, Wabasha City Planner
Supreme Court Decision Could Have Big Impact

A recent Supreme Court decision regarding the authority of a local government (a Water Management District) to suggest conditions for permit approval for wetland development could have a chilling effect on the ability of local governments to negotiate permit conditions. It may affect some of Minnesota’s wetland banking and other mitigation practices. It’s too early to know all the implications, but keep this Committee informed of 1) potential projects that may be affected or 2) changes you may consider to your permitting practices under the Wetland Conservation Act.

http://www.startribune.com/local/213062421.html

The US Government Portal link below displays headlines and links to news coverage of the case.

Koontz v. St. Johns River Water Management District
Supreme Court of the United States
Docket Number: 11-1447
Petition for a writ of certiorari filed: May 30, 2012
Petition for a writ of certiorari granted: October 5, 2012
Journal of the Supreme Court of the United States, October 5, 2012, page 172
(http://www.supremecourt.gov/orders/journal/jnl12.pdf)

http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/supreme_court_preview/briefs-v2/11-1447_pet_amcu_apra-et.al.authcheckdam.pdf

Link to the Opinion:

Summary
For over eleven years, a Florida land use agency refused to issue any of the permits necessary for Coy A. Koontz, Sr., to develop his commercial property. The reason was because Koontz would not accede to a permit condition requiring him to dedicate his money and labor to make improvements to 50 acres of government-owned property located miles away from the project—a condition that was determined to be wholly unrelated to any impacts caused by Koontz’s proposed development. A Florida trial court ruled that the agency’s refusal to issue the permits was invalid and effected a temporary taking of Koontz’s property, and awarded just compensation. After the appellate court affirmed, the Florida Supreme Court reversed, holding that, as a matter of federal takings law, a landowner can never state a claim for a taking where (1) permit approval is withheld based on a landowner’s objection to an excessive exaction, and (2) the exaction demands dedication of personal property to the public.

The questions presented are:
• Whether the government can be held liable for a taking when it refuses to issue a land-use permit on the sole basis that the permit applicant did not accede to a permit condition that, if applied, would violate the essential nexus and rough proportionality tests set out in Nollan v. California Coastal Commission, 483 U.S. 825 (1987), and Dolan v. City of Tigard, 512 U.S. 374 (1994); and
• Whether the nexus and proportionality tests set out in Nollan and Dolan apply to a land-use exaction that takes the form of a government demand that a permit applicant dedicate money, services, labor, or any other type of personal property to a public use.

(http://www.supremecourt.gov/gop/11-01447qp.pdf)

Nollan v. California Coastal Commission:
Dolan v. City of Tigard:

Suzanne S. Rhees, AICP
Floodplain and Land Use Planner
Land Use Programs Unit | DNR Division of Ecological & Water Resources
Collaborating to Renovate an Old Firehouse

Editor’s note: This article comes courtesy of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s USER resource. This article ran in the April edition of The Edge.

Hillside sits above downtown Duluth, with scenic views of Lake Superior and the adjacent harbor and parks. Although the neighborhood includes assets such as two commercial streets, a medical district, and several cultural and community organizations, Hillside also exhibits several conditions typical of older, inner ring neighborhoods: vacant and blighted buildings, aging infrastructure, and significant portions of the population with below-median household incomes and high unemployment. To address these issues, the At Home in Duluth Collaborative has invested millions of dollars in revitalizing Hillside, including rehabilitating homes and educational and cultural facilities, as well as restoring many of Hillside’s historic buildings. The recent renovation of the neighborhood’s Fire House No. 1 and its annex, built in 1889 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has continued this trend. The buildings are now part of the Firehouse Flats complex, which along with newly constructed apartments, provides affordable rental housing while preserving two pieces of Duluth’s historic fabric.

Collaborating to Revitalize Hillside

The At Home Collaborative, a partnership of more than 20 local nonprofit and city agencies convened by the Duluth office of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), began working in Hillside in 2000. The collaborative invests in housing, builds family income and wealth, encourages economic activity, enhances education access, and supports healthy environments in the target neighborhoods of Hillside, Morgan Park, West Duluth, and Lincoln Park. One of the collaborative’s major tasks has been the preparation of the Hillside Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, with priorities set by neighborhood residents and businesses. The plan’s priorities include renovation of Fire House No. 1 and its annex into affordable and supportive housing. MetroPlains revitalized the historic property and incorporated it into the new Firehouse Flats development, with the help of Duluth LISC through neighborhood planning and assistance with securing financing.

Renovating Fire House No. 1 and its Annex

MetroPlains completed the renovation of Fire House No. 1 and its annex in December 2012, and now the historic buildings include 12 affordable units, two of which are reserved for chronically homeless persons. A skyway connecting the fire house and annex allows easy access between the two structures. A new building containing twenty-eight additional affordable units, including two reserved for chronically homeless persons, has been constructed next to the annex, where a temporary storage facility and other nonresidential buildings once stood. Residents of the units reserved for chronically homeless individuals and families will receive services from Churches
United in Ministry (CHUM), a faith-based organization assisting low-income people in Duluth; the services, based on individual needs, will include applying for public assistance, addressing mental health issues, locating resources for after-school child care, and counseling on educational and employment goals. The one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, with views of Lake Superior, will house extremely low- and very low-income households. The complex also contains community, exercise, and laundry rooms, as well as underground parking – an asset during Duluth’s cold winters. The Firehouse Flats development is expected to reach full occupancy by spring 2013.

Total development costs for Firehouse Flats were approximately $9.4 million. Funding sources for the project include the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, and federal and state historic and low-income housing tax credit equity. To receive the historic tax credits, MetroPlains renovated Fire House No. 1 and its annex according to the requirements of the U.S. National Park Service. The Duluth City Council established the Firehouse Redevelopment Tax Increment Financing District to finance land and building acquisition, site preparation, and improvements to public utilities, streets, and sidewalks.

**Integrating Affordable Housing into Hillside**

Erin Anderson, staff member at MetroPlains, noted the challenge that usually arises when affordable housing is proposed in an established neighborhood with single-family homeowners nearby. Pam Kramer, executive director of Duluth LISC, echoed Anderson’s sentiment and said that Duluth LISC’s close involvement with Hillside over the past 14 years mitigated that challenge and was an important factor in the development’s success. In addition, residents, community groups, and city staff first came together in 2005 to analyze options for rehabilitating Firehouse No. 1 and the annex. The result is a development that Hillside residents support — affordable housing in preserved historic buildings and an architecturally compatible new building. Both Firehouse Flats and Hillside are poised to benefit from these carefully developed plans; residents of Firehouse Flats can walk to local businesses and other Hillside amenities, and as Kramer has pointed out, the apartments have generated interest in future market-rate housing.
Upcoming Events and Programs

Functional Classification: So Important No One Wants to Talk About It

When: Friday, July 26, 2013, 12-1:30 p.m. CDT
What: Functional classification is a transportation topic that is often left for engineers to sort out, but it has a huge impact on urban planning. Anyone involved in urban planning—including community stakeholders—should be part of the dialogue surrounding the function of public streets. Functional classification is a way that transportation professionals group streets according to the type of traffic they serve and the degree of access expected to adjacent land uses. Few transportation issues are as important as functional classification, and yet it is one of the least understood or debated. Despite the Federal Highway Administration’s advocacy of flexible design standards, typical practice in the United States has been very rigid, leading to unintended negative consequences. For new urbanism, that means streets that require almost highway speeds and lane widths—physical impacts that are contrary to the overall purpose of new urban planning. For example, in some areas an Urban Principal Arterial might require a minimum 45 MPH design speed and minimum 12-foot wide lanes, even if the surrounding land uses need more appropriate (i.e. livable, sustainable) solutions. This webcast will incorporate very specific examples that are typical of public transportation networks throughout the United States.

Sponsored by the New Urbanism Division. 1.5 CM credits approved.

To register go to https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/854418202

Getting Back to Business: Addressing the Needs of Rockaway Businesses Impacted by Superstorm Sandy

When: Friday, July 19, 12-1:30 p.m. CDT
What: Webinar. On Monday, October 29, 2012, Superstorm Sandy struck New York City, the most populous region in the United States. Sandy was the biggest Atlantic storm in history, devastating homes and businesses across the Northeast, and causing over $19 billion in damages in New York City alone. In response to this disaster, the New York Metro Chapter of the APA undertook a six month effort to assess how Superstorm Sandy impacted businesses in Rockaway, Queens, a community uniquely situated on a narrow peninsula and one of the hardest-hit areas of New York City. A team of over 60 planners volunteered their services to assess needs, identify resources, and make recommendations for short- and long-term planning strategies that will help businesses recover and plan for the future. The APA team partnered with the Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation (RDRC), a community development corporation that provides business support in the Rockaways and has promoted economic development throughout the peninsula for over 30 years. When Sandy struck and displaced or damaged nearly 1,000 businesses, RDRC sprang into action. RDRC proved to be an invaluable partner and assisted the APA team visited approximately 300 businesses and conducted over 100 business interviews in 3 commercial corridors. The Chapter recently released a report documenting this process and lessons learned along the way in hopes that New York City’s experience can help other communities impacted by storms and other natural disasters. This webinar walks you through the process that the New York Metro Chapter team took to conduct its needs assessment and develop meaningful recommendations for strong planning.

CM credits pending

To register go to https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/653203482

Addressing the Needs of LGBT Seniors

When: Friday, August 2, 12-1:30 p.m. CDT
What: Webinar. Addressing the Needs of LGBT Seniors: Seniors in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community face a unique, and significant, set of obstacles to aging comfortably, including discrimination, lack of certain legal protections, and an absence of a family support system. Examine current trends in addressing the needs of LGBT seniors as well as innovative programs and services to help them age in place. Sponsored by the Gays and Lesbians in Planning Division.

CM credits pending
Upcoming Events and Programs

Job Creation Assistance

Can planners create jobs?

What’s the connection between planning and economic development?

What you answer may depend on where you sit!

Participants in the last two National Planning Conferences have heard a great deal of discussion about connections between planning and job creation. Your Economic Development Division hosted a lively, facilitated discussion at this year’s national conference and would like to help you replicate that sort of conversation at your state chapter meetings or other similar events.

If you are interested in advice and assistance in planning similar discussions, please contact:

John Provo, APA Economic Development Division Chair-Elect
Director, Office of Economic Development, Virginia Tech
jprovo@vt.edu
(540) 357-2949

AICP Certification Exam

The exam application window for the November 2013 AICP certification exam is now open. Here are the deadlines:

Early Bird Application Deadline: June 18, 2013
Final Application Deadline: July 30, 2013
Early Bird Notification Deadline: August 6, 2013
Testing Window: November 4-18, 2013

Submit an APA Conference Proposal

When: Deadline is August 20, 2013

What: It’s time to submit a proposal for the 2014 APA national conference in Atlanta, to be held April 26-30, 2014.

Atlanta is an economic powerhouse and one of the country’s fastest growing regions, yet is filled with natural beauty. Advance your career, network and get knowledge at the conference. And you can help shape the National Planning Conference by presenting a session, workshop, APA Learning Theater Demonstration, poster, or other contribution.

Atlanta was founded in 1837 as the end of the Western and Atlantic railroad line. It is the considered the capital of the Southeast.

The conference will be held at the Georgia World Congress Center, 285 Andrew Young International Boulevard.

Online registration opens in December. The early registration and student volunteer deadline is February 25, 2014. the advanced registration deadline is March 25.
Job Opportunities and RFPs

Job Title: Request for Proposals (RFP)
Hiring Agency: City of St. Cloud
Web Link: http://mn-stcloud.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/4129
Deadline: July 1, 2013
Salary Range: NA

Job Description
The City of St. Cloud is seeking proposals from qualified parties to prepare an Environmental Assessment Worksheet per Minnesota Rule 4410.4300, Subpart 22 for the extension of Clearwater Road in south St. Cloud. The City has identified the need for a future north-south minor arterial roadway between the Mississippi River and Interstate 94 connecting 8th Avenue South and existing Heatherwood Road.

Application Instructions
Proposals must be received by the City Clerk's Office prior to noon on July 1, 2013. Faxed or emailed proposals will not be accepted.
If you have any questions regarding this RFP, please contact Matt Glaesman, Community Development Director, at 320-650-3110 or Steve Foss, City Engineer, at 320-255-7243.

Job Title: Executive Director
Hiring Agency: Upper Minnesota Valley RDC
Web Link: http://www.umvrduc.org
Deadline: Open until filled, reviews starting July 1
Salary Range: $39,000 DOE

Job Description
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNER: 5-county regional planning agency in Appleton, MN. 4-year degree in community development, planning, urban studies, public administration or related field or at least six years' experience in the previous fields required. Salary DOE. Application and full position description available at www.umvrduc.org. EOE.

Application Instructions
Application and detailed job profile and description online at www.umvrduc.org.

Job Title: Planner
Hiring Agency: City of Mendota Heights
Web Link: www.mendota-heights.com
Deadline: July 3, 2013
Salary Range: $50,475 - $61,352

Job Description
The purpose of this position is to administer all planning and zoning ordinances and polices. Performs highly responsible and independent professional work related to planning and development plan review, including the implementation of the City's zoning, subdivision regulations, site plan approval process as well as the Comprehensive Plan.

Essential Duties:
• Planning
• Serve as staff liaison to the Planning Commission
• Code Enforcement
• Serve as Recycling Coordinator for the City.

Application Instructions
To apply call 651-255-1356 or download the application materials from our website at www.mendota-heights.com. Application materials are also available at Mendota Heights City Hall located at 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights, MN 55118.

All applicants must submit a cover letter, resume, City application and addendum to Human Resources by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 3, 2013. EEO.
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