

# PA Chapter of APA 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



American Planning Association  
**Pennsylvania Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

The PA Chapter of APA had a busy year in 2017, continuing with a number of successful programs, including Great Places, elections for the Chapter and some of the Sections, and a successful annual conference in State College, PA. This was the second year of service for President James Cowhey, who completed his term and ran for re-election. James will serve a second term beginning in 2018. This Annual Report summarizes the Chapter's many 2017 activities.



## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Our 2017 Annual Conference was held on October 18-20 in State College at the Penn Stater Conference Center. It was hosted by the Central Section and attracted 419 attendees. The **Pitkin Lecture speaker** was **Robert Kanigel**. Robert spoke about his latest book, published in 2016, which is a biography of Jane Jacobs, the fearless activist, author and champion of big-city life. It's entitled *EYES ON THE STREET: The Life of Jane Jacobs*. Monday morning was kicked-off with a presentation by **Spud Marshall**. Spud is an avid connector and social entrepreneur dedicated to cultivating changemaker communities and innovation ecosystems around the world. He is the CEO and Chief Catalyst for the co.space: residential intentional communities for young changemakers aged 18-30. Our final general session featured a presentation on **Medical Marijuana**, now that it is legal in Pennsylvania. There were many excellent sessions and presentations on a wide range of topics presented through **three mobile/walking workshops** and **40 concurrent sessions**.



## GREAT PLACES IN PENNSYLVANIA

The PA Chapter of APA held its “*Great Places in Pennsylvania*” Program for the fourth year under the leadership of **Pam Shellenberger, AICP**. The purpose of the Program is to recognize places with exemplary character, quality, identity, cultural interest, and community involvement. Great Places are unique and have a sustainable vision for tomorrow; they serve as a model that other communities want to emulate.

For 2017, the Great Places categories were **Great Public Spaces** and **Great Streets**. Sixteen nominations from across the Commonwealth were submitted. A panel of eight judges reviewed and rated the nominations. The outcome was the designation of five Great Places in Pennsylvania: three in the category of Great Public Spaces and two in the category of Great Streets.



### GREAT PUBLIC SPACES

- Aspinwall Riverfront Park – Aspinwall Borough
- Fountain Park and Bandstand Park – Franklin
- Karl Stirner Arts Trail – City of Easton

### GREAT STREETS

- North Beaver Street – City of York
- State Street – Media Borough





# PA CHAPTER OF APA ANNUAL AWARDS

The “best and brightest” were recognized at the Annual Awards Luncheon in State College during the Annual Conference. Awards Committee Chair, **Denny Puko**, gave a presentation and announced the following awards:

## **Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan**

Comprehensive Plan for the Preservation, Infill, and Redevelopment of Lower Merion Township  
Lower Merion Township (Montgomery County)

## **Planning Excellence Award – Best Practice**

Chester County’s Commercial Landscapes Series  
Chester County Planning Commission

## **Planning Excellence Award – Best Practice**

Pittsburgh Vacant Lot Toolkit  
City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

## **Planning Excellence Award – Plan Other Than a Comprehensive Plan**

Community Greening Plan: A Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan for Harrisburg  
Capital Region Water

## **Student Project**

Capstone Seminar in Planning and Digital Governance  
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs,  
University of Pittsburgh

## **Planning Achievement Award – Advancing Social Change and Diversity**

Leslie Richards, Secretary,  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

## **Planning Leadership Award – Professional Planner**

Dr. Whit Watts, Geography and Regional Planning  
Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

## **Planning Leadership Award – Emerging Planner**

Ryan T. Judge, Senior Planner,  
Delaware County Planning Department

## **Planning Leadership Award – Distinguished Service**

Ronald K. Bednar, AICP

## **Certificate of Merit**

Comprehensive Plan  
Township of Pine Performance Workbook  
Pine Township (Allegheny County)



## STRATEGIC PLAN

Our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan was revisited throughout the year to see how the Chapter is meeting its goals, and to fine-tune individual segments of the Plan as needed. In 2018, we will embark on a plan for 2019-2022. The Chapter will seek input from members to identify top priorities.

## PLANNERS4HEALTH – HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IN PA

The Chapter received a \$50,000 grant to establish the Healthy Communities in PA task force to support the work of the Planners4Health project made possible through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of the National Dissemination and Implementation program within the Division of Community Health, Funding Opportunity. Healthy Communities in PA task force combines the expertise of health and planning professionals statewide to advise the American Planning Association (APA), Pennsylvania Chapter (APA PA) on actions to better facilitate projects on common areas of interest. The Healthy Communities in PA increases awareness of the link between planning and health and provide resources to health and planning professionals to further this message in their work in healthy community design. The task force:

- Held nine steering committee calls in 2017
- Formed working groups focused on Healthy Aging, Healthy Food Access, and Healthy Transportation
- Held a joint day long roundtable meeting with the Pennsylvania Interagency Health Equity Team
- Presented work at the Chapter Conference and PA Trails and Greenways Summit
- Produced articles on healthy community design and shared resources on training opportunities

## STATEWIDE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) is a multi-year strategic plan developed in collaboration with a diverse public partnership of stakeholders across the commonwealth. A number of meetings were held in 2017 to further implement the Plan. Justin Dula, AICP, attended these meetings on behalf of the Chapter.



## GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE

The Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence are a celebration of successful local government initiatives within a variety of award themes. The Governor's Center for Local Government Services presented the awards at the 21st Annual Local Government Day award ceremony on April 12, 2017, at the Governor's mansion. The PA Chapter of APA nominated **Brian O'Leary, AICP**, who was recognized at the event.

# COMMITTEES

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Professional Development Committee (PDC), under the leadership of Chair **Susan Elks, AICP**, serves planners in pursuit of professional development. With representatives from each of the six Sections and one additional at-large member, there are currently eight members. The Chair of the PDC also serves as the Chapter's Professional Development Officer, or PDO, to liaise with APA on certification and continuing education. In addition to providing information online and through email blasts and social media, the PDC played an active role in the following:



### Training

- *Taxation, Zoning, and Licensing for Short-Term Residential Rentals* was APA-PA's contribution to the Planning Webcast Consortium, which provides free weekly webcasts. Many thanks to **Marisa Waxman, Eleanor Sharpe, and Michael Fink** for repeating what had been a very well-received session at the 2016 annual conference.
- Support was provided to Sections and partners on developing professional development events and submitting them to APA for Certification Maintenance (CM) credits. Such support helps ensure that members have multiple options for training and CM credits. A total of 21 events, plus the Annual Conference, were submitted for CM accreditation.
- Supported development of an ethics session for the annual conference.

### AICP Membership

- Assistance was provided to planners aspiring to AICP status, through the spring in-person exam prep session, which had 24 attendees. The full day session attracted APA-PA members (for whom the session is free), as well as planners from surrounding states. In the fall, condensed information was presented at the annual conference. These sessions included information on the revised AICP exam.
- Personalized support was provided to members seeking input on their AICP exam application and formation of study groups.
- Assistance was provided in the nomination of three APA-PA members for inclusion in the College of Fellows of the AICP (FAICP).

## MEMBERSHIP/COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Chapter published its quarterly newsletter, the *Vantage Point*, in an online only version. The *Vantage Point* is posted on the website, along with past issues, and all interested parties are notified via the email blast system utilized by the Chapter. E-blasts are sent regularly with information about education, resources, or other topical news items. The Chapter posts information almost daily on its website and on social media. Co-chairs **Amy Evans, AICP** and **Amy McKinney**, and the committee comprised of representatives from each of the six Sections, updated our membership brochure which was printed early in 2017 and also appears on the website. The committee also began meeting to discuss onboarding new members, and making 'exit' calls to those dropping their membership.



## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

This Committee advocates for planning issues with local, State, and Federal elected officials. It also monitors and makes recommendations or takes positions on State and Federal legislation or regulatory action. The Chapter is looking for a new Chair, and hopes to re-invigorate this committee in 2018.

## PLANNING OFFICIALS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Planning Officials Development Committee is the link between local Planning Officials and the Chapter to achieve good planning in the Commonwealth. This Committee is chaired by **Troy Truax, AICP**.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This Committee serves as a clearinghouse for all APA-PA planning related training, education and similar activities; encourages and supports Section education and training activities; and collaborates with institutions of higher education. The Chapter is looking for a new Chair.



# GOVERNANCE

## ELECTIONS

2017 was an election year for the Chapter. The official elections ballot was distributed online only by APA, our national office. Ballots were distributed in August, and voting ending in early September. APA gave the results to PA Chapter of APA in September. The current officers were re-elected for another two-year term.

President	James Cowhey, AICP
Vice President	Amy McKinney
Secretary	Leah Eppinger, AICP
Treasurer	Justin Dula, AICP

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Executive Committee met in March, August, and November, while the full Board met in April, June, October and December. Minutes are posted on the Chapter website.

## FINANCES

Each year the APA-PA offers a Scholarship Program to support individuals seeking funds for academic degree programs, internships, and professional development activities that enhance planning at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

- The **Leslie & Greta Spaulding Educational Fund** is a Trust. The Trust awarded \$2,500 in 2017 to four student recipients. As of 12/29/2017, the Trust had \$11,953.20.
- Funding from the **Francis Pitkin** scholarship supports student scholarships. \$2016.96 was disbursed to four recipients. Funding from the **Richard P. Byler Charitable Fund** of The Philadelphia Foundation, in the amount of \$683.04, was combined with the Pitkin scholarship for a total award of \$2,700. As of 12/31/2017, the scholarship account had \$5193.60.
- Funding from the **Richard G. Bickel, FAICP, Planning Education Award** supports student scholarships. It is restricted to students from accredited planning programs in Pennsylvania. \$1000 each was given to two recipients. All monies were disbursed.

The Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) provides courses in community planning and land use regulations for planning commissioners, zoning hearing board members, zoning administrators, elected officials, and others with an interest or involvement in planning. The Chapter helps to support the work of PMPEI through an annual grant. The grant amount for 2017 was \$6,500. Sections also sponsor individual workshops. Course offerings are posted on the Chapter website calendar.

At the end of 2017, the Chapter had the following cleared balances:

Checking	\$66,262.51
Money Market	\$171,207.45
Scholarship Fund	\$5,193.60

In 2017, the Chapter had expenses of \$263,143.66 and income of \$313,260.82. The Chapter uses an accrual accounting method.

## BYLAWS

In 2017, the Board suggested a minor change to Bylaw 9.1. After a comment period, followed by formal voting by the membership, and the revision was approved in December. This minor change appoints the Immediate Past President, instead of the current President, as the chair of the Nominating Committee.



# SECTIONS

## CENTRAL SECTION

APA/PA Central Section had a busy 2017. In addition to offering professional development through CM-credit approved workshops, the Section held elections. Five meetings of the Central Section Council were held either in person or via conference call. The Section also continued to implement the Professional Development Scholarship Program with application deadlines in February and August; in the first round they awarded a scholarship for a member to take the AICP exam; no applications were received in the second round. In addition, Central Section members were instrumental in getting many municipalities and the legislature to adopt a proclamation designating October as Community Planning Month.

### Section Events

- Hosted a Professional Development Workshop entitled *"Stormwater Management: Compliance, Coordination & Cost,"* which was approved for 5.5 CM credits and held on May 18.
- Hosted the 2017 Chapter Annual Conference in State College. Council members and other members participated on the Planning Committee and subcommittees, as well as assisted with a variety of activities during the Conference. The Planning Committee Kick-Off Meeting was January 6, at which Central Section provided lunch for attendees, and the Conference Wrap-Up Meeting was via conference call on November 6. The revenue goal for the Conference was exceeded!
- Co-sponsored three PMPEI events: Lancaster County - Course in Zoning Administration and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission - Course in Zoning and Course in Subdivision and Land Development Review.
- Hosted a social event *"Fall Foliage Tour Aboard the M&H Railroad"* on October 28.

## LEHIGH VALLEY/BERKS SECTION

APA/PA Lehigh Valley/Berks Section had a busy 2017. In addition to offering professional development through CM-credit approved workshops, the Section held elections for officers and council. The Section held 10 in person meetings including an annual luncheon and meeting in December. The Section has joined and is participating in the Lehigh Valley Consortium of Professional Organizations (LVCPO.)

### Section Events

- Hosted a Professional Development Workshop entitled *"Tour of Suburban Mixed-use Project, Madison Farms"* which earned 1 CM credit.
- Hosted a Trolley Tour of Easton.
- Co-sponsored the Albright Center for Excellence in Government and Berks County Bar Association legal update.
- Held its annual Section Meeting and Luncheon in December.

## NORTHEAST SECTION

The Northeast Section convened four Board meetings in 2017 including a Holiday luncheon during which there was a presentation on 'medical marijuana' by a company that received a license to cultivate marijuana for medicinal purposes within the Section (Scranton, PA).

### Section Events

- The Section met in March at the NEPA Office to host a workshop *'PA Land Use Law Update - Zoning Cases'* with Attorney Don Karpowich. The event earned 1.5 Law CM credits.
- Co-sponsored three PMPEI events in collaboration with the Wyoming County Planning Commission, Lackawanna County Planning Commission & Middle Smithfield Township (Monroe County).
- At its December meeting, Mr. George Kelly was the guest speaker discussing the newly created Land Bank in Lackawanna County as well as other county initiatives such as the Community Reinvest Grants and Small Business Loan fee waiver program.



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## NORTHWEST SECTION

A report of APA-PA Chapter activities and Section activities is given at every Northwest Regional Planners meeting that is held every other month in Oil City. Arlene Rodriguez stepped down as Treasurer and Zach Norwood agreed to fill that vacancy for the remaining time. Over the past year the Northeast Section has been working on a regional water quality training initiative, which will continue in 2018. A Section Council meeting was held in early December to discuss the 2018 program plan and the 2018 APA-PA Chapter Conference in Erie.

### Section Events

- Hosted two training sessions, on *Act 167 Stormwater Management* - one in Mercer County and one in Lawrence County.

## SOUTHEAST SECTION

The Southeast Section Council met every other month through 2017. Due to active interest in activities that were extending section council meetings, working committees have been formed to discuss issues of interest in more detail. The four active committees are Events, Engagement, Education, and Local Presence of APA Divisions. More about the committee structure can be found on the Section website at [www.apapase.org](http://www.apapase.org).

### Section Events

- The *2017 Annual Event* was held on November 15, 2017 at WeWork Philadelphia where attendees joined a panel discussion to have a dialogue on flooding and disasters in Greater Philadelphia and celebrate the accomplishments of our 2017 John E. Pickett Student Scholarship Award Winners. The panel discussion was approved for 1 CM credit.
- *PennDOT Connects* was held on February 23, 2017, where PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards was able to introduce the region to the PennDOT Connects Program.
- Sponsored an AICP Study Groups for the spring.
- The *'Heads Up! Urbanist Happy Hour'* was held on April 4, 2017 with the assistance of event sponsor LRK to allow planners to mingle and play games.
- A *Tour of the Mazzoni Center* was held on June 20, 2017 to look at customized design in the region's premier LGBTQ health facility. The event was organized by local members of the local presence of the LGBTQ and Planning Division of APA sponsored by the section and called the Queer Urbanist Exchange (QUE). The event was included in the summer LGBTQ and Planning Quarterly Newsletter.

- The section hosted *'The Principles to Which We Aspire: Social Justice and Public Health'* on August 30, 2017. The session spoke to the link between social justice and public health through healthy community design, food access, and financial stability, while relating all topics to the AICP code of ethics.
- The *'Daniel Burnham's Belated Birthday Bash'* was held on September 12, 2017 with the assistance of event sponsor LRK to honor one of the founders of planning.
- *'Inside the Planner's Studio'* with Director of Planning & Development for the City of Philadelphia, Anne Fadullon, was held on October 25, 2017.

### Partnership Events

The Section looks to partner with other organizations hosting events to help increase the visibility of planning among other professional organizations and the public.

- The *Future City Philadelphia Competition* was held on January 21, 2017. The section financially sponsors the event as well as provides a judge for the special awards for Planning Excellence and Regional Context. The program helps open up the world of city planning to middle school students, which is why we held a mentorship training program on April 18, 2017 to encourage further participation by planners.
- *'Cards against Urbanity'* game night was held on January 26, 2017 in partnership with Young Professionals in Transportation (YPT).
- Volunteered with Temple *EarthFest*, held on April 28, 2017. The Southeast Section staffed a booth on planning and presented information on the Chapter.
- *'Classic Towns Trolley Tour'* was held on May 19, 2017 in partnership with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.
- The *Planning Law Review* session held on July 5, 2017 by DVRPC was promoted to members in the section needing Law CM credits.
- The section promoted *'Porches, Pocket Parks, and Pop-Ups'* on September 13, 2017 with PlanPhilly.
- The section promoted several *Orton Community Heart and Soul* sessions on September 27, November 6, and at the State Conference in State College.
- Section presented as part of Design Philadelphia's *'Alphabet Soup Night'* on October 12, 2017 to link with other design professionals.

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## SOUTHWEST SECTION

The Southwest Section had a busy year. The Section sponsored the *Best City Layout Award* at the 2017 Future Cities Competition held at the Carnegie Music Hall of Oakland. Section Council members Josh Lippert and Steven Wiedemer participated in pre-event judging activities and attended the event to serve as day of judges. The Section will again be sponsoring the competition in 2018. In September of 2017 the Southwest Section sent out a survey to all of its members for feedback in regard to services provided and additional workshop provisions for the future. Also, in December, Section Council member Steve Wiedemer presented the Aspinwall Park Board with their *Great Public Space* in PA award.

### Section Events

- Hosted the Winter/Spring Social at Games N'at in the South Side neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh on March 2.
- Hosted a summit on March 16 entitled '*Waterfronts that Work*' in conjunction with the City of Pittsburgh. There were over 230 registrants for the summit and it was well attended specifically by members of the Southwest Section. 2 CM credits were awarded.
- Sponsored a workshop on April 27 entitled '*PA Agriculture: Local Planning, Regulations, & Policies*' in conjunction with the Penn State Extension. 3 CM credits were awarded.
- Held a social event at Grist House located just north of Downtown Pittsburgh on October 11.
- On October 23, the Southwest Section held a social event at Local Whiskey in State College as part of the Chapter Conference.
- On November 14, the Southwest Section Council sponsored a workshop entitled '*Complete Street*' in conjunction with CONNECT which earned 3 CM credits.
- A workshop entitled '*Greenways, Trails, and Lanes – Connecting Allegheny County Communities with Green Assets*' was held on December 6 and was approved for 2 CM credits.



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