From the President:
Welcome to the AIA Queens Newsletter. Volume I, Number 1

I took one of the last trains out of Washington, D.C., before the last 26 inches of snow shut the place down. I was there representing the chapter at the AIA National Grassroots Convention. One of the benefits of such a gathering is the opportunity to exchange ideas and information with peers from across the country. Out of this experience, I determined that our chapter needed a newsletter to update members on chapter events and to share information. So here it is: Volume I, Number 1. We welcome your comments, suggestions and contributions.

We begin 2010 with great hopes and high aspirations for the chapter. Last year we gathered around a series of lectures and site visits themed Connecting Queens - Fabric and Future. This provided a framework for highlighting some of the incredible new design work in the borough, with presentations on the Queens Library, Queens College, Queens Botanical Garden, Queensboro Bridge, Hunter's Point South, the new Frank Sinatra High School, Queens Waterfront Development, and the Douglaston Historic District.

This year our theme is Greening Queens, and we are beginning with two tours highlighting local production. In January we visited CAPSYS Modular Construction in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and in February we held our meeting at Crystal Windows in Flushing.

Finally, I am very pleased to report that our chapter is once again on a sound financial footing. When I took office a year ago we had an operating debt of $10,000. The new administration put together a budget, and we kept to it. With a strict eye on our expenses, bringing sponsors to partially fund our events, and expanding our outreach efforts, we managed to pay off our debt and now have a surplus.

Get involved - let us know how you would like to contribute to the chapter!

Laura Heim, President
Reports from Conventions, Meetings, and Events

2010 Grassroots Convention

Capitol Hill Visits: Chapter President Laura Heim represented our membership at the AIA National's Grassroots Convention in Washington, D.C., in early February. Leaders from chapters all across the nation attended seminars, working breakfasts and lunches, and visited Senators and members of the House of Representatives to promote a series of AIA-developed recommendations intended to stimulate the design and construction industry during these stressful times. Together with representatives of AIANYS, Ms. Heim met with two Legislative Correspondents of Senator Charles Schumer, and then, with the President and President-elect of AIANY, met with Congresswoman Hon. Carolyn Maloney's counsel (she had been called to the floor to vote). The AIA had prepared all members with striking blueprints – actual blueprints – outlining five key issues:

1. Help Struggling Communities Rebuild
2. Free Up Credit for Commercial Properties
3. Expand the Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction
4. Provide Relief for Small Business
5. Support Funding for School Modernization

In addition, members of the Queens chapter will be meeting with Congressman Joe Crowley in his local office.

Peer Group Breakfast Session: AIA National presented a Strategic Plan template which would be beneficial to component chapters in an effort to define goals and implementation strategies. “The Weave” as they called it incorporates Knowledge, Advocacy, Communication and Collaboration. This looks like a useful template, and with the assistance of AIA National, this chapter will employ it to help define our immediate and long-term goals for this year and the future using this template.

Leadership and Knowledge Workshops: The workshop on Inspiring Leadership in Students and Emerging Professionals focused on a pilot program in the AIA Northwest and Pacific Region designed to engage students and associate members. The program was designed to link academia and the profession specifically to address leadership skills among students and younger practitioners.

Networking with Local Chapters: The New York State Dinner and Peer Group Breakfast (chapters of the same size) provided opportunities to discuss common chapter issues and shared goals. Other chapters present included AIA Long Island, AIA Peconic, AIANY, AIA Staten Island and the new leadership of AIA Brooklyn.

AIANYS Board Meeting

The AIA Queens representative to the AIANYS Board of Directors is Chapter President Laura Heim, President, as per our by-laws; Fernando Villa is the alternate. The first meeting of the Board was held on Jan 21-22 in Albany, with the formal installation of new Directors. Your President volunteered to serve on the AIANYS Education Committee.

Issues discussed during the two-day meeting included:

- Staff and Past President’s Report: lessons learned from 2009 convention and the status of planning for the 2010 convention in Buffalo
- Review of the 2010 Legislative Agenda
- Regional Directors Report
- Public Director (discussion)
- President's Report
  - 2010 Goals, Chapter Visits, Associates and Developing Professionals
- 2011 Tri-State Convention (NY, NJ, PA) The AIANYS Challenge (mini-RUDAT like program leading up to symposium)

Our Regional Directors are: Terry O'Neal, AIANY; Susan Chin, AIANY; Russell A. Davidson, AIA Westchester / MidHudson. Last year, Terry O'Neal was assigned to our chapter and attended several of our events and meetings. This year, Susan Chin will perform that function. The Regional Directors act as a liaison between components /state/ national. We look forward to their input and suggestions.
PDC Meeting 1/26/10

In an effort to clarify our affiliation with the Professional Design Center of New York (PDC), Chair Robert Lo Pinto called a board meeting on January 26th. Attendees included Chris Petallides, President of the QCC of the New York State Society of Professional Engineers; Laura Heim, AIA Queens President; Brian Flynn, Engineer; Paul DiNatale, AIA LI and Past PDC Chair. As requested by AIA Queens, the by-laws, yearly budget and certificate of incorporation were given to the AIA Queens Chapter.

Our potential future collaborative efforts were discussed with an emphasis on shared events which are of interest to architects and engineers. We discussed having 2-4 events together in the coming year. Two have already been scheduled this winter so we need to focus on the spring and fall. If you are interested in specific issues which engage architects and engineers, let us know. **We are looking for three chapter members to serve on this board.** Please contact the chapter president if you are interested.

Commissioner’s Roundtable: Standpipe Legislation Implementation 1/26/10

The AIA Queens was invited to a presentation of the Standpipe Legislation Implementation at 280 Broadway. Willy Zambrano represented the chapter at this meeting. Handouts were distributed through the code and zoning committee.

*For more information use the following DOB Link:*

Queens Industry Meeting 1/21/10

**Notes** Gino O. Longo, R.A., Chair AIA Queens Code and Zoning Committee

Queens is working to cut down on reconsideration backlog. In December there were 130 determinations. Today they are down to 30. The present wait time for a response should be about three to four weeks. DOB is accepting PRE-determinations and will honor them once the application is filed.

Borough manager’s office has been relocated to the first floor. The Borough Manager’s office will be assisting with TCOs and after hour work variances.

TR2 & TR3 procedures were discussed. Handouts are available. Generally, they will be waived for 1- and 2-family homes filed under the 1968 code and filed prior to July 2009. For all other projects, upon obtaining core reports, the applicant of record can process a PAA stating that they have analyzed the reports and that the concrete exceeded the design strength. Upon approval of the PAA, the plan examiner will waive the TR2/3. For pro-cert jobs, you can go to the plan desk counter at 2:30 to see the Chief Plan Examiner or Code Consultant for the waiver. At 2:30 they will also be available for the 1- and 2-family home waivers.

Construction division will continue to issue full construction sign-offs regardless of open applications, complaints, violations, or applications.

Full Demo with mechanical means requires drawings for means and methods of demolition by a PE. Partial Demos are filed together with Alteration applications. A separate DMO drawing must be provide to show means and methods.

Flyer is available regarding Energy Code Compliance

*If you wish to be included on the Code and Zoning direct e-mail list, contact Gino Longo AIA longoaia@aol.com*

*We are going to include links to current information and flyers when we have the website up and running.*
Engineers and Architects Roundtable (EAR), 1/19/10

In an effort to provide information to the leadership of the professional organizations in the construction industry, the Department of Buildings holds EAR Meetings every 6 weeks. The Presidents of the five AIA NYC chapters are invited, together with other design professionals. The agenda included:

1. Special Inspections Update: Gus Sirakis
2. PW3: Joshua Florsheim
3. Plan Submission Requirements Update: Patricia Knobloch & Elizabeth Gelpi
4. Determination Process: Scott Pavan
   Precon/Recon

The fourth item focused on the backlog of Reconsiderations, especially at the Queens Department of Buildings. The DOB is aware of the problem and they are in the process of revising the determination process.

They were responding to the direct request from the AIA Queens in the December 15th Meeting of the AIA Leadership with Commissioner Robert LiMandri. AIA Queens thanked the Department of Buildings for following up on their chapter's request from December.

Remember, if you have questions regarding the code, email them to constructioncodes@buildings.nyc.gov and if you have questions surrounding operational processes, you can submit to operationsredesign@buildings.nyc.gov

AIA Meeting with Commissioner Robert LiMandri December 15, 2009

At the request of the AIA Queens Chapter, the AIANY Chapter reached out to the Department of Buildings to arrange a meeting with Commissioner LiMandri to address specific issues currently impacting the architectural profession. The agenda was formulated by AIA Queens in a late 2009 business meeting. While all five AIA presidents from NYC were invited to this meeting, AIA Brooklyn and AIA Bronx declined to attend.

Attendees:

Robert LiMandri, Commissioner NYC Buildings Department
Fatma Amer, Deputy Commissioner for Technical Affairs and Chief Code Engineer at the Department of Buildings
Scott Pavan, Executive Director Operations Redesign
Kanda Gordon, Associate Commissioner of Borough Operations
Laura Heim, AIA, LEED AP AIA Queens President
Marcus Marino, RA, AIA AIA Staten Island President
Sherida Paulsen, FAIA AIA New York President 2009
Tony Schirripa, AIA IIDA AIA New York President 2010
Rick Bell AIA New York Executive Director

AIA Agenda Items:
1. New ZRD1: Zoning Resolution Determination & CCD1
   The reconsideration process has become more time consuming taking 6 to 9 weeks. There now is a roundtable internal discussion at DOB without the architect present to discuss logic. Someone from the DOB needs to be available. The process needs to be shorter.

   The DOB discussed recent past issues specifically in the Queens DOB acknowledging a backlog. The Chief Plan Examiner has left and the Borough Commissioner has rotated at around the same time. The DOB is also now trying a new method of review which has been used in the Bronx which is intended to streamline the reconsideration process.

2. Demolition Requirements - Documentation of Means and Methods and Site Issues
   There needs to be clarification of the liability aspects of the job.

   Not specifically addressed. Division of responsibilities between Engineers and Architects and liability is not a specific DOB issue.
3. Review of Objections and Administrative Access and Organization of DOB for Plan Review

Questions were asked about the training of plan examiners, double reviews of filings, internal reviews. The request was made that for minor administrative issues, someone would be available to answer questions and resolve issues.

*The DOB will take this under advisement. It was also brought up at the EAR Meeting.*

4. New Initiatives. Give professionals more lead time to review.

*Many of the recent changes were brought about by emergency situations. They stated that in a non-emergency situation, all effort would be made to review initiatives with professionals prior to implementation.*

During this meeting the concerns brought up by AIA Queens members were brought to the table and discussed thoroughly. As per the DOB's presentations at the next EAR and at Queens Industry Meeting, the backlog for Reconsideration's in Queens was significantly reduced. We made a specific request, and it was acknowledged and made into a high priority action item. Please continue to forward your suggestions to be included on the EAR Meeting Agendas.

**Energy Audit Meeting - Queens Department of Buildings** December 3, 2009 Deborah Taylor, Chief Sustainability Officer

New York City Department of Buildings, contacted the AIA Queens to review example energy audits from the Queens DOB. The Executive Committee and our Code and Zoning Chair were invited to participate. Responding were: Gino Longo, Willy Zambrano, Laura Heim.

Gino Longo presented these issues at our last business meeting which included using the correct code, citing specific references, and making sure your insulation was continuous and shown on the documents. Window designation and keys must also coordinate and be reflected and consistent with your energy calculations.

**Chapter Business**


The chapter contracted with the firm of Joseph A. Albano CPA to conduct a financial audit for the years 2006, 2007, 2008. This is not only sound practice, but it is necessary as per our by-laws. We supplied as many records as we had to the accountant. The report was received in January and discussed at the board meeting of January 25.

The 2009-2010 Executive Committee inherited an operating deficit of over $10,000, and we decided to conduct an audit to determine the causes and institute reforms to prevent such a situation from recurring. For the audit, the board requested from past president Alan Weinstein minutes from board meetings from 2007-2008 (in the absence of any chapter budgets for those years) to try to determine which expenditures had been approved, but the minutes were never delivered to the accountant.

Unfortunately, the accountant determined that they, “were not able to issue an opinion on the financial statements because there was insufficient amount of documentary evidence to support the expenses presented.” Even so, the report included several recommendations which the current Executive Committee either has already implemented or intends to implement. Every effort is being made to ensure this inexcusable situation is never repeated in this chapter.

Despite the difficult financial situation the Board inherited, we are proud to announce that the debt has been paid in full as of January 2010. It took a year of hard work and frugality, but we are now on a sound footing.

**Audit Summary as of December 31st of the Year Indicated:**
Statement of End of Year Financial Position and Operating Income and Expenses (Excluding Investments)

Cash / Credit Card Debt / Oppenheimer Reserves    Members Dues+ Event Income /Total Income/ Total Expenses /Operating Balance

2006   $5,669 / - $410 / $60,343  $14,163 + $8,678 = / $22,841/ -$25,142        $ -2,301

2007  $5,355 / - $2,778 / $63,307  $18,654 + $49,992 = /$68,646 / -$71,328    $ -2,682

2008  $6,847/ - $11,994 / $43,608 $17,961 + $57,401 = /$75,362 / -$83,086     $ -7,724

Please note the fluctuations of the Oppenheimer account are shown in the Reserves Column but the increase and decrease in value and interest is not included in the operating expense summary as the account was not accessed in the three years covered. It has since increased in value following the overall investment market gains.

If you would like to see a copy of the official report, contact: Laura Heim, laura@heimarchitect.com.

Website and Online Registration

Website: The AIA Queens has had two website companies share their products with us as they have provided templates to other AIA Chapters. Upon review, we have decided that Affiniscape offers the best package for our chapter needs. We will be working on the new site this winter. Any volunteers are welcome, particularly among the Associate members. We need your input.

Online Registration: We have begun online registration for our events. Based on the recommendation of other NY State chapters, we selected Acteva for this purpose. The basic plan accepts VISA and Mastercard (we can upgrade to include American Express in the future).

Acteva takes a $.99 per order fee for ticket sales between $25 and $45. The charge company takes about the same so we pay $2 per ticket. With a typical attendance for an event of 40 the fee would be $80 max payment. It has historically cost at least that much to prepare for the event, and up to $1000 per event in 2008. With this system, we also have a clear record of who attended and their AIA numbers. We will no longer accept cash as we are trying to tighten our accounting practices. Also, we will have an accurate count of attendees, which will improve our efficiency in ordering food for events, and everyone has receipts and a record of all transactions. This system worked well for our February event at Crystal Windows.

Upcoming Event
All day seminar on Building Code issues, March 9, 2010.
Information to follow shortly!

The seminar will address:

This seminar is being organized by Michael Cosentino, AIA Queens VP and Willy Zambrano, AIA Queens Treasurer. Please address all specific event questions to Michael at: macosentinoarch@aol.com

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the NYC Department of Buildings in putting together the program.

Student Awards

The AIA Queens Housing Committee is sponsoring our second annual student awards program around the theme of Innovative Housing Ideas. Housing Committee Chair Fernando Villa, is coordinating this effort. We have solicited entries from City College, Cooper Union, Columbia University, New York Institute of Technology, Parsons School of Design, and Pratt Institute. Please contact your colleagues at these architectural schools and encourage them to have their students participate.
The jury will be:

Fernando Villa, AIA LEED AP, MAP Architecture PC
Laura Heim, AIA LEED AP, Laura Heim Architect PLLC
Willy Zambrano, AIA LEED AP, Zambrano Architectural Design Services
Steve Peppas, AIA Queens, Polshek Partnership Architects
Andrew Knox, AIA New York, Co-Chair AIA NY Housing Committee, Edelman Sultan Knox Wood

We are also looking into matching scholarship grants available from AIA National.

**Calendar:**

AIA Queens Meetings: 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tuesday of the Month Time and Location TBD

Queens Industry Meetings 3\textsuperscript{rd} Thursday of the Month 2:30 PM in Room G-140 Queens Department of Buildings

Architects In Albany Lobby Day April 20, 2010

AIA National Convention June 10-12 Miami

AIA State Convention October 14-16, 2010 Buffalo, NY

Photographer: Peter D'Angelo c 2009

AIA Queens 2009 Holiday Party
Poppenhusen Institute, College Point
Please forward any comments or suggestions!
Laura Heim
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