



AIA BRONX CHAPTER SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee Info@studio360s.com

Highlighting activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect

Events and Education Opportunities

- **DOB Bronx Industry Meetings**
1775 Grand Concourse, 5th Floor
Second Wednesday of each month 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM
Register to attend the meeting – In person only
BronxPER11Appointments@buildings.nyc.gov
- **Orchard Beach & Hunter Island Tour**
AIA Bronx Chapter with The Bronx County Historical Society
October 17, 2026 – Saturday 10:00AM - 12:00PM
The tour will begin in Orchard Beach Parking Lot
Bronx, New York
besnard@dzco.com
- **AIA Tri-State Conference**
November 3 - 6, 2026
Hyatt Regency Princeton
<https://www.aianys.org/event/2026-tri-state-conference/>
- **AIA Conference on Architecture & Design 2027**
May 19 to May 22, 2027
The event will be held in the Pennsylvania Convention Center.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Save the date

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I Current Activities



September 17, 2026

AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

The virtual meeting started at 6:04PM.

Attendees:

Antonio Freda
Bryan Zelnik
Julian Misiurski
Ken A. Koons, Jr.
Ken H. Koons, Sr.
Linda P. Infante
Matthew Rezkallo
Michael Goldblum
Nico Zapata
Robert Esnard
Sara Djazayeri

Guest:

Jared Blum, CDT, CPH
Business Development Manager
C: 781-733-5020
10925 David Taylor Dr., Suite 300
Charlotte, NC 28262

Agenda

1 Seminar Presentation

The meeting commenced with a seminar sponsored by Huber Engineered Woods, led by Business Development Manager Jared Blum alongside colleagues Mike Moriarty and Michael Scanlon. The core educational presentation focused on managing condensation and thermal performance using continuous insulation, detailing the mechanics of thermal bridging, R-values, and U-factors across varying climate zones under recent energy codes. Following the technical presentation, the representatives transitioned to a product showcase highlighting their premium MDI-resonated structural panels, the ZIP System (featuring integrated weather-resistant barriers and attached polyiso insulation), and Exacore underlayment.

During the session, attendee Hal Dorfman and member Tony raised technical inquiries regarding the panels' structural shear values, stiffness relative to standard plywood, and seasonal performance compared to competing self-adhered membranes like Henry Blueskin. The Huber team clarified that while adding an insulation layer to a structural panel results in about a 20% loss in shear value, the panels still start at a high Structural 1 rating and maintain an excellent overall shear value while providing an indispensable thermal break. They also noted that unlike products requiring a primer below 40 degrees, their system remains vapor-permeable and functional down to zero degrees.

Summary and Contact Information

For 125 years, **Huber Engineered Woods** put safety, sustainability, and respect above all else, creating products that provide solutions to professionals across industries. Their expert panel of engineers developed the highest quality products and have a dedicated sales team to ensure customers get the products they need. **Huber Engineered Woods** products are crafted with excellence to assist projects to be crafted with purpose.

By creating the integrated sheathing category over a decade ago, ZIP System sheathing and tape replaced the need for house wrap on walls and felt underlayment in roof applications. Rigorously engineered to streamline continuous air and water barrier performance in structural roof and wall assemblies, it has changed the way teams build.

Huber Engineered Woods indicated that they would love to connect with chapter members. They can be found online at www.huberwood.com, or can be reached directly at the information below:

Jared Blum

Huber Engineered Woods

jared.blum@huber.com

cell: 781.733.5020



2. Adoption of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:14 PM and **Bob Esnard** officially welcomed new attendee Hal Dorfman to the business portion of the chapter meeting. Bob then shared and reviewed the previous meeting minutes from the June newsletter, which summarized past chapter business including the planning as well as the Annual Awards Event and details of the spring University Heights walking tour. Since no corrections or additions were offered, **Julian Misiurski** made a motion to accept the June minutes as distributed, which was seconded by **Linda Infante**. The motion passed unanimously without further comment or corrections.

3. Schedule for Next Meetings

The Chapter reviewed the schedule for the upcoming monthly meetings, which will continue to be held virtually at 6:00 p.m. The next official Chapter meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2026. The October meeting will be sponsored by Kryton International, with a presentation on "Smart Concrete," a technology that was utilized in the construction of the World Trade Center. The November 19, 2026, meeting will be sponsored by WestWood USA Liquid Technologies, a building materials manufacturer based in Fairfield, New Jersey.

The Chapter also discussed the possibility of holding a holiday luncheon in December, with the date and arrangements to be determined based on scheduling. All Chapter members will be invited to attend. Members were also reminded that during the October or November meeting, the Chapter will need to present and adopt the Treasurer's Report, Proposed Budget, and Chapter officers for the upcoming year. The proposed schedule of upcoming meetings is as follows:

October 15, 2026 – 6:00 p.m. – Virtual

November 19, 2026 – 6:00 p.m. – Virtual

December 17, 2026 – Holiday Luncheon – Time and format TBD

January 21, 2027 – 6:00 p.m. – Virtual

4. **Chapter Committees**

President **Sara Jazayeri** greeted the members after the summer break and confirmed that existing committee chairs would remain in place, thanking them for their continued dedication. She shared positive feedback from a recent Emerging & Women In Architecture picnic held at Van Cortlandt Park, noting that the word is out that the AIA Bronx Chapter is highly active. She also encouraged eligible chapter members to apply for Fellowship (FAIA) status, specifically nudging **Michael Goldblum** to advance his application.

Awards Committee: The committee discussed the success of past scholarship grant distributions and the intent to maintain strong institutional footprints. Last year's efforts were highlighted as a major milestone. The chapter achieved representation from all six architecture schools simultaneously for the first time. The members agreed to **lean** on the same volunteer committee participants to develop and sustain these valuable school sponsorships.

Student Competition Committee: **Michael Goldblum** confirmed his willingness to lead the student design competition again this year, humorously noting he would do it "if they'll have us". Members praised **Goldblum's** invaluable participation and instructed him to begin gathering the participants and selecting a project site for City College (CCNY) Student Competition.

Empowerment Grants Committee: **Brian Zelnik** confirmed he is fully on board to continue managing his committee duties for the upcoming cycle, members joking that **Zelnik** is a true "glutton for punishment". All six of New York architectural schools now have embraced the program because it allows each institution to identify a student who would benefit most from the award.

Fall Tour Committee: **Julian Misiurski** proposed rescheduling the Orchard Beach walking tour for **October 17th**, just after Columbus Day weekend. He also confirmed that **Roger McCormack** from the **Bronx County Historical Society** has approved the October date. Roger reminded the group that this year's Orchard Beach tour was initiated several years ago and was completely rained out by tornado-like severe weather. That was true despite an unusually large number of pre-paid registrations. Julian discussed the benefits of the timing of this tour early in the fall, noting it is ideal before the deep winter cold sets in allowing members to experience a more comfortable tour and the newly completed reconstruction of the historic WPA/Robert Moses-era beach pavilion. All members are invited to hopefully spend a few hours at one of The Bronx's "jewels" the Orchard Beach & Hunter Island beautiful park complex.

Appendix I – Orchard Beach & Hunter Island Tour

5. **DOB Update**

The chapter engaged in an extensive discussion regarding the Department of Buildings (DOB). **Tony Fredda** the chapter representative at ACNYC (Architects Council of New York City) opened a dialogue on the city's **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)** incentives, noting that strict code regulations triggers requiring full building sprinklers under multiple dwelling laws and vertical firewall separations—often financially deflate clients once they discover the actual legal compliance requirements. **Hal Dorfman** voiced strong objections to ADUs, arguing they represent a "bunch of smoke" that diminishes property rights and threatens to ruin neighborhoods by overcrowding the low-density R1 and R2 zoning infrastructure.

Linda Infante and **Tony** added that the Bronx DOB has struggled to consistently interpret and apply cellar and basement ADU protocols, noting a lack of clarity on horizontal compartmentalization. Tony also updated the group on digital changes, stating that Borough President Plans (BPPs) have officially shifted

onto the DOB NOW platform, and the department is gradually transitioning plumbing and inspection logs away from legacy Silverlight modules onto the new interface.

New York City Existing Building Code: Hal Dorfman then initiated a discussion on the new code set to take effect in July 2026, warning that its complex alteration triggers and cost calculation definitions will hit architects "like a wall of bricks". He and Linda strongly advocated for members to attend the monthly **Bronx DOB Industry Meetings** held every second Wednesday at 2:00 PM at 1775 Grand Concourse. They praised the current Bronx Borough Commissioner for being accessible and highly candid, even reviewing building bulletins directly on screen and taking ad-hoc plumbing code questions.

6. **New Business**

Chapter Officers 2026: Members were reminded that **Ken Koons Sr.** would be spearheading the nominating committee to propose a slate for the upcoming elections for the four core officer positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer as well as review the Chapter Directors for 2027. If any member would like to be considered or want to recommend someone for any of the positions, they should email the current Secretary Bob Esnard besnard@dzco.com.

DOB Industry Meeting: Linda Infante agreed to distribute the registration details to all members who are interested, for the **Bronx DOB Industry Meeting** as if they attend, they need to submit questions in advance via the PR11 process. **Sara Jazayeri** requested that members identify themselves as members of the AIA, report back to the chapter following each meeting attended, and that we should develop establish a stronger institutional relationship with the DOB Bronx office.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU): During the discussion concerning the city new housing initiative **ADU** members indicated that specific information has not filtered down to them or many of the government officials who have to "regulate" implementation of the program. **Bob Esnard** indicated that he as chapter secretary did and does receive background material that obviously has not been circulated to the general architectural community. He will attach to the meeting minutes a brief summary of the program and will in the future forward new information as it is received.

Appendix II – Ancillary Dwelling Units

7. **Adjournment**

As there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with bidding the members a good night. The **September 2026** meeting ended at **7:49PM**.

II Next meeting:
Thursday, October 15, 2026, @ 6:00PM
Virtual - ZOOM meeting link
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766>

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Appendix I – Orchard Beach & Hunter Island Tour



Orchard Beach and Hunter Island Walking Tour: The AIA walking tour will explore the promenade of Orchard Beach and discuss its architectural history, as well as situating the “Riviera of The Bronx” in its historical context; that is, the Robert Moses sponsored urban planning of the 20th century and its impact on The Bronx and New York City. The beach was borne out of the WPA and public works associated with the New Deal era of Franklin Roosevelt. The walk will also focus on the development of the Bronx Park system and the City Beautiful movement of the late 19th and early 20th century’s, with a particular emphasis on Pelham Bay Park, at 2,772 acres, the largest park in New York City, of which Orchard Beach is a part. Pelham Bay Park was borne of a particularly propitious moment for city beautiful movement.

The annexation of the West Bronx to New York City (in 1874) and the East Bronx (in 1895) hastened the urban development of The Bronx as a major mixed-use business/residential urban area, a far cry from its early days as a critical agricultural supplier for New York City. Highlighted will be examples of urban planning and architectural construction that allowed for the creation of green spaces, which began early in the Bronx with the New Parks Act of 1884. As a result, the amount of total parkland in the Bronx is 4,000 acres, the most of any borough of New York City. Private sector efforts combined with the government of the State and City of New York, to orchestrate the creation of Orchard Beach and Hunters Island in Pelham Bay Park in the 20th century. In addition, a system of “greenways” was laid out to connect these parks, including Pelham Parkway, which connected Pelham Bay Park to Bronx Park, so Bronx residents could get to any of the parks with ease.

The access to Orchard Beach and Hunter Island is an excellent example of the Pelham Parkway “greenway” which include; a roadway for buses and cars, horse trails, running path, walkways, bicycle area and various seating locations and open spaces. The tour will visit the Hunter Island Wildlife Reserve, just adjacent to Orchard Beach. The flora and fauna of the East Bronx will be discussed, as will preservation efforts to maintain the ecology of Pelham Bay Park in a heavily urbanized Bronx. The tour will proceed down the Theodore Kazimiroff Nature Trail and hiking trails and conclude at the Orchard Beach Parking lot where the tour began.

- Date and Time **Oct 17, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**
- Location **Orchard Beach Parking Lot, Bronx, New York, NY**
- Price Architect / BCHS member **\$20** - Associate member **\$20** - Non-member **\$25**
- Special Instructions **Wear comfortable shoes and will take place rain or shine.**
- For more information Contact **Bob Esnard, AIA - besnard@dzco.com**

Appendix II – Ancillary Dwelling Units

Local Laws 126/127

UPDATE: Applications for Local Law 127 of 2024 Ancillary Dwelling Units are required to be submitted in DOB NOW: *Build*. Basement/Cellar ADU pilot program applications are not currently being accepted until DOB Rules are promulgated. Applications for a 1-family home constructed with a cellar ADU are now accepted pursuant to 1RCNY105-08(d)(4) and Local Law 80 of 2026, effective April 9, 2026. (last revised 04/09/26)

In December 2024, New York City enacted Local Laws 126 and 127 alongside the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity zoning text amendment to support the safe creation and use of **Ancillary Dwelling Units (ADUs)** in one- and two- family homes. These initiatives work together to expand housing options by allowing a homeowner to add a new ADU to an attic, basement, cellar, a free-standing building, or a building attached to the current building.

Local Law 126 is a pilot program which enables the legalization of some pre-existing basement and cellar apartments in certain NYC areas that have been occupied unlawfully by establishing a procedure to gradually bring basement or cellar apartments into compliance with Local Law 127 in ten years. Local Law 127 establishes comprehensive requirements for zoning, construction, fire safety and occupancy, providing a clear framework to create more housing while protecting health and safety. The information below explains generally what these changes mean for members of the public who are interested in ADUs, including homeowners, tenants, and building professionals.

General Requirements

- Only 1 ADU per each 1- or 2- family residence
- At time of initial occupancy for an ADU, the zoning lot on which the ADU is located must be the primary residence of an owner of such zoning lot
- Maximum of 800sq ft of zoning floor area
- ADUs require a separate entrance
- A two-family building adding an attic, basement, cellar, or attached ADU will be treated as a three-family building subject to the NYS Multiple Dwelling Law (MDL), unless the unit is separated by a fire wall
- A two-family building with a pre-existing basement or cellar unit enrolled in the pilot program will be subject to Building Code Appendix U and additional fire and safety rules and regulations in lieu of the MDL. See the **Subgrade ADU Pilot Program section** for more details. Pilot program applications are not currently being accepted until the DOB Rule pursuant to Local Law 126 is promulgated and effective.

Exceptions/Restrictions

With some exceptions, one- or two- family buildings can add an ADU. These exceptions include:

- Backyard ADUs* are not permitted in:
 - Historic Districts
 - R1-2A, R2A and R3A districts outside of the Greater Transit Zone
 - Special Bay Ridge District west of Ridge Boulevard or south of Marine Avenue
- Subgrade ADUs are not permitted in high-risk flood areas demarcated by FEMA's Special Flood Hazard Area, the Coastal Flood Risk Area, and DEP's 10-Year Rainfall Flood Risk Area.
- LL126's subgrade ADU pilot program is restricted to existing one- and two-family buildings in the program area. The pilot program area includes:
 - Bronx community districts 9, 10, 11, and 12
 - Brooklyn community districts 4, 10, 11, and 17
 - Manhattan community districts 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, and 12
 - Queens community district 2.

Conversions of existing garages to an ADU are not considered **Backyard ADUs per Zoning 12-10 and are not restricted in those areas.*

How to File an ADU in DOB NOW

To submit an ADU filing, login to [DOB NOW](#) using an [NYC.ID account](#) and create either an Alt-CO-GC or New Building-GC job. In the PW1: Plan/Work Application tab, a new Ancillary Dwelling Unit section appears under Filing Review Type, Work Type/Filing Includes. Applicants are required to answer whether the scope of work includes an ADU. If **Yes** is selected, additional fields will appear: pre-approved plan number (if applicable), ADU location, and where the main entrance of the ADU directly opens. The Schedule of Occupancy has also been updated to include Ancillary Dwelling Unit as a Description of Use option for Residential Occupancy Classification under both Occupancy Group R-2 and R-3. For more details, refer to the [DOB NOW: Build Release Notes](#).

THE END