



Published by the Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee to highlight activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect.

Newsletter

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I Current Activities



May 19, 2022
AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Meeting began at 6:04pm.

Attendees:

Bill Caplan
Ofe Clarke
Sara Djazayeri
Robert Esnard
Antonio Freda
Michael Goldblum
Ken H. Koons, Sr.
Ken A. Koons, Jr.
Robert Markisz
Julian Misiurski
Giuliano Penna
Matthew Rezkallo
Bryan Zelnik

Guest

Lauren Gedeon
Regional Sales Representative
Rulon International

Agenda / Discussion

1. Seminar:

Lauren Gedeon, Regional Sales Representative of Rulon International presented a seminar on "Consideration for the Design of Wood Ceilings and Wall Systems." Lauren introduced Rulon International as a 40-year business based in St. Augustine, Florida. Rulon manufactures decorative/acoustical as well as Engineered Polymer Ceiling and Wall Systems. They work in 50+ countries with all their products manufactured in the United States.

Lauren discussed the various characteristics of wood species, and how they are mostly commonly found in wood ceilings & walls. She reviewed the value of engineering and understanding wood characteristics to identify the acoustics of a room. In addition, she went over the relationship between wood and water, the need for life safety and the importance of the fire performance of wood. All of which is critical to gain the benefits of coordinated detailing for the efficient costing of various wood species and successful projects. The importance of design, testing and fire treatment were also reviewed with examples of various installations when walls and ceilings are manufactured with a minimum of site labor or site fabrication. She demonstrated lighting and acoustical treatment that could be "pre-built" to maximize efficiency and reduce costs.

Wood can be used in interior ceiling wall design applications and is a material as complex in its origin as its use. It requires significant processing and evaluation before it can be used to liven an interior space and done correctly can be a great asset to a building. Lauren used a series of slides illustrating the base material - the tree itself – to discuss the various wood product applications. The characteristics of wood have two general categories, hard wood and soft wood. Hard wood has a high standard of grading and a distinctive specie appearance. It is structurally strong and used for furniture, wood ceiling, floors, and millwork. Soft wood on the other hand has a low standard of grading and hardness. However, it is easy to machine and can be used as structural lumber and paper.

Lauren Gedeon utilized slides/photos in her presentation which she concluded with a short question and answer period. She illustrated and urged that, wood manufactured walls and ceilings can always benefit from design whether its' an economical low-cost room, or a very upscale technologically filled space.

Lauren again reinforced that Rulon fabricates all its' products in Florida and that Rulon International supplies exterior and interior wood as well as engineered polymer ceiling and wall systems. Lauren will welcome questions and is willing to assist architects with their projects large or small. She can be reached at:

Lauren Gedeon
Sales Representative for NYC and Northern NJ
Rulon International
2000 Ring Way
St. Augustine, Florida 32092
Email: lgedeon@rulonco.com
Tel: 904-584-1400
Cell: 917-842-8604

2. Adoption of the May Minutes:

The Minutes of May 19, 2022 were attached to the May meeting notices for members to review. A motion to approve the May Minutes was made by Sara Djazayeri, which was seconded by Ken Koons, Sr. and the May 19, 2022, minutes were then unanimously approved.

3. Next Meeting Dates:

The meetings for the near future will continue to be virtual as Members do not feel comfortable or safe participating in person or restaurant meetings at this time. However, the wish and need to have some in-person meetings was again proposed. We, to this day have not been able to find a suitable meeting venue near mass transit with parking. In addition, Ken Koons Sr. observed that since we have been virtual, we have had many more members attend. Our in-person meeting historically were between 6-12 attendees, whereas currently there are 12-20 members attending. Therefore, it was agreed that through the beginning of next year will continue to be virtual on:

September 15, 2022 at 6:00pm
October 20, 2022 at 6:00pm
November 17, 2022 at 6:00pm
December 15, 2022 at 6:00pm

4. Chapter Webinar – Reducing Embodied Carbon:

Unfortunately, Bill Caplan could not attend the meeting to discuss his impressions of the seminar. However, the attendees from the Chapter indicated that it was a very successful online seminar with approximately 50 attendees. In addition, several attendees had emailed the Chapter with complimentary statements on the presentation, the importance of the subject and urged for additional seminars on the Reduction of Carbonization in Construction.

Bill had videotaped the seminar; put it on YouTube and the Web, and had over 150 hits which he thought was very encouraging on two fronts:

- One - this issue is of importance to many people in/out of the architectural and construction industry.
- Two - the Bronx Chapter is publicly attached to this important issue which should assist us in our standings with other Chapters in our region as well as National AIA.

The members thought that the Westchester + Hudson Valley Chapter and their Executive Valorie Brown were very helpful and produced a seminar technically smooth and except for Bill Caplan, without too much effort by our Chapter members. The thought is that perhaps in the fall, if the Chapter and Bill agrees, we could have a follow-up seminar.

5. DOB – Update – New Commissioner

Tony Freda discussed the fact that Mayor Adams had chosen a non-architect, a councilman from Queens, Eric Ulrich as the new DOB Commissioner, with the former Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Kazimir Vilenchik, PE as his First Deputy. The interesting thing from Tony's point of view, was that the mayor's office requested that the five Presidents of the AIA Chapters write a supportive letter congratulating the mayor's choice. Although this was a "difficult" negotiation with some of the Chapters being very disappointed, as the choice was not a professional architect or engineer, or at a minimum, an experienced construction person. However, Tony significantly noted that the first public notice the Commissioner promulgated, was to announce that all the borough offices will open in a modified form, to handle specific issues and processing actions should be welcomed by the industry. It is hoped that this will be followed by additional specific actions to expand and enable applicants to address filing issues and glitches, that no amount of emailing or telephone conferences can handle. (Appendix I – DOB Announcement)

6. Chapter Tour:

Bob Esnard reminded members that the Chapter scheduled its first 2-CEU Credit Tour since the covid crises started, with a walking tour concerning "The Mix Uses of Norwood". Julian Misiurski will be the registered architect for the tour with Roger McCormick, Director of Education of the Bronx County Historical Society leading the Tour. Roger and Julian modified a Historic Society existing Tour to be more architectural, discussing zoning and land use issues in the evolution and development of this Northwest Bronx community. The construction of the New York City Water Tunnel, The Hospital Developments of Montefiore and North Bronx Central, as well as Lehman College will be visited/reviewed. Physically, the Grand Concourse links these facilities and the many parks within this residential community, which was historically built between the two world wars, and to this day is continuing to evolve into an attractive/successful urban neighborhood.

All members are encouraged to attend. The tour starts and ends at 10:00am June 4th at the Bronx Varien House on Bainbridge Avenue and 204th Street, Bronx. (Attachment II – Tour Announcement).

7. New Business

- Michael Goldblum had written to Sara Djazeryeri requesting time to discuss some initiatives for the Chapter to work on. His thought was to involve Associate members and develop some publicity by involving the Chapter in important Bronx development issues and to become more “visible.” Michaels’ ideas are to;
 - a. Approach DOB to revive a small pilot DOB program called “Let’s do it Together” wherein specific projects that are publicly important, such as needed housing or community facilities, get reviewed by DOB with a different process than the “regular” project approval procedure. The idea would be to have Plan Examiners and a supervisor work for one hour +/- on a regular schedule on a by or weekly basis, instead of the normal DOB examiner appointment once every 3 weeks for 20 minutes plan examination time. The Building Department would give direction and approvals at the meeting as the job requires, without going through objections, rejections, and more objections again and again, until a final conclusion of the procedure. The incentive is to say yes instead of no!
 - b. Identify a New York City Housing Project – to be developed with CCNY Architectural School scheduled class as a competition; where the Chapter, New York City Housing Authority (“NYSHA”) and CCNY take a real project as it is being developed for government approval and become part of a CCNY Term Design Project, for students as part of a class. The commitment would be that NYSHA, the AIA, and the school jointly judge the project and pick a winner that would be announced. The city would take the winning design into “consideration” when the project is actually designed and built. There was an enthusiastic discussion of this idea among the members. It was noted that a good percentage of students at City College are Bronx residents which can raise the Bronx Chapter’s visibility in Bronx communities as well as students.
 - c. Michael also suggested a Low-Income Housing Study that a few associated members could work with him on doing research reviewing how many of the Bronx’s older housing projects can be successfully rehabilitated. As many of the existing publicly built and operating apartment houses have been historically badly underfunded and are suffering; elevator, plumbing, heating, and serious maintenance issues all of which were caused by the Federal Government not supporting housing the way it at one point did. The purpose of this report would be to make an argument of the techniques that work well, and what doesn’t. Michael’s thought that perhaps a Public Private Partnership might work better than just relying on public funding with its public bidding process, to efficiently secure contractors to do specific improvements for low-income families housing.
- Associate Member Involvement
There was a short discussion that approximately half of the Chapter members are Associates and many of them, as they join, attend one meeting or two, and then do not attend further. There have been discussions with some of the new associates that a 6:00pm zoom call once a month interferes with, their commuting to/from work or perhaps conflicts directly with school, if they are still studying for an advanced degree or their architectural license. In addition, the idea of starting all our Chapter meetings with a CEU

Course, although interesting to associates, does not have the same importance for an AIA member where these courses are required to maintain their license.

It was suggested that we take a portion of the next meeting immediately after the CEU presentation to take a few minutes to discuss strategy with Chapter associate members. The goal would be how the Chapter could hopefully encourage more associate involvement as they are beginning professionals, and to explore what subjects' associates are most interested in. Chapter members are simply seeking to encourage Associate involvement and if necessary, schedule events or meetings specifically geared to their needs.

The meeting ended at 7:48pm.

IV. Next Meeting:

Due to the continuing health crisis the next meeting will again be Virtual on:

Thursday June 16, 2022,

at 6:00PM

IV Appendixes

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Appendix I

DOB Announcement



May 13, 2022

SERVICE NOTICE

In-Person Appointments for Standard Plan Examination Job Filings

Beginning Monday, May 16, 2022, customers have the option to attend appointments with a plan examiner in person in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island offices.

If the appointment will be conducted in-person, all appointment attendees should arrive at the office 10 minutes before the appointment to check-in with the Appointments (PENS) Coordinator. A face mask is required to be worn at all times while in the building.

The Appointments and DOB NOW: *Build* systems will be updated to show the office location of the plan examiner. In addition, an option to select an in-person appointment will be available in both systems on Wednesday, May 18, 2022. Additional Service Notices will be posted when the in-person option is available for Manhattan, HUB, energy, and site safety plan examination appointments.

Customers may still choose to attend meetings online using the Goto Meeting links provided in the appointment confirmation. BIS appointments that were scheduled **prior to April 20, 2022** will continue to be conducted by phone (with the option to attend in person).

If additional assistance is needed, submit an inquiry at www.nyc.gov/dobhelp.

Bronx Borough Office
1932 Arthur Avenue, 5th Floor
Bronx, NY 10457

Brooklyn Borough Office
210 Joralemon Street, 8th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Queens Borough Office
120-55 Queens Boulevard, 1st Floor
Kew Gardens, NY 11424

Staten Island Borough Office
10 Richmond Terrace
Borough Hall, 2nd, and 3rd Floors
Staten Island, NY 10301

Eric A. Ulrich, Commissioner
build safe | live safe

nyc.gov/buildings

Appendix II

Tour Announcement



WALKING TOUR: MIXED USES OF NORWOOD, BRONX, NY

JUNE 4, 2022

The Tour AIA BX 10 - 2 CEU:

The Director of Education for The Bronx County Historical Society, and a Bronx AIA Architect will lead a walking tour of Norwood, Bronx, NY, chronicling its' place in the Bronx and New York City. Included are how historical, architectural and infrastructure construction impacted residential areas, the regional railroad, roads, and reservoirs within and adjacent to Norwood. Urban planning, public and private investment within the context of the growth of Norwood will be reviewed.

The area grew from the Kings Bridge over the Spuyten Duyvil Creek – one of the only bridges connecting Manhattan in the 18th century, as well as the construction of the railroad, Albany Post Road and Boston Post Road connecting New York City to Albany and Boston. The major roads and Parkways through the neighborhood such as Gun Rill Road and the Mosholu Parkway, give easy access to the regional parks; Pelham Bay Parkway, Mosholu Parkway, Crotona Parkway and Bronx River Parkway in and/or adjacent to Norwood.

Date & Time:

The tour starts on Jun 4, 2022, at 10:00 AM ET (UTC -5) Eastern Time

The tour ends at 12:00 PM ET (UTC -5) Eastern Time

Starting Place:

Meet at the entrance gate at 3266 Bainbridge Ave. Bronx, NY 10467

Price (20 tickets are available):

Architect member \$20

Associate member \$20

Non-member \$30

For More Information & Tickets:

CONTACT: Bob Esnard - besnard@dzco.com , 212-977-4800

The End