



AIA BRONX CHAPTER APRIL NEWSLETTER

Published by

Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee Info@studio360s.com

Highlighting activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect

Events and Education Opportunities

- **AIA Conference on Architecture & Design 2026**
June 10-13, San Diego
Save the date for AIA2 The premier AEC industry event in San Diego, California.
- **AIA Bronx Annual Awards Event**
May 21, 2026, Manhattan, N.Y. From 5:45 to 7:45PM
The Baker Showroom
200 Lexington Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10016.
Info@studio360s.com
- **AIA Bronx– Spring Tour 2026**
University Heights May 30, from 10:00AM to 12:00PM
Bronx Community College, Bronx, NYC.
besnard@dzco.com

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I Current Activities



April 16, 2026

AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

The virtual meeting started at 6:04PM.

Attendees:

Antonio Freda
Bryan Zelnik
Hirinha Pena
Julian Misiurski
Ken A. Koons, Jr.
Matthew Rezkallo
Nico Zapata
Robert Esnard
Sara Djazayeri

Guest:

Jason Allocco
Business Development
Architectural Grille
42 Second Ave., Brooklyn
jallocco@archgrille.com

Agenda

1 Seminar Presentation

The meeting began with a presentation by **Jason Allocco of Architectural Grille**, presented on the importance of ventilation in living spaces and how grill design impacts both health and aesthetics. He explained different types of ventilation systems including mechanical, natural, hybrid, and infiltration, as well as common issues like improper airflow design and system imbalances. The presentation covered grill placement options, including wall, ceiling, floor, and decorative applications, and detailed the importance of open area percentages in grill design. Jason also explained the manufacturing process for linear bar grills, which are made from extruded materials like aluminum, stainless steel, brass, or bronze, and can be customized with various features including bar spacing and deflection options.

Grill Design and Customization Options

Jason discussed various options for linear and perforated grills, including different core designs, frame styles, and installation methods. He explained that grills can be customized in shape, size, and material, with options for access doors and hidden screw holes. Jason also covered the process of creating custom perforated patterns using CNC punch machines, lasers, or water jets, and emphasized the importance of proper pattern layout, especially for round grills.

Shop Drone Materials and Finishes

Various materials and finishes for shop drones were introduced, including metal and wood options, with specific considerations for strength and safety. He explained different finishing techniques such as satin, mirror polish, anodizing, and statuary processes for aluminum, bronze,

brass, and steel. Jason also covered manufacturing processes using technology like CNC punch, laser, and water jet cutting, and showcased additional applications for metal beyond HVAC grilles, including infill panels, shelving, furniture, and decorative elements. The presentation concluded with a brief history of the company and its founders.

Shop Drone Materials and Finishes

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Summary and Contact Information

Jason summarized, by outlining the various options for linear and perforated grilles, including different core designs, frame styles, and installation methods. He explained that grilles can be customized in shape, size, and material, with options for access doors and hidden screw holes. Finally, he described Architectural Grille's custom furniture capabilities, explaining that they offer a catalog with 2–3-week lead times for standard items and 4-5 weeks for wood pieces. The company can handle projects from concept to completion or work with existing millwork teams, with pricing comparable to retailers like West Elm and that members should feel free to contact to assist on any project they have designers on staff can review drawings and real time assist on issues.

Contact Information: Jason Allocco
Business Development
Architectural Grille
42 Second Ave., Brooklyn
jallocco@archgrille.com 718 832 1200 ext 7233

2. Adoption of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by **Bob Esnard** at approximately 6:40 PM. The minutes of March 19, 2026, Business Meeting were briefly presented for review. He explained that a key item reflected in the minutes was the Conference of Design and Architecture in San Diego, where **Sara Djazayeri** will be formally elevated to **Fellow in the American Institute of Architects (FAIA)**. Becoming a Fellow is one of the highest honors bestowed by the Institute, recognizing architects who have made significant contributions to the profession and to society. It is hoped that members who can are encouraged to attend to celebrate with her, as she is only the second Chapter member since **Simon Zelnik** in 1949 was elevated.

Members were asked if any member wished to discuss the minutes or if there were any changes necessary or modification to the minutes. Receiving none, a motion to adopt the minutes was requested. Julian Misiurski made the motion, and Sarah Jazayeri seconded. Mr. Esnard called for objections, and none were raised. The minutes were **adopted unanimously**.

3. Chapter Committee Organization

The meeting then proceeded to a discussion of members being included a chapter committee reorganization. Chapter President **Sarah Jazayeri** developed a chart and structure attempting to involve as many members as possible to actively participate in chapter activities. In elaborating on her approach. Ms. Jazayeri stated that several members were already effectively working in

areas and that she had organized the committees around those efforts. She described asking **Linda Infante** to assist with ARE preparation support for emerging professionals, noting that Ms. Infante had given a presentation at City College outlining how to begin the licensure process and sharing her personal experience. Ms. Jazayeri explained that she encouraged Linda to lead this effort as a committee and described her approach of initially mentoring committee leads, then stepping back once they were comfortable.

Sara expressed her long-term goal of **increasing the number of Fellows** within the chapter, stating her hope of achieving five Fellows within ten years. She noted that with her own elevation, four more Fellows would be needed to meet that goal. She emphasized the need for a committee to identify and encourage potential candidates. She also referenced existing areas of activity, including tours led by Julian, scholarships overseen by **Brian Zelnik**, the student competitions coordinated by **Michael Goldblum**, and DOB engagement handled by **Tony Freda**, and stated that greater organizational clarity across these committees would be beneficial. She had developed a chart outlining these thoughts for implementation and adjustment as members hopefully accept or decide what role they would like to take.

Appendix I – AIA Bronx – Leadership, Committees & Initiatives.

4. **Schedule for Next Meetings**

There was a continuing discussion concerning the organization of chapter meetings and attendance. It was pointed out that participation remains a challenge noting that even during in-person meetings, sustained engagement beyond specific catalysts—such as the Black Lives Matter issues attendance was difficult. Participation fluctuates based on intensity of issues. Comparing the Bronx chapter’s structure with other chapters, observing that Brooklyn and Queens have fewer meetings annually. Manhattan on the other hand, holds frequent meetings due to a much larger membership base however, they are not full chapter meetings which are held one or two times a year with a formal event. **Tony Freda** stated that seminars were a strong and reliable aspect of chapter programming and felt they should remain central. The idea of perhaps reducing full all member monthly meetings in favor only having seminars monthly and fewer business meetings, may or may not potentially improve attendance and efficiency. He also expressed concern that meetings might suffer from low attendance regardless of frequency. Discussion followed regarding pairing meetings with seminars, holding two or three major meetings annually. The group tentatively agreed to consider a modified structure beginning in June, following the May Awards event.

Julian Misiurski stated that we should take a little time to consider the advantages and disadvantages. It was decided to consider these alternate approaches. No formal resolution was made at that time. It was decided that modifying meeting frequency will be included in this meeting’s minutes and be on the agenda for **discussion and voting** at our next business meeting in June.

Therefore, the chapter’s meetings **June** will continue to be held in a **virtual** format. However, the **May meeting will be in person** and be the Chapters **Annual Awards Event**. The scheduled dates of the next meetings were outlined, with the proposed next chapter meeting dates as:

May 21, 2026,	In Person Award Event
June 18, 2026,	6:00PM – (Virtual)
September 17, 2026,	6:00PM – (Virtual)
October 15, 2026	6:00PM - (Virtual w/without business meeting?)

5. **Committee Reports**

Empowerment Grants

The meeting moved to committee reports. **Brian Zelnik** reported on the scholarship program, stating that six students from all six architecture schools in NYC were participating, which was a first for the chapter. All students had been contacted, with Columbia University confirmed most recently. He referenced a supportive note received from **Trudy Chair**, School of Architecture and Design at the New York Institute of Technology. He also described positive feedback from students who expressed appreciation for the scholarship support. He stated that the effort required to coordinate schools was significant but worthwhile.

Student Design Competition

Discussion turned to the chapters design competition at CCNY and Bronx Week scheduling. Sarah Jazayeri explained that Bronx Week had shifted, with the borough president's event occurring the night before the chapter's Awards event. She expressed disappointment regarding scheduling conflicts, noting that Michael would be unavailable and students might be too fatigued to attend both events. This year's CCNY **student design project** will focus on a proposal for the revitalization of the **Arthur Avenue Public Market in the Bronx**. The project invites students to explore architectural strategies that address modernization, accessibility, and urban revitalization while preserving the market's historic role as an important neighborhood institution. Interim reviews are ongoing, and final jury deliberations are anticipated in advance of the Chapter's annual awards event in May.

Annual AIA Bronx Chapter Awards Event

The awards Event is scheduled for **May 21, 2026**, and organizers remain optimistic that participation will be strong. Unfortunately, Bronx Week scheduling this year, had shifted, with the borough president's event celebrating the students' designs is occurring the night before the chapter's Awards event. **Sara Djazayeri** expressed disappointment regarding scheduling conflicts, noting that Michael Goldblum would be unavailable and students might be too fatigued to attend both events on continuous nights.

However, Sara confirmed the venue had been secured for the Awards event but noted concerns from building management regarding an 8:00 PM exit requirement and potential additional fees. She is hopeful she can work the issues out in the next few days and be able to prepare a flyer that we could share with members and the public. She encouraged members to suggest potential invites, including city officials, and offered to extend personal invitations if given contact information.

6. **Bronx Chapter Spring Tour**

Julian Misiurski reported readiness for the spring tour, scheduled for **May 30, 2026** the Saturday following Memorial Day. He described the tour area, including historic buildings on the former

NYU campus and architectural contributions by Marcel Breuer, along with aqueduct and park features. He explained that flyers would be distributed, information posted on the chapter website, and listings shared with the Westchester chapter. These tours are a bi-annual event that brings together architects, historians, and members of the public for an exploration of architectural history within the Bronx. Specifically, it is organized jointly with **Julian Misiurski** representing the chapter and with the **Bronx Historical Society's** Roger **McCormick** coordinating historical research and programming.

Appendix II – Spring Tour.

7. DOB Update

Tony Freda provided a DOB update, beginning with chapter's outstanding dues for the Architectural Council, noting that both the Bronx chapter and the Society of Registered Architects had not yet paid. He stated that the amount owed by the Bronx chapter was minimal and that invoices had been sent. Mr. Esnard confirmed that the matter was being addressed with the chapter treasurer.

Tony then discussed ongoing DOB issues, describing recurring problems with excessive or irrelevant objections issued by plan examiners. He provided examples involving accessibility requirements and unrelated building components. He noted that objections were often improperly documented, sometimes appearing only on drawings rather than in the formal objection list. Tony referenced guidance from **Ida Galea of the Architectural Council**, emphasizing proper objection procedures.

Also, Tony is attempting to schedule a meeting with the DOB commissioner and requested that members forward examples of problematic objections for presentation. He on the positive side noted possible improvements, including consolidation of DOB inspection systems with DOBNOW on DOB's website.

8. New Business

Julian Misiurski brought up a point he meant to make at our last meeting discussing Women in Architecture (WIA) and Emerging Professionals (EP) initiatives, as they continue outreach and engagement. He used as well as recommends the Architectural Registration Exam (ARE) preparation materials and Kaplan study guides as a reliable resource. He described purchasing options and costs, noting the value compared to repeated exam attempts. Julian offered to share his experience and materials with the committee members.

9. Adjournment

As there being no further business, the meeting concluded with brief closing remarks confirmed that the next Chapter meeting will be held virtually on June, with anticipation Chapter Awards Event on May21, 2026. The meeting then adjourned with thanks to all attendees. The **March 2026** meeting ended at **7:33PM**.

II Next meeting:
Thursday, June 18, 2026 @ 6:00PM
Virtual - ZOOM meeting link
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766>

Appendix I – AIA Bronx – Leadership, Committees & Initiatives

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Appendix II – Spring Tour.

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AIA Bronx 2026 – Leadership, Committees & Initiatives

Officers

President

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA

Vice President

Julian Misiurski, AIA

Treasurer

Kenneth Koons Jr., AIA

Secretary

Robert Esnard, AIA

Directors

Ofe' Clarke, AIA

Kenneth Koons Sr., AIA

Leila Peña, AIA

Nico Zapata, AIA

Bryan Zelnik, AIA

Committees & Programs

Women in Architecture & Emerging Architects Committee – Founded Equity Platform

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA – Co-Chair

Leila Peña, AIA – Co-Chair

Scholarship & Student Empowerment Committee – Opened Doors for Bronx Architecture Students

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA – Co-Chair

Bryan Zelnik, AIA – Co-Chair

FAIA Committee – Built Pathways to Fellowship

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA – Co-Chair

Bryan Zelnik, AIA – Co-Chair

Adaptive Reuse Committee – United Stakeholders, Reclaimed Bronx Landmarks

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA – Co-Chair

Michael Goldblum, AIA – Co-Chair

Architectural Licensure Support (ARE) Committee – Guided Bronx Members Toward Licensure

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA – Co-Chair
Linda Perez Infante, AIA – Co-Chair

Special Initiatives & Roles

Bronx Architecture Tours Initiative – Challenging the Stereotype of the Bronx Through Architecture

Julian Misiurski, AIA & Robert Esnard, AIA– Lead

“Where I Work” Program – Opened Architecture’s Doors to Bronx Youth

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA & Ofe’ Clarke, AIA – Lead

2026 Strength and Tranquility: A Design Competition – Women in Architecture Initiative

Sara Jazayeri, FAIA & Leila Pena, AIA – Lead
Aisha Shaikh – Coordinator

AIANY Delegate

Nico Zapata, AIA

DOB Communications Liaison

Antonio Freda, AIA – Lead

Communications & Media

Communications & Media

Soany Marquez, AIA – Lead
Syeeda Simmons, AIA – Coordinator

Website Manager

Bill Caplan, AIA – Lead

Editorial Director, Chapter Newsletter

Robert Esnard, AIA – Lead

Sponsorship & Industry Engagement

Sponsorship Program – Supporting Scholarships & Programming

Hirinah Peña – Coordinator

