

THE VANTAGE POINT



American Planning Association
Pennsylvania Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association

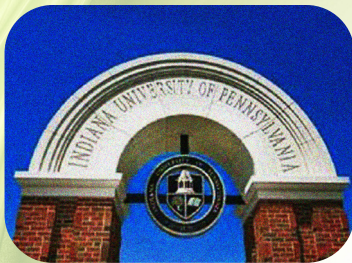


KUDOS

to our own

IUP receives National Accreditation

The Bachelor of Science program in **Regional Planning** in Indiana University of Pennsylvania's (IUP) Department of Geography & Regional Planning, College of Humanities & Social



Science has received **its initial professional accreditation, according to an announcement by the national Planning Accreditation Board (PAB)**. The program is one of only 14 undergraduate programs nationally accredited by the PAB, and the only accredited undergraduate program in Pennsylvania. There are eighty-five planning programs in the United States at seventy-three universities that are presently

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Alex Graziani, AICP and Jerry S. Walls, FAICP Recognized for Contributions to Professional Planning

Annual Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence

THE DEPARTMENT of Community and Economic Development **Secretary C. Alan Walker**, on behalf of **Governor Tom Corbett**, recognized local government officials and local organizations for revitalizing their communities in the face of adversity.

Alex Graziani, AICP was recognized for his services as Executive Director of the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County. The organization works to support community development in the county. Graziani served as the partnership's director for ten years before becoming Latrobe's city manager last August. Alex is the immediate past president of the PA Chapter of APA.

Alex received the award on April 17 at the **16th Annual Governor's Awards for**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Jerry S. Walls, FAICP Inducted to the AICP College of Fellows

THE PENNSYLVANIA Chapter of the American Planning Association is pleased and honored to announce that member **Jerry S. Walls** has been inducted to the **American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) College of Fellows** for his contributions to professional planning practice. Mr. Walls receives this honor in recognition of his achievements in planning, and as such is elevated before the public and the profession as a model planner who has made significant contributions to planning and society. Throughout his career Mr. Walls has developed innovative solutions, promoted regional cooperation, advocated for public participation,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Alex



Jerry





CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

KUDOS to our own

Graziani

Local Government Excellence. In total, eight local government leaders and eight communities across the state received awards. Awards to organizations were presented to: Neshannock Township School District and Neshannock Township, Blair County Tax Collection Bureau, Char-West Council of Govern-

ments, Central Carbon County Regional Comprehensive Plan Committee, City of Philadelphia, Borough of Lansdale, Lower Swatara Township, Triple Divide Watershed Coalition, and the Pennsylvania Wilds Planning Team. Individual awards were given to: the Honorable Brian McGrath, James C. Steff, the Honorable Robert Spandler, the Honorable Richard Vilello, the Honorable John Dorin, Michael Schober, the Honorable Pam Tokar-Ickes, and Alexander J. Graziani. **Congratulations Alex!**

Walls

and maintained a commitment to positive outcomes for communities.

The distinguished College of Fellows includes less than 500 members, and induction to its ranks is one of the highest honors that the AICP bestows upon a member. This year Mr. Walls and 40 fellow planners were selected to join the College of Fellows, which represents the top echelon of the American Planning Association and its membership of more than 12,500 active AICPs.

Denny Puko, Planning Program Manager with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, notes that **"Jerry Walls is the consummate professional planner and respected throughout Pennsylvania as a planning**

leader and innovator." **Cindy Adams Dunn,** Deputy Secretary with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources shares that **"Mr. Walls is the true definition of a visionary leader who knows how to move people and processes to accomplish real, on the ground results."**

Pennsylvania Chapter President **Brian O'Leary, AICP** and 2010 FAICP inductee **Richard Bickel** honored Mr. Walls and his colleagues at the 2012 class ceremony on Sunday, April 15 at the 2012 National Planning Conference in Los Angeles, CA. **"Jerry has been a strong, consistent advocate for good planning in Pennsylvania for decades. This FAICP honor is richly deserved."** shares Mr. O'Leary.

Mr. Walls served more than three decades as the planning director for Lycoming County, Pennsylvania and continues to serve as a consultant and volunteer. Over the course of his career, Jerry has been recognized for his leadership, vision, and superb technical skills on issues as diverse as greenways planning, solid waste management, infrastructure development and emergency management planning. He maintains a focus on quality of life and implementation, and his multiple accomplishments can be credited to his most important skills – following through, building consensus, fostering meaningful public involvement, and forging partnerships.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association congratulates Jerry Walls on this outstanding recognition!

To learn more about the FAICP-Elect Class of 2012 visit: <http://www.planning.org/faicp/> ♦



Submit Your

News & articles

for *The Vantage Point*

We are always seeking articles on current planning topics and planning news!

The Vantage Point is published quarterly and contributions that are timely, newsworthy, and of statewide interest are welcome. Dated material should be submitted well in advance according to our deadlines below. Submitted articles of 500 words or less in length should be sent by email to sshermer@shermer-assoc.com. Please include artwork, illustrations or photographs if possible. Images must be scanned at 300 dpi with a print size of at least 2.5 inches wide. The author's name, position, and employer's name and city must also be included to ensure proper credit. Shorter articles and announcements of 100-150 words are welcome.

DEADLINES FOR UPCOMING 2012 ISSUES:

Summer Issue: Jun 15, 2012
Fall Issue: Sep 14, 2012
Winter Issue: Nov 16, 2012

Submit to:
sshermer@shermer-assoc.com ♦



American Planning Association
Pennsylvania Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

587 James Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17112
717 671-4510 (P)
717 545-9247 (F)
www.planningpa.org

Susan Shermer, CMP
Administrative Director
sshermer@shermer-assoc.com

Sarah Galbraith Laucks, CMP
Conference Manager
sgalbraith@shermer-assoc.com

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Mission Statement

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning through education, empowerment, partnership, and public policy.

Who? Me?

Your contribution to the Planning Commission

by *Shirley A. Yannich, PP, AICP*

A Warrington Township, Bucks County, PA resident who is a former planning commission chairwoman

If you live in a developing municipality, one that has seen the rise of residential subdivisions and shopping centers over the past forty years, or seen a steep decline in local business, or are in the midst of the natural gas boom, you probably have a planning commission.

MUNICIPALITIES set up a planning commission with authorization from the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Commissions are created by a local ordinance to provide advice to the governing body on the physical development of the municipality. In most cases they review and make recommendations to the elected officials concerning land development plans.

The majority of municipalities do not have the financial resources to hire consultant planners, so your role is of utmost importance. In your non volunteer life you may be a stay-at-home parent, run the local donut shop, repair cars, practice law, sell bridal gowns, be retired, plant trees, drive a taxi, lead a religious group or any number of useful endeavors. If so, you are the perfect candidate to be a planning commission member. **Why? Because, you bring a unique perspective. Here's how.**

Stay-at-home parent:

When reviewing a subdivision plan you have an eye for the proposed layout of the houses noticing the rear yard setback and visualizing a swing set or swimming pool. You look for sidewalks so your children can walk to friend's homes and lighted streets to keep them safe.

Run the local donut shop:

You know the importance of access from the major roadway and the benefit of cross easements between your establishment and adjacent businesses.

You know the business value of attractive signage compared with the ugliness of a mishmash of signs.

Repair cars:

You may have been the individual who established this business before new zoning rules were adopted and now you are a "legal non conforming use". Who, but you would understand that dilemma?

Practice law:

Your knowledge of legal principles can aid the work of the commission, particularly when it comes to matters of "due process" and "equal protection."

Sell bridal gowns:

Let's see, what can you contribute? How about understanding the demographics. Is your municipality seeing more and more age qualified residential developments being built? Is the over 55 age group buying enough bridal gowns to sustain your operation? Should your retail uses be analyzed to keep up with the times and population? You are that nexus? No one but you fares over time or are in a better position to react to the economic sector.

Retired:

Need we say more? You bring a vast understanding of how things work best. You remember when the farm houses dotted the landscape and now look at that – shopping centers and houses everywhere. If you have been on the planning commission for a

while you helped form the built environment, but your planning commission also wrote the comprehensive plan so your vision must have been achieved.

Tree lover:

Some people just like to see green and pretty things. You probably recognize the Bradford Pear trees being planted along your "main street." They are pretty, but you know that in twenty years their trunks will crack and they will fall. Few people looking at a landscape plan would recognize that so you suggest a mixture of specimen trees instead.

Drive a taxi:

The road network in your municipality is probably easier to traverse because you have made enough left turns and got stuck in enough cul-de-sacs to figure out there is a better plan for moving traffic.

Religious leader:

Your church, temple, mosque or synagogue probably provides a child day care center and fields for play and organized sports. As a planning commission member you can make sure that the drop off area for the children is safe and the fields are protected by fences and lights.

This is YOUR commission.

YOU and YOU alone are the most important person. No one person can do what this consortium of individuals can do. All together you contribute a vast array of knowledge to your community. ♦

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Contact information is available at www.planningpa.org under "About Us".



Hello Fellow Planners. I've just returned from the APA national conference in Los Angeles inspired about the role planners have in the broader community. It's clear that in these difficult times, planners are more important than ever.

MITCH SILVER, APA president, gave a rousing presentation on the importance of planners, particularly for addressing three critical demographic shifts in America – the aging of our population; our increasing racial and ethnic diversity; and changing household types, with more single and two person households. Mitch, who is an inspiring and humorous public speaker, **will be presenting on Tuesday, October 16 at our PA Chapter conference in Erie.** I hope you can come to Erie to hear him and leave as excited about the future of planning as I did.

The LA Conference was more than inspirational speeches. There were many excellent seminars covering any planning topic you could imagine. I personally focused on two subject areas – **healthy communities** and **redeveloping commercial corridors**. On the health front, there are a lot of interesting partnerships between health and planning departments around the nation, with an **emphasis on designing places where people can exercise and walk in order to lower obesity, diabetes, and other chronic disease levels.** For commercial corridors, communities are looking at reuse, potentially with more residential and mixed uses, as well as **redesign of corridors to make them function better for**

both pedestrians and automobiles.

Any conference gives you a chance to get out and see what other places are doing. I traveled around LA to see what was happening, and I'm pleased to report that planning has started making a real difference. **Yes, LA is still a sprawling, heavily-developed place, but it also has lots of redevelopment and reinvestment that has improved the walkability and character of the area.** The downtown has seen extensive residential development, new train lines leading to different parts of the region, and a new entertainment complex. Redevelopment with new businesses and beautification has improved Culver City, Leimart Park, and Crenshaw. Pasadena has two great mixed use, mixed-income Transit Oriented developments around its new train stations. These are very large and dense developments, but the architecture, open space, setbacks at higher levels, mix of uses, and public art all help these developments fit into the broader community.

In Pennsylvania, the Chapter is forging ahead on a variety of efforts, including **a complete makeover of our website**, which is coming soon. If you haven't checked out the website lately, I encourage you to look at the calendar. There are a lot of won-

derful events being offered by us or other organizations around the state.

Finally, **the Board will be meeting in June, and we'll be discussing our goals for the Chapter**

over the next two years, as well as the creation of a development committee that will examine how to strengthen and expand the Chapter. If you have thoughts about our goals, ideas on how to improve the Chapter, or a desire to serve on the development committee, please let us know by emailing the Chapter at info@planningpa.org or me at boleary@montcopa.org.

Keep up the great planning work and advocating for a better future. ♦



Welcome New PA Chapter Members!

We welcome the following new members who joined the PA Chapter over the past few months. The PA Chapter membership includes nearly 3,000 planning officials, professional planners, and others who care about how Pennsylvania continues to grow the places where we live, work, and enjoy recreation. The board and staff are available to answer any questions. Feel free to contact the Chapter Office at 717-671-4510. Board member contact information is available at www.planningpa.org under **About Us**.

Individual Members:

Kevin Smay, Southwest Section

Connie Anderson, Southwest Section

Hadley Wilmerding, Southeast Section

Organizational Members:

Fairview Township, Erie County, Northwest Section ♦

2012 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



charting a new course—
balancing opportunity and environment

October 14-16, 2012

Erie, PA

Connect with Planners at the 2012 Annual Conference

The Conference Committee is planning an excellent conference for this fall! A schedule of compelling concurrent sessions is in the works along with several dynamic mobile workshops.

We're excited to give you a sneak peak at two of the main speakers!

Tony Hiss is best known as the author of the popular and influential book *The Experience of Place* and for his report (written with Robert Yaro) *A Region at Risk: The Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area*. Hiss was a staff writer for the *New Yorker* for 30 years, and he is

currently a visiting scholar at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. APA will be publishing a paperback edition of Hiss' most recent book, *In Motion: The Experience of Travel*, this summer. *In Motion* explores the myriad ways that people think about places and travel, with an eye toward getting people to look at the world the way planners often do: thoughtfully, comprehensively, and imaginatively. Mr. Hiss will address the conference at the Opening Keynote Session on Monday, October 15.

We're also thrilled to be joined by **APA President Mitchell J. Silver, AICP**. Mitchell Silver is the Chief Planning and Economic Development Officer in the City of Raleigh, North Carolina. Silver is an award-winning

planner with more than 25 years of planning experience. He is nationally recognized for his leadership in the profession and his contributions to contemporary planning issues. Before coming to Raleigh in 2005 as planning director, Silver worked as policy and planning director in New York City, a principal of a New York City-based planning firm, a town manager in New Jersey and deputy planning director in Washington, D.C. He has taught graduate planning courses at Hunter College, Brooklyn College, Pratt Institute, and North Carolina State University. As planning director in Raleigh, he led the comprehensive plan update process. He is now overseeing a rewrite of the city's Development Code. Mr. Silver will present at the closing luncheon on Tuesday, October 16.

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"Charting a New Course – Balancing Opportunity and Environment"

Lancaster County Announces ENVISION Leadership Award Winners

The Lancaster County Planning Commission held its Annual Envision Lancaster County Leadership Awards Program on February 7. The event was hosted by the Turkey Hill Experience in Columbia. The winners of the Envision Leadership Awards were recognized and showcased.

COMMISSIONER STUCKEY and LCPC Chairman **Ray D'Agostino** presented the awards to the winners. Commissioner Stuckey said "The award winners truly exemplify what it means to achieve smart growth in our communities."

James Cowhey, LCPC Executive Director, said that "the quality of the projects submitted for awards continues to improve from one year to the next."

Three Smart Growth Leadership Awards, five Achievement Awards, and one Certificate of Merit were presented. The project categories for the awards this year included heritage resources, sustainable growth, infrastructure, community capacity, and design/placemaking. These categories support the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.

Sustainable Growth

The winner of a Leadership Award in the Sustainable Growth Category was the **Historic East Side Suites in Lancaster City**, a project of John Meeder and Wohlsen Construction. The Historic East Side Suites project turned five dilapidated buildings into a historically-restored, mixed-use center one block from Penn Square. The project totals 38,000 square feet and consists of seven first-floor storefronts, three second-floor office/commercial spaces, 17 upper-floor, middle-income, market-rate apartments, and 13 garages. This project called for a unique blend of partners and funding sources resulting in 16 different private, public, and service sector entities working together to make the project a reality, as well as to fit the vision and strategy of the City of Lan-

caster. The project is designed to match uses that fit into the context of the neighborhood as well as serve visitors to the City.

Community Capacity

The winner of a Leadership Award in the Community Capacity Category was the **James Street Improvement District's (JSID) North-Central Elm Street project in Lancaster City**. This project includes reinvestment in a mixed use neighborhood, fostering civic pride among property owners, and setting a long-term foundation for sustainable growth. Through state grants the following initiatives were completed: a neighborhood vision plan a neighborhood advisory committee, public infrastructure improvements, and investment in 108 properties through a matching grant façade improvement program. The 337 properties within the 13-block area are bounded by Lemon, Clay, Prince, and Christian Streets.

Community Design/Placemaking

The winner of a Leadership Award in the Community Design/Placemaking Category was the **Form-Based Code and Official Map for Penn Township**. The new code and Official Map will provide the regulatory framework to implement the Manheim Central Region Comprehensive Plan and promote better design. The code and map will promote smart growth and its implementation by focusing on form, mass, scale, and placement of structures including mixed land-use compact building design, and walkable neighborhoods. The Official Map will reinforce the character and form of development through identi-

cation of desired street layout and connections.

Achievement/Heritage

Winners of Achievement Awards in the Heritage category were the **Butterfly Acres Critical Aquifer Recharge Area Restoration** in Lititz Borough, **Lancaster Central Market Assessments, Guidelines, and Recommendations Report**, the **Lancaster Central Market Renovations**, **College Row** in Lancaster City, and the **Turkey Hill Experience** in Columbia Borough.

Merit/Infrastructure

Winner of a Certificate of Merit in the Infrastructure category was the **Middle Creek Road Bridge Replacement** in Ephrata Township.

The Awards Competition

Established in 2003, the awards competition supports implementation of Envision Lancaster County, the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and Smart Growth principles, which are the foundation of the Plan. The Awards Committee consists of community partners who established the application criteria and standards and evaluated the submissions:

"The award submissions were judged by a panel of citizen experts based on a number of smart growth attributes that we'd like to see replicated in projects throughout the County" said James R. Cowhey, executive director of the LCPC. ♦



TOP TO BOTTOM:
Lancaster Central Market; College Row; Turkey Hill Experience.



IUP receives National Accreditation

accredited by PAB, seventy-one of these are graduate programs.

"This accreditation indicates the high quality of our undergraduate planning program here at IUP, and professional education that our students are receiving," said John Benhart, Jr. chair of the Department of Geography & Regional Planning. "This demonstrates that our faculty, students, alumni, and professional network are among the best in the country."

The program began the accreditation process in 2007 by inviting an external consultant from a university with an accredited planning program to assess the program at IUP. As a result of the positive recommendation from the consultant, the faculty and administration decided to move forward with the accreditation effort. A self study report comprehensively describing and analyzing the undergraduate Regional Planning program at IUP was submitted to the Planning Accreditation Board in August 2010. The report was approved by the Board, allowing the program to advance to candidacy in November of 2010. In November 2011, a site visit team from PAB came to IUP to meet with planning faculty, students, and alumni as part of its evaluation process. **In a letter dated April 20, 2012, PAB informed IUP that it had voted in favor of accrediting the Regional Planning program.**

The program began the accreditation process in 2007 by inviting an external consultant from a university with an accredited planning program to assess the program at IUP. As a result of the positive recommendation from the consultant, the faculty and administration decided to move forward with the accreditation effort.

"Along with **Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania, we are now one of only three accredited programs in the state.** Nationally, we share this honor with Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of California, Berkeley, Columbia University, University of Michigan, Ohio State University, and the Georgia Institute of Technology. The hard work and talent of our faculty, the quality of our students, and support from our alumni and university administration has made this possible," said Robert Begg, Regional Planning program director. "This accreditation provides our students additional benefits through professional organizations like the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), such as scholarships and allows graduates to sit for the planning certification examination in a shortened period of time. Potential employers will know that our students possess the professional knowledge and skills to be effective planners."

The Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) accredits bachelors and masters degree programs at institutions of higher education in North America. The accreditation process is based on standards approved by the PAB and its sponsoring organizations: the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and the American Planning Association (APA). The standards by which a program is assessed are based upon curriculum content and quality measures that encourage appropriate professionalization of students. ♦

Connect with Planners at the 2012 Annual Conference



Conference Details for Your Planning:

When: October 14-16, 2012

Where: Bayfront Convention Center & Sheraton Erie in Erie, PA

Schedule:

A flexible conference structure is planned to allow for attendees with long distances to travel. Watch for the Conference Announcement – available in late July 2012 – including the full conference schedule, special events, conference fees and registration, and accommodation details.

Visit the Chapter website, www.planningpa.org and click on "Annual Conference 2012" for regular updates.

Nervous about the distance?

We promise you'll be glad you made the trip! Be sure to check out the air travel option which offers affordable rates and many travel times. Charter buses are also being discussed – we'll keep you posted on the details. Take this great opportunity to check out the northwest part of the state.

Will Your Company Be Seen at PA's Largest Planning Event?

The PA Chapter 2012 Annual Conference offers excellent opportunities to sponsors, exhibitors and advertisers. Be a part of the largest annual gathering of Pennsylvania's professional planners and planning officials by sponsoring, exhibiting or advertising at the event. The Conference Announcement, distributed in July 2012, is expected to reach 5,000 members of Pennsylvania's planning community. This detailed booklet includes all sponsors, exhibitors, and advertisers who have confirmed their support by June 22, 2012, together with detailed information about the full conference program.

Maximize the benefit of these opportunities – confirm your arrangements with the PA Chapter by June 22, 2012.

Details available at www.planningpa.org. Click on "Annual Conference 2012." ♦

2012 Irving Hand Award supports

Mediation

and Its Planning Value



IN COMMUNITY PLANNING, a planner can often *feel* like that third party, trying to get a community and its many interests to come to an agreement on an issue – perhaps a comprehensive plan or zoning map. It was this feeling that led me to explore the idea of mediation, and I was awarded the 2012 Irving Hand Excellence in Planning Professional Development Award to undertake mediation training.

The Training

I recently completed the first portion of my training, with the Lancaster Mediation Center (LMC). LMC has been pro-

viding mediation services for 30 years, and their basic mediation training breaks the training into two workshops: **Module I – Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills** and **Module II – Mediation Skills**. Each module is 20 hours. The workshops are interactive and practice-based, with lecture, skill-building exercises, and role playing simulation.

Module I

Module I focused on skills that everyone – planners included – are in need of, specifically active listening, promoting dialogue, and defusing strong emotions. All of these skills are useful in

Mediation is defined as a process where a neutral third party without decision making authority assists parties in negotiating a mutually agreeable settlement.

By Susan Elks, AICP, PA Chapter of APA Professional Development Officer

working through conflict, whether a person is a neutral third party or part of the conflict. Techniques such as paraphrasing, clarifying, and reframing were explored and practiced during the workshop. As I sat in the training, it was easy to see the value of these tools for steering committee or task force meetings.

Module II

Module II moved into more specifics and logistics regarding mediation as a process with a neutral third party. Different types of mediation were explored – facilitative (*which is the LMC model*), evaluative, and transformative. Facilitative requires the mediator to be neutral and not provide advice, while evaluative mediation allows the mediator to provide advice. Transformative mediation focuses on the relationship between the disputing parties. While each approach is somewhat different, they share the neutral third party facilitator and a focus on interest (*rather than position*) and self-determination. The workshop provided ample opportunity to practice the skills that were covered.

Takeaways

I had several takeaways from this training. One is the power in listening and promoting dialogue, especially through clarification and reframing. As planners, it is critical that we listen to communities, but also that we facilitate

productive dialogue within the groups and settings in which we work.

Hallmark of Mediation

Another point that was stressed throughout the training was the importance of allowing the disputing parties to determine their own outcome, and thus have a greater buy-in to the agreement. This is a hallmark of mediation, and also of planning. Without community buy-in of a plan, successful implementation is impossible. While planners certainly have their own technical knowledge to bring to the table (*and thus the planning process more closely resembles evaluative mediation*), it is the community that needs to work through issues and come to a consensus on moving forward.

The Focus

The mediation training was very valuable, providing specific tools and techniques to become a better listener and promote dialogue. Its focus on interests – the underlying need or motivation for a specific position – and on self-determination provided substantial reinforcement for good planning processes, showing how such a focus can help create outcomes with which all parties are satisfied. For more information on LMC, visit www.lancmed.org; for more information on mediation in general, visit the PA Council of Mediators website, www.pamediation.org. ♦

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Small Towns, City Centers & a Sense of Place in Central Pennsylvania

For the last few weeks, a rumor has been spreading that the Lowe's Market and Ben Franklin store were closing in Clarkstown, a small village near Muncy in the Williamsport area of Central Pennsylvania.

ALTHOUGH THE business owners posted signs saying the rumor was false, the incident reminded me how much local residents depend on these stores to give Clarkstown a sense of identity and place. Lowe's and Ben Franklin provide common spaces where residents socialize and catch up on local news while shopping for groceries, getting prescriptions filled, and checking handwritten flyers on the stores' community bulletin boards.

During last September's floods, when all of Clarkstown lost power and many homes were inundated with water, Gail and Harold Lowe set up a barbeque grill in front of their store and gave away free food to residents in need. A sign at the Ben Franklin store tells customers to call the home phone number of Gary Peck, the store's owner, in case of a pharmacy emergency even though most drugstores don't post emergency numbers.

Lowe's Market and Ben Franklin are located in a relatively built up part of Clarkstown that also includes a bank, a barber shop, two churches, some small businesses and a few blocks of houses. This concentrated area – and the human activity that occurs within it daily – give Clarkstown a visible identity that's more than just a marker along the highway.

Many communities in Central Pennsylvania have this kind of town center – **a relatively compact cluster of mixed uses, such as retail stores, restaurants and small offices** – that forms a visible hub of activity. Just think of the traditional shopping areas in Lewisburg, Montoursville and Selinsgrove, or the larger city

centers in Williamsport and State College. These built-up areas help give communities a **sense of personality and place, especially when they include historic buildings or landmarks that connect current uses to the past.**

Of course, in today's car-centric world, it's a constant struggle to keep town centers relevant and whole. Local merchants must compete with shopping malls and big-box stores, and some places are stuck with run-down buildings or poorly planned intersections that keep people away.

The largest town center in our part of Central Pennsylvania is the city center of downtown Williamsport, the region's focal point of commerce, banking, culture, government and entertainment. This central business district offers a rich mix of urban uses and experiences, including specialty shops, ethnic restaurants, local music and art, historic landmarks, office buildings and upper-floor apartments. The downtown sidewalks often bustle with activity, and the city boasts a first-rate bus system for people who'd rather ride than walk. Just attend a First Friday celebration or a popular performance at the Community Arts Center to see downtown Williamsport at its liveliest.

For decades, Central Pennsylvania suffered from a **brain-drain** as talented young adults moved away to find better jobs and lifestyles elsewhere. Studies show that having an interesting mix of urban uses and attractions can help counter this decline by drawing educated young adults and skilled workers to an area. Central Pennsylvania is well-

known for its outdoor recreation and rural amenities, and having a viable urban core adds to its appeal as a place to live, work and raise a family.

Williamsport got an economic boost last year from the opening of Kohl's department store and other downtown developments, and more projects are planned for 2012. However, the entrance to Kohl's faces away from the core shopping district

diverse blend of traditional small towns and urban pleasures.

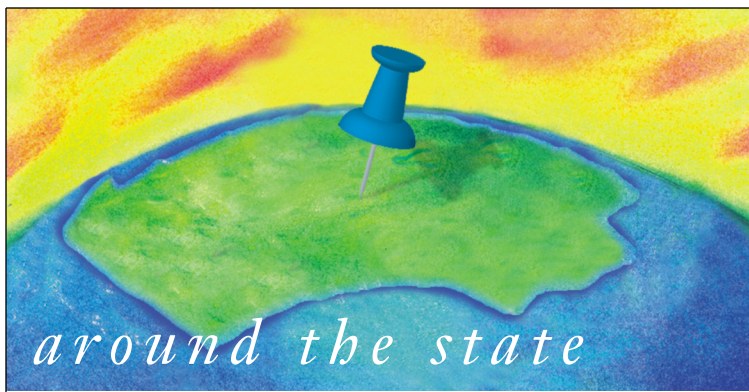
During past economic recessions, many downtown establishments had to struggle to survive, and none has been more tenacious than Otto Bookstore. Otto is the oldest independent bookstore in the country that was not initially part of a church or school. It is able to compete against brand-name stores and online retailers because Otto's



and towards Interstate I-80, and its windowless back wall further isolates the store from the city center. I realize Kohl's and city officials had to deal with many constraints when planning the store, and I'm grateful Kohl's located here. Still, I hope future developments will help to create a more unified core business district. **To sustain a strong regional economy and quality-of-life, we need a well-functioning city center that's mutually beneficial with the small towns and neighborhoods that surround it.**

Before moving here, I lived in New York, Detroit, Chicago, Atlanta and other big metro areas. I never imagined I'd settle in Central Pennsylvania, but here I am, and I'm grateful to live someplace that offers a

owner and staff are expert book lovers who offer superior customer service and book recommendations. I know I speak for many residents when I say Otto Bookstore has made a real difference in the lives of thousands of Central Pennsylvania families. It epitomizes the unique value of small enterprises run by people who believe passionately in what they do. Lowe's Market, Ben Franklin and Otto Bookstore are more than just private businesses. They are valuable community assets, as are the city and town centers which they help to anchor. In the years ahead, as we make the transition to a more carbon-constrained future, these traditional built-up areas may help to keep our communities economically sustainable. ♦



Central Section Updates

by Tara A. Hitchens, AICP,
Section Chair

Municipal Impacts of Oil and Gas Development Workshop

Every municipality in the Commonwealth is impacted to some degree by activities related to oil and gas development with the enactment of Act 13. Come find out how to deal with these impacts on **May 24, 2012 from 8:30am-4pm at the Langone Center, Room 256, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA.** The morning session (9am-12pm) will be a panel discussion on current social, housing and transportation impacts being faced by municipalities. Three panelists will provide insights into their topic. The afternoon session will focus on the zoning implications of the oil and gas amendment (Act 13). There are 5.5 CM credits, pending approval. The cost of the workshop is \$40 for members and \$45 for non-members, which includes lunch and breaks.

Please find the brochure for this event available on the Chapter Website under the events calendar on the right of the home page. After the workshop we will make every attempt to have presentations from this workshop available on the PA Chapter website.

Special thanks to Richard Koch, AICP, Rachele Abbott, AICP and Pam Shellenberger, AICP for their dedication to this workshop.

Richard N. Koch, AICP, Current Vice Chairman of the Central Section

Richard (Dick) Koch has informed Central Section Council that he

will not be seeking reelection in the 2012 elections. Dick has been a great resource with a wealth of knowledge and numerous professional connections which have allowed the Central Section to provide meaningful workshops for our membership. Dick has been a professional planner for over 40 years, beginning his planning career with the PA State Planning Board. For the past 37 years he has been a project manager and vice president with Gannett Fleming planning and engineering consulting firm in Camp Hill, PA. Dick's career has taken him across Pennsylvania, throughout much of the United States and abroad to Mexico, Turkey and Puerto Rico providing planning assistance at the federal, state, regional and local levels.

Dick has been a member of APA and the PA Chapter since the early 1970's. As a member of the PA Chapter, he has volunteered his time and efforts in various capacities throughout the years. He served as a program chairman, presenting at the annual conference, planning for the annual conference, serving as Chairman of the Conference in 2007 and as a co-Chair of the 2010 Conference. Dick has also been a certified instructor for the zoning course through the PMPEI program for a number of years.

The Central Section wishes to thank Dick Koch for all of his hard work, dedication, enthusiasm and the numerous volunteer hours he has provided to the section and to the PA Chapter over the 40 plus years as a member.

by Stan Lembeck

PMPEI Announces Spring 2012 Training

The Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute will hold a **Train-the-Trainer program** to prepare new instructors to teach *The Course in Zoning*. The training is a two-day program, June 8 and 9, 2012 (Friday and Saturday) at the Hilton Garden Inn, State College.

THE TRAINING COURSE is a concentrated 16 hour program that includes in-depth review and discussion of the course materials (text, visual aids, exercises), how to teach adults, team teaching with other instructors, and how to organize and present the course. Upon completion of the train-the-trainer program instructors become certified to teach the Course in Zoning for which they receive compensation and travel expenses.

The Course in Zoning is one of PMPEI's four in-depth courses that is presented statewide to appointed and elected officials involved with planning and zoning. The zoning course is a "nuts and bolts" course that emphasizes the MPC, the fundamentals of drafting zoning ordinances, the use of techniques like overlays, performance zoning, TND and PRD. Participants in the course also get involved with mapping exercises and review of ordinance provisions. The course has been updated with the **new components of Act 13 affecting zoning** and this will be part of the training.

If you would like to share your knowledge and experience to help local officials become more effective in their zoning work you are invited to join the Institute's team of instructors. Citizen and professional planners with five years experience in planning and zoning are eligible to become Certified Instructors. The registration fee is \$160, and the deadline for applications is May 31, 2012. Space in the Train-the-Trainer program is limited. To obtain an application form, or for more information, contact Stanford Lembeck, AICP, at (814) 237-2382, or email sml1@psu.edu. For information about the Institute and its courses check the PMPEI website: <http://cax.aers.psu.edu/pmpei/>. ♦

Elections:

The Central Section election results will be announced at the May 24, 2012 workshop described above. We have a great slate of candidates that look forward to assisting the section and chapter. The new leadership for the Central Section will take office June 1, 2012.

We welcome anyone that wishes to attend the next meeting of the Central Section which is tentatively scheduled

for June 22, 2012 at 10:00am at the Ranch House in Watts, PA. At this meeting the section will be meeting for the first time with the new leadership and discussing potential topics for a fall workshop. If you are unable to attend the meeting but have suggestions for workshop topics or methods of reaching out to our membership please feel free to email thitchens@co.lancaster.pa.us ♦

The application period for the fall AICP exam is in June/July. If you are interested in taking the AICP exam in November of 2012, remember to visit the Chapter website for a variety of exam preparation resources, and the APA website for details on applying. The Chapter has copies of APA's AICP Exam Prep Guide to loan out, and the website includes study notes, presentation materials, and links to other resources. **A new resource for those preparing for the AICP exam is a series of prep sessions held in February and March of 2012 as part of the webcast series sponsored by chapters, divisions, and universities.** Participating chapters included Pennsylvania, Maryland, Illinois, and North Carolina. Most of the sessions were recorded and are available on the archived webcast page of the Utah Chapter website: <http://www.utah-apa.org/webcast-archive>.

If you are looking for training on **how to incorporate design guidelines into planning efforts**, the PA Chapter is cosponsoring six sessions statewide with the PA Local Government Training Partnership on this topic. The advanced session **Design Matters: Using Design Guidelines to Shape a Community** will show how to guide the aesthetics and functionality of the built environment to contribute to community success. The session will cover use of design guidelines within comprehensive plans, zoning, stand-alone guides, and Traditional Neighborhood Developments. Sessions are scheduled through May and June, with one session being held at the annual conference in Erie in October. Visit the PA Chapter website for more details on this low-cost, 3 CM session.

Last fall, AICP proposed **changing the manner in which membership in AICP could be**

received. Currently, all applications must meet minimum requirements in education and experience, pass the AICP exam, and then uphold the ethics code and maintain compliance with Certification Maintenance. Referred to as the **tenured faculty proposal**, the proposal would have automatically granted AICP status to all tenured professors at Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) approved programs - without meeting the application requirements or sitting for and passing the exam. Compliance with the ethics code and CM would have still been required. Following a period of public comment (which was largely opposed), **AICP formed a task force to review the proposal and make recommendations.**

The task force's three recommendations are now available on the APA website. The first recommendation was to remove the

original proposal from consideration. The second was to establish a clear process to move forward, including defining the problem, increasing understanding, surveying faculty, developing recommendations, and outlining an adoption process. The third recommendation was to look into other solutions for consideration.

The Board of the PA Chapter voted in February of this year to oppose the original proposal, and provided comments to AICP in March outlining reasons for our opposition and suggestions for other ways in which to better engage planners and planning programs/students at the university level. While the PA Chapter is supportive of efforts to improve interaction between practicing planners and students/universities, there are other solutions. Diluting the AICP credential is unnecessary and counterproductive. ♦

Help Wanted

PA Chapter of APA Seeks Volunteer for Board Position

Planning Officials Development Officer

Shirley Yannich, PP, AICP served as the Chapter's PODO the last few years. She is focusing her energies in new directions and stepped down in the fall 2011. Shirley was instrumental in generating newsletter articles of interest to the chapter's citizen planner members.

The PODO's roles and responsibilities include the following. The new PODO is welcome to explore additional opportunities.

- The PODO serves on the PA APA Board which consists of elected members from the PA Chapter, with the addition of the PODO, the Professional Development Officer, and the Student Representative (appointed members).
- The PODO is appointed by the PA APA President and is also a member of the Chapter's Education Committee.
- The PODO oversees the Planning Officials Development Committee and serves as the official chapter contact for questions on planning official topics. The new PODO will work with Section Chairs to select committee members from around the state. The committee can choose its focus areas and can choose to meet in person or by conference call. Within the chapter structure, each section has an elected planning official member and these individuals may provide helpful assistance in building the Planning Officials Development Committee.
- The PODO should be an individual who serves on the planning commission or Zoning Hearing Board in a local community. The individual may be a professional planner as well.

If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity to support the efforts of planning in Pennsylvania, please contact Chapter President Brian O'Leary for more details. ♦

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PLANNERS' *Verse Challenge*

When the times get tough,
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THROUGH THE AGES, in times of suffering, trial, or love, the human spirit has been expressed in verse. Well, planners, don't Marcellus Shale, TOD, and HB 1723 make you want to rhyme?

SHOW YOUR TRIALS or ecstasy in planning. Send an ode, limerick, or haiku of your own composition to *The Vantage Point*. Or send a favorite poem that speaks to your feelings about planning. (Please indicate proper credit.) *The Vantage Point* will publish selections in upcoming issues. ♦

Do I Plan?

by Denny Puko, Planning Program Manager, PA DCED

Do I plan?
Yes, I can!
Some say I'm the man
With the plan.

I plan
The use of land,
An environmental scan,
A sewage connection ban,
The light rail tran,
A replacement span,
Conservation of the alluvial fan,
And zoning the average person can
Understand.

I admire a man
Or a wo-man
(Say, Diane,
Joanne,
Or Shellenberger, Pam)
Who can plan.
In fact, I'm their biggest fan!
We're all kinda like a clan.

I want to be Ed McMahon.
(Not Johnny Carson's side man.)

But some officials don't plan.
They stick their heads in the sand.
You wonder why they ran.

You all know of a plan
That was dead before it began.

Officials should demand
That we plan.
Just give the command.
We'll lend a hand.

So, please understand
I'm not a con man,
Or a straw man,
Or a talking head on CSPAN.
I'm not an alien from a far-off land.

I'm just a common man
Trying to be like Soloman
With a plan.