



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

Newsletter

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
I Current Activities:	
• Bronx AIA Chapter - Special Virtual Strategy Meeting Minutes of July 21, 2022.	2
II Related Articles and Education Opportunities:	
• ArchSandFest AIA Emerging Professional Committee (Downstate) Fund Sand Beach Event September 10 & 11, 2022 Location: To be determined	
• AIA Women's Leadership Summit 2022 San Jose, California September 28 – October 1, 2022 Register >	
III Next Chapter Meeting is Virtual and on Thursday, September 15, 2022, at 6:00pm	6
IV Appendix	7

I Current Activities



July 21, 2022

AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Meeting began at 7:40pm.

Attendees:

Ofe Clarke
Sara Djazayeri
Robert Esnard
Antonio Freda
Michael Goldblum
Arionnys Hororio
Linda P. Infante
Josette Matthew
Soany K. Marquez
Julian Misiurski
Bryan Zelnik

Introduction

This special summer meeting evolved from several brief discussions at the prior May and June 2022 Chapter meetings concerning:

- Involving Associates and new Members in Chapter activities.
- Reviewing Chapter meeting structure and whether additional and/or separate committee meetings should be scheduled, to engage both Associates and Members in a less structured format, than monthly meetings with CEU seminars.

Associate members were sent additional notification that there would be a “Strategy” meeting to maximize, if possible, Associate attendance and to have an in-depth discussion.

At the June meeting there was a mixed group of Associates and new Members attending, and it was agreed to schedule this very unusual special summer meeting to have an open conversation with both Associates and Members to focusing on actions to increase participation. The special meeting was to start at 7:30pm instead of the normal 6:00pm to allow Associates to end their work or study commitments and attend.

I -Discussion

Sara Djazayeri started the “special” meeting by indicating that in addition to the “Strategy Discussions,” there was one new agenda item for this meeting that the Chapter needed to review and possibly vote, on before the meeting ended. The item was brought to the Chapters’ attention by Bryan Zelnik concerning the Preservation of a Modern residence in Scarsdale, New York, designed by his grandfather, Simon Zelnik, FAIA, a founding member of the Bronx Chapter.

Bob Esnard briefly reviewed how our Chapter, of approximately seventy Members are equally divided between Associates and Members. Historically, Members attend monthly meetings on a regular basis, as each meeting includes a first hour seminar for CEU credit. However, Associates, generally when they join the Chapter, attend a meeting or two and then afterwards only intermittently attend. This drop of attendance apparently is caused by two complications; 1) the meetings start at 6:00pm which interfere with work, commuting or studying for Architectural License Exam, and 2) the subject matter of meeting often is unrelated to Associates everyday professional needs or concerns.

A “*Possible Discussion Agenda Items*” was distributed (Appendix). However, the agenda was not followed as Associates and Members had an unstructured vigorous back and forth discussion. The highlights are summarized in these minutes under three general areas of concern:

- Architectural Licensing Exam
- Committees
- AIA functions/representation

An abridged version of the meeting discussions concerning Associates are:

- Architectural Registration Examination:
The exam discussion clarified how the licensing process is now computerized and has evolved from seven/eight different subject paper tests into six, that must all be passed within a short 5 year “rolling” specific time frame. If time expires for any exam, the specific exam must be retaken which creates tremendous “pressure” on applicants. This can be frustrating especially while someone is working full time, trying to have time for family life, and/or do an appropriate amount of studying for each portion of the exam. The ability for Associates to have spare time to work on AIA or any professional voluntary activities allows for limited opportunities/time to participate in AIA meetings, and on expanding their professional growth.

At the meeting, most Associates were looking for help in passing the subject matter of the License Exam and requested that the Chapter explore opportunities to develop a structure or relationship with other Chapters that have programs to aid “study” on specific subjects. It was mentioned that the Brooklyn and Queens Chapters have ongoing sessions. Some Associates indicated that larger Chapters such as the New York Chapter or Westchester + Hudson Valley Chapter do offer study

sessions/programs for a fee. The organization of these study activities vary, some have a speaker; or as in the Brooklyn Chapter the group sessions are organized with a different Associate reporting on specific test areas to focus group discussions and thoroughly investigate/explore a subject through the general conversation with all the session participants.

It was suggested that the Bronx Chapter contact the surrounding Chapters to officially and/or unofficially attempt to arrange for Bronx Chapter Associates to individually participate with existing programs. The expectation is to give each Associate as much flexibility to study and learn as their personal time and schedule would allow them.

- Committees:

The Chapter currently has two active committees that have both Members and Associates active: the Education Committee and Grants Committee for CCNY Architectural School students. The hope is to create additional committees with new participants. Michael Goldblum had proposed several ideas where Chapter Associates could work on projects that would be done independently of formal meetings. A few Members and Associates could work together to report on existing practices on a subject, and then make suggestions for improvements. This hopefully will raise the Chapter public profile while suggesting improvements in the practice of Architecture and with Bronx development issues. He suggests three possible areas of activity could be:

1. DOB Functioning – Reviewing the processing of applications to discover what has worked and not worked in the past at DOB. The concept is to digest information, then suggest thoughts about the approval process to make it more productive. The approach would be to instead of “objections” of why not a project cannot happen, concentrate on how a project can happen. The idea of “YES” verses “NO.”
2. Public Housing – The Bronx has one of the highest concentrations of public and assisted housing in the city. Some of these developments work well and some do not. The issue again, is to do research on what seems to work to; create successful, affordable, and subsidized housing and suggest how development process can be approved and/or streamlined. The goal is to take the many significant public and private housing efforts that are currently funded by various government agencies and private sector organizations in the Bronx to improve or develop new thoughts on improvements to support affordable housing.
3. Student Competition - At CCNY Architectural School which is physically the closest architectural school to the Bronx and with many Bronx students, to combine a real project as part of a design course in their schoolwork. The idea is to look at the City’s Construction program for an actual Bronx public project such as a specific housing development, park school, etc., then with the

Chapter, put together a team of; AIA Chapter members, representatives of the city agency with the project, and CCNY to choose a project to be the subject of a scheduled design course. Then at the end of the term, the team would pick a “Best Student Project” to be chosen with the CCNY faculty. The construction agency could take into consideration these student efforts when developing and building the actual project.

- AIA functions/representation:
The Chapter occasionally gets requests to attend community functions, or AIA events where other Chapters and/or community groups participate. Normally this is informally handled by the Chapter Officers and Members, but many times we cannot get someone to attend or speak at an event. This need is something new Members and Associates can do and would not be as much of a commitment as working in a committee. Ofe Clarke, a Vice President of the AIA NY State Board of Directors, indicated that the State AIA has many activities that could be very helpful to Associates in their professional development. Associates should also consider participating or volunteering with State or National AIA programs or assisting Bronx development within their home communities. The experience can be informative as well as develop Professional expertise. Julien Misiurski, the Bronx Chapter AIA Representative also reported that State AIA wishes all Chapters to be involved in developing specific projects in their jurisdiction. Our Chapter in the past has proposed Bronx Park development projects. This type of effort can be redirected or modified so Associates could pick a project or goal that they are interested in and be more proactive professionally.

Josette Matthew who historically has been effective in participating with other Chapters and with AIA events, is now part of an AIA group called “ArchSandFest.” They are organizing an event that might be of interest to Associates. This event has been developed with the downstate Emerging Professional Committee (EP leaders from five of 13 NYS Chapters) and have pre-pandemic, held it annually since 2017. It served as a summer outing with a sandcastle competition attended by Members of the Chapter, family, and friends. Attendees and spectators alike set up camp on the beach for an afternoon of networking and sunbathing. Then having teams create their sand sculptures and have them judged by our slate of judges. Josette was approached by AIA Long Island, as well as AIA Brooklyn, to help in resurrecting this event in hopes of having it at the end of this season. The ask from our Chapter is to: have Members attend the event and financially contribute (can be done by obtaining a sponsor for refreshments, etc.). The date in mind is the weekend of September 10/11 and location TBD. As more details are settled. We will keep Members posted on updates.

II - Preservation of Modern Residence:

Bryan Zelnik was contacted by residents of a Scarsdale, New York neighborhood a few hours before a hearing was to take place, by the Committee for Historic Restoration in Scarsdale. The owner of a property wants to demolish a modern building that Bryan's grandfather, Simon Zelnik FAIA had built at 78 Birchall Road, Scarsdale. The owner wishes to create two houses in its' place. The neighboring owners asked Bryan to assist in their attempt to preserve this unique modern building. Bryan had a few hours to prepare and argue on behalf of saving/preserving the building. Bryan attended the hearing and described the importance of the building which is a one of very few modern mid-20th Century homes in Westchester County. At the hearing, the Town's staff as well as owner's representatives, indicated that not only was the building was not worthy of preservation, but that the architect was not a designer of any note. Thus, the building is not worth saving and should be demolished. Fortunately, enough questions were raised at the hearing, and the Committee did not vote. There will be another meeting the end of September to review the issue again. Bryan asked that the Chapter support his efforts to save the building as well as defend his grandfather's (a Bronx Chapter founder) reputation at the next committee hearing. After a short discussion, the Chapter unanimously approved a resolution to actively support preserving the building and Simon Zelnik' work. Finally, Michael Goldblum indicated that the argument for preservation should include not only supporting the architect, but specifically describing in detail the important architectural features of the home. Sara Djazayeri also indicated she will try to enlist, the Westchester Historic Committee as well as the Westchester Hudson + Valley Chapter to join in support of preservation.

The meeting ended at 8:41pm.

III. Next Meeting:

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

Thursday September 15, 2022,

at 6:00PM

Appendix

Proposed Discussion Agenda Items

July, 2022

Possible Discussion Agenda Items

The Bronx Chapter AIA Strategy Meeting

Associates' Involvement:

General

- Study Sessions for State Licensing Exam.
- Participate with Chapter new/existing committees.

Specific

- DOB regulations and approval process,
i.e., Michael Goldblum/Ken Koons Jr.
- Lobby elected officials that are important to the AIA and the neighborhoods members live in,
i.e., AIA Nationals coordinate with AIA NY State.
- Representing the Chapter at;
AIA functions.
At Community meetings.
Bronx construction/development issues/events.
Local Schools to discuss architecture.

The End