

MINUTES

NNECAPA Executive Committee Meeting

Conference Call

Wednesday, December 16, 2009 – 9:00 a.m.

I. Introductions

Present were Ben Frost, Peg Elmer, Nate Miller, Rebeccah Schaffner, Sandrine Thibault, Julie LaBranche, Sharon Murray, Mac Stocco, and Tara Bamford.

II. Minutes from September 23rd

Sandrine Thibault moved to accept the Executive Committee minutes of September 23rd as submitted. Rebeccah Schaffner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Tara Bamford abstained due to absence.

III. Treasurer's Report

Tara Bamford provided an overview of the year-to-date balance sheet and profit/loss reports, noting that the format for these reports is new. Tara has updated the year-to-date files and reconciled the CD balance, but is still learning the QuickBooks accounting program.

Rebeccah Schaffner asked how to account for expenses from the Annual Business Breakfast. Should NNECAPA pay for these expenses directly or should the Maine Association of Planners (MAP) deduct the expenses from conference profits? Tara Bamford will review this and advise on the proper course of action.

Rebeccah Schaffner moved that the Executive Committee accept the year-to-date balance sheet and profit/loss report. Sandrine Thibault seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Executive Committee Retreat Update

Peg Elmer reported that the NNECAPA Executive Committee retreat is tentatively scheduled for March 26th and 27th at the Highland Center in Crawford Notch, NH. Peg advised that she will be reserving the rooms soon. The retreat offers an opportunity to begin updating the NNECAPA Chapter Plan, which is an APA requirement.

V. Communications

Sandrine Thibault discussed the possibility of retaining a new IT support consultant for the NNECAPA website. Recently, NNECAPA spent approximately \$2,200 to make a series of improvements to the website. However, after the upgrades, it is still prohibitively difficult to add new content or upload photos to the website. Sandrine noted that the City of Burlington, Vermont recently developed a new website for their Climate Action Plan

(www.burlingtonclimateaction.com). The website is built on the Wordpress platform, and managing content is very simple and intuitive. Sandrine noted that the current IT support contractor would charge approximately \$1,000 to add a new page to the NNECAPA website. However, with the Wordpress framework, a new page could be added to the website in less than an hour.

For discussion, Sandrine distributed a quote from Union Street Media to convert the NNECAPA website to a Wordpress framework. Union Street Media's quote presents two design options:

- Option #1- Mimic the current NNECAPA website design with Wordpress (\$750-\$1,000)
- Option #2- Redesign the NNECAPA website with Wordpress (\$2,000-\$2,500)

There would also be a fee of \$2,250-\$2,500 for "Site Production", a fee of \$50 per month for hosting services, and an optional fee of \$50 per month for support services. Sandrine advised that, at a minimum, the website upgrades would cost approximately \$3,000 (Design Option #1 + Site Production). Tara Bamford noted that this would require a budget amendment. Julie Labranche asked how long it would take to redevelop the site, and Sandrine reported that Burlington's Climate Action Plan website took approximately 2-3 weeks to develop.

Mac Stocco questioned the ongoing charges of \$50 per month for both hosting and support services, noting that these fees total \$1,200 per year. Peg Elmer noted that, with the current IT support contractor, actual website costs have exceeded the budget in both 2007 and 2008. Sandrine Thibault advised that we may not need to pay the optional \$50 per month support charge if the website has a Wordpress format. The NNECAPA Executive Committee can also develop a RFP for these services.

Sharon Murray moved that the Executive Committee develop and solicit a Request for Proposals (RFP) for these services. Rebeccah Schaffner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Tara Bamford, Julie Labranche, and Sandrine Thibault volunteered to serve on a Sub-Committee to develop the RFP and review the subsequent proposals.

Rebeccah Schaffner reported that, per an e-mail discussion of the Executive Committee in October, conference attendee contact information was not shared with conference sponsors. Ben Frost noted that APA "rents" the national membership list to "trusted partners and sponsors." Ben advised that the NNECAPA Executive Committee develop a policy to govern the potential distribution of members' contact information.

VI. APA Updates

Peg Elmer reported that APA has not yet determined whether to add additional fees to balance their budget.

Peg Elmer reported that Anna Breinich is running for election for Chair of the AICP Commission, and Angie Vincent has been nominated to run for AICP Region 1 Commissioner.

VII. Professional Development Update

Ben Frost advised that the NNECAPA Executive Committee needs to take action on paying a \$900 fee to APA for one year of unlimited CM registrations. Ben noted that this fee is in addition to the CM provider fee, but would ultimately save the Chapter money from conference session CM registrations alone.

Ben Frost moved that NNECAPA pay a \$900 fee to APA for one year of unlimited CM session registrations. Sandrine Thibault seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Ben Frost reported that the Maine Association of Planners (MAP) has expressed interest in collaborating with NNECAPA under the chapter's umbrella for unlimited CM registrations. Ben noted that, in order for such an arrangement to be feasible, a member of the NNECAPA Executive Committee must be directly involved with the planning of the session to be registered for CM credits. MAP participation cannot be ex post facto. Ben advised that, under this arrangement, MAP may not have the flexibility to sponsor events that do not have direct NNECAPA involvement. At this time, this is not an action item. Ben will continue to discuss this with MAP and report back to the Executive Committee.

Ben Frost reported that AICP Exam scholarship information has been distributed. One reduced-fee scholarship is available. Ben noted that the scholarship recipient selection rests with the Professional Development Officer and is final. The due date for scholarship application statements is January 2, 2009.

Ben Frost requested that the Executive Committee approve a disbursement of \$65 from the NNECAPA Professional Development budget to allow him to audit the May AICP Exam. Ben advised that auditing the exam will help him to prepare for the AICP Exam Prep session at the 2010 NNECAPA Annual Conference. Rebeccah Schaffner made a motion to this effect. Sharon Murray seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

VIII. 2010 Annual Conference Update

Julie LaBranche provided a series of updates related to the 2010 Annual Conference. Because planners from southern New England will be participating in this year's conference, we may have 300 attendees. There are two locations in the Portsmouth area that can accommodate a group of 300 people: the Sheraton or the new Hilton hotel/conference center currently under construction. Julie provided an overview of the pros and cons associated with each venue. The Hilton is new and we will not be able to finalize arrangements until January. However, the Hilton is less expensive, will not require booking a block of rooms, has an open calendar to select dates, has ample parking, and is LEED certified.

Executive Committee members agreed that the Hilton would be the preferred venue, even though arrangements cannot be finalized until January. Julie LaBranche reported that she has recruited a number of volunteers from the New Hampshire Planners Association to assist with planning the conference. Peg Elmer advised that we will need to arrange a keynote speaker soon. Bert Cohen from the University of New Hampshire was recommended as a possible keynote speaker.

IX. Federal Legislative Initiatives Update

Sharon Murray provided an overview of current federal legislative initiatives, noting that two bills currently under debate would have significant impact on the planning profession: 1) The Livable Communities Act of 2009 (S. 1619); and 2) The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (S. 1733) introduced by Senators Boxer and Kerry. There is also an important takings case in front of the U.S. Supreme Court (Stop the Beach Renourishment vs. Florida Department of Environmental Protection). This case could potentially establish a precedent for “judicial takings.” Sharon noted that the American Planning Association has submitted an Amicus Curiae Brief urging the Supreme Court to reject the “judicial takings” concept.

Sharon Murray asked how NNECAPA should show its support (or opposition) to federal legislation. Mac Stocco recommended that NNECAPA support for legislation be directed toward the three states. Sharon advised that the Executive Committee continue this discussion at a future meeting.

X. Student Programs Sub-committee

This agenda item was tabled. Peg Elmer noted that the recent Bylaws change allowed the President to appoint a member of the Student Programs Sub-Committee as a voting member of the NNECAPA Executive Committee. Peg reported that she has appointed Mary Robertson of the University of New Hampshire to serve on the NNECAPA Executive Committee.

XI. Grant Updates

Peg Elmer reported that, by the end of the month, she expects to receive official word that NNECAPA has been awarded a Chapter Presidents’ Council grant for the *Inducing Rural Towns in Northern New England to Use Smart Growth Tools* project.

Sandrine Thibault noted the recent discussion about adding a page to the NNECAPA website for the Photo Library project, and asked if she should wait for the website upgrades to be completed before adding this new page. Executive Committee members agreed that it would be prudent to wait for the website upgrades, and Sandrine advised that she would coordinate adding the page with Brandy Saxton once the website upgrades are complete. Tara Bamford noted that she is still researching the financial background of the Photo Library grant and will have more information available at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Peg Elmer reported that NNECAPA is overdue on soliciting for FY 2010 State Association Grants. Peg has updated the grant application form; however, administering the grant solicitation is primarily the responsibility of the three state directors. Previous grant awards (e.g. the VPA lighting project grant) have not moved forward. Peg asked if there should be stricter reporting requirements and deadlines for these grants. Sandrine Thibault recommended that grant awardees also be required to write an article about the project in the Yankee Planner newsletter.

Tara Bamford reported that FY 2009 grants were never solicited. Tara advised that not spending the FY 2009 state association grant funds will help the Chapter to break even for the fiscal year, although FY 2009 numbers will not be finalized until the actual revenues and expenditures from the 2009 Annual Conference are accounted for.

The Executive Committee advised the three state directors (Rebecca Schaffner, Julie LaBranche, and Polly McMurtry) to form a Sub-committee to recommend whether to solicit FY 2009 state association grants. This determination will be based on the needs of the three state associations. The state directors will also review current state association grant administration policies and recommend whether to incorporate stricter reporting and deadline requirements.

XII. Next Meeting

Peg Elmer advised that she would send out an online "Doodle Poll" to determine the next Executive Committee meeting date/time.

Sandrine Thibault moved to adjourn the meeting. Nate Miller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

*Prepared by Nathan Miller
NNECAPA Secretary*