



*A Chapter of the American Planning Association*

## **APA Chapter Presidents Council**

As a state chapter, MAP has certain duties and responsibilities as well. One of the primary means through which we engage with national is by appointing a Chapter President's Council (CPC) representative. The Chapter Presidents Council is composed of presidents, or appointed proxies, of state chapters across the United States who meet twice a year to exchange views and information on matters of common concern. Communicating with APA National as a member of the CPC is a key responsibility of this position.

David Scurto, AICP, PCP, of Hamilton Anderson, was appointed as MAP's CPC at the October MAP Board of Director's meeting as a proxy to the president. Scurto has embraced the new position with gusto, attending the fall leadership meetings in Fort Worth, Texas a mere two weeks after his appointment. Preparation for the position included review of reams of reports and documents, participating on a pre-leadership meeting conference call with more than 50 representatives of other state chapters, and preparing a report he was asked to present at the leadership meetings about MAP's membership categories, budget and fundraising successes. As one of the APA's largest chapters, MAP also has probably the healthiest budget, and the CPC's from other states were eager to learn about MAP's strategies for growing the organization. MAP is one of the few APA chapters with a staff, and our myriad accomplishments are recognized by other chapters interested in learning from our successes.

Many topics of mutual interest were taken up at the fall leadership meetings, which were held over three days in early November. The three topics of highest interest to MAP were mandatory continuing education for AICP, a branding initiative being undertaken by APA that would require consistency with the appearance of the APA and state chapter logos and messages, and APA's super topic: Affordable housing.



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**Chapter Presidents Council Fall 2006 Leadership Conference  
A Summary Report to the Michigan Association of Planning Board of Directors  
by David Scurto, AICP, PCP**

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Dates: November 7 - 8, 2006  
Place: Fort Worth, Texas

**Summary of Events**

**New Presidents Orientation, 11/7/2006, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.**

- Nine (9) new presidents
- PowerPoint show describing APA leadership and staff structure; APA/AICP services offered; role of a chapter president (or proxy); CPC committees; and, APA divisions

**Exchange Session on Fundraising, 11/7/2006, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

- Sponsored by the Information Committee (MAP is member)
- Topic of presentations is fundraising and memberships.
- The states of North Carolina, Arizona, Florida and Michigan presented.
- Annual meeting appears to be the primary source of funding for several of the chapters.
- Attendees impressed at the variety of memberships offered by MAP and the grants that are secured.
- Much interest in our use of a full-time executive director especially because our presentation demonstrated how the executive director has elevated the planning presence in the state legislature.
- North Carolina and Arizona expressed the most interest in conversing with us. MAP received many questions throughout the two days on how we function.

Observation – It is humbling how many chapters struggle to put conferences together; get newsletters completed; and, educational information disseminated. Most chapters do not have staff and the presidents take on the lion's share of the work. These chapters need the support of the national organization. Potentially, MAP could share its successes (how we engage the lawmakers, templates of fundraising letters, list of possible grant funding sources etc.).

**Information Committee Session, 11/7/2006, 4:15 – 5:30 p.m.**



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- Focus for the next year is to share information regarding conference sponsorships, registration fees and chapter services between chapters. Examples include sample letters sent to interest sponsors and ideas how to secure sponsors
- There are three main activities planned for the 2007 annual conference in Philadelphia. 1) The committee will sponsor an exchange session on building leadership. MAP was offered as a presenter on how leadership is nurtured in our chapter. 2) Educational CD's made available by the APA will be reviewed to determine if they are relevant. 3) Determine which of the fundraising and conference material sent by the chapters is applicable as models for general use.

**CPC Business Meeting, 11/8/2006, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

The CPC Committees, APA and AICP presented summary reports. Most topics were met with lively discussion.

- Student Involvement – CPC delegates discussed methods of getting university planning programs and students more involved in chapter activities.
- Committee Reports
  - Community Services – Committee wants to review APA national policies and offer ways of making them more usable to chapters. Want to maintain travel assistance budget for CPC delegates.
  - Grants – Five of eight applications funded.
  - Communications – APA and chapters need to strengthen lines of communication.
  - Information – See above.
  - Chapter Support – Setting forth minimum performance standards for chapters. Ten draft performance standards submitted by Ohio Planning Conference proxy. Chapters requested to respond. MAP responded. Specifics can be discussed at December Board meeting.
- Treasurer's Report – Several chapters owed the CPC money. Members asked the APA and the treasurer to set up another line item for emergency response for political challenges to sound planning (i.e. the regulatory takings that were prevalent in this year's election). No decision made.
- APA President's Report – APA preparing a development plan that includes a membership growth strategy. APA improving its presence in the global world.



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- APA Director's Report
  - APA staff is focused on three points – growth, education and communication.
  - Each year a supertopic is chosen. The 2007 supertopic is housing choice and affordability.
  - APA offers chapters free conference calling service.
  - Planners should speak at rotary clubs and other non-planning venues on the virtues of planning.
  - APA wants universities to focus more on policy issues.
  - To increase membership, the APA wants to focus on academic planners and affiliate members.
- AICP President's Report (Most intense discussion of the meeting)
  - AICP wants members to maintain their certification through mandatory continuing education. If a mandatory program does happen in 2007, the subject will not be taken seriously for another 5 -10 years. The window of opportunity is now. AICP is counting on chapter support.
  - A draft proposal will be sent to chapter PDO's on 12/1/2006.
  - Comments will be received through 1/1/2007.
  - The program will be finalized in fall 2007.
  - Credits will be first recorded during the annual conference in Philadelphia.
  - The South Carolina chapter operated a booth at their state conference to show participants how to log credits.
  
  - Advanced certification will be offered: Fall 2007 – transportation; 2008 – urban design and environmental planning; 2009 – economic development planning and preservation; 2010 – planning management.

**Leadership Workshop, 11/8/2006, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

The leadership workshop was divided into two components – communications training and branding.

- Communications Training – conducted by Axiom Communication via conference call
  - Basics of framing a message
  - Use of tag lines v. message
  - Support points for the message
  - Breakout session conducted – Creating a message for eminent domain and regulatory takings
- Branding
  - Good presentation by ThoughtForm – branding design firm. Showed many images of successful programs including FEDEX, Target, UPS and AIA.



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- Comments by ThoughtForm:
  - Chapter logos typically good but no common thread is evoked when seen at a national level.
  - Chapters should have a consistency with the APA and with each to demonstrate a unified front.
  - ULI, ITE, CNU and AIA all have chapter logos that are consistent with each other and with the national organization.
  - Verbs and bold imagery will be used to sell the APA. The blue square will be continued but in a slightly lighter and more vibrant shade. The AICP square will be red.
  - Major rollout will happen at the 2007 national conference in Philadelphia.
  - Ohio and Michigan specifically mentioned by the presenter.
- Breakout session conducted with a preset list of questions. Common themes are captured below.
  - Many responses showed that chapters liked the idea of visually tying chapters together and with the APA.
  - The simpler and unified designs create a stronger public image.
  - The entire program visually transforms the APA from a passive to an active organization.
  - Some chapters acknowledged that resistance is expected.
  - Questions were posed to Paul Farmer as to how the APA will confront the chapters that don't follow the program. Farmer didn't respond with any thoughts on punishment but said that the APA will be able to offer money to change letterhead and replace paper and envelope stock.
  - MAP's table had vocal respondents. The AICP board member from the State of Washington asked if the APA could withhold membership dues as recourse for resistant chapters. Knight from Illinois (the table facilitator) answered yes but did not pursue he comment further. Knight suggested to Farmer that the APA direct ThoughtForm to meet with the Michigan and Ohio boards to discuss the proposed designs.

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