



Published by  
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[Info@studio360's.com](mailto:Info@studio360's.com)  
Highlighting activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect

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## I Current Activities

### December 14, 2023 AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Bob Esnard calls to order the virtual meeting at 6:02PM.

#### Attendees:

Boris Baranovich  
Sara Djazayeri  
Robert Esnard  
Antonio Freda  
Alvi Rahman Khan  
Ken A. Koons, Jr.  
Ken H. Koons, Sr.  
Ofe Pearson  
Julian Misiurski  
Robert Markisz  
Matthew Rezkallo  
Bryan Zelnik

#### Guest:

Vanessa Anderson  
Surface Materials, Inc.  
[www.surfacematerials.com](http://www.surfacematerials.com)  
NY Sales Representative  
Tel: 516-592-9353  
Email: [vanessa@surfacematerials.com](mailto:vanessa@surfacematerials.com)  
Sales Team:  
Anthony Riggi  
Matt Malles

#### Agenda / Discussion

1. Seminar Presentation: Surface Materials, Inc.

Vanessa Anderson, the NY Sales representative of Surface Materials, Inc., and her sales team of Anthony Riggi and Matt Malles, discussed the different material choices available for wall panel systems, including HPL compact, solid phenolic, magnetic dry erase, and real wood veneer. She highlighted the versatility of the panels in various industries such as healthcare, education, retail, and airports. The panels are abuse-resistant and suitable for high-traffic areas. They can be applied directly over older surfaces during renovations with proper preparation. The standard thickness of the wall panels is 7/16 inches and sizes range from 2' x 8' to 4' x 10' depending on designer preference.

Summary of Vanessa Anderson's presentation:

[PSI: Panel Specialists, Inc: Decorative Interior Wall Panel Systems](#)

- PSI Has manufactured Decorative Interior Wall Panel Systems in Temple, TX since 1990, offering Aesthetic Appeal, Contemporary Concepts, Durability, Ease of Maintenance, Longevity, and Long-Term Cost Effectiveness. Panel surface options include High Pressure

Laminate, Wood Veneer, Write-On Magnetic Glass, Back Painted Glass, Back Printed Glass, Metallic, Acrylic, Solid Compact Laminate (Phenolic), System Integrated Acoustics, Faux Leather, and Custom Laminate Digital Graphics. Supplemental Products include Magnetic Marker Board and Tack Board. In most cases, PSI Decorative Interior Wall Panel Systems can be installed directly over existing wall surfaces including gyp board, wood, concrete, glazed block, CMU, granite, brick, ceramic tile, and porcelain tile without incurring the usual time, labor, and cost of interior wall demolition.

**ATI: Mirroflex, Fusion, Lumisplash & NuMetal**

- [MirroFlex Structures](#) are thermoplastic wall panels, ceiling tiles, wainscoting, tub and shower surrounds, light diffusers, and door skins. They can be flat-laminated in over 45 colors or can be profile-wrapped to over 60 different substrate patterns. MirroFlex can be installed over most substrates including drywall, CMU, tile & more.
- [The Fusion program](#) allows for the combination of art or graphics with an array of suitable substrates. Choose imagery from our Idea Library or supply your own art to be combined with our varied assortment of adaptable, durable substrates appropriate for use in healthcare, institutional, hospitality, educational, and retail installations.
- [LumiSplash](#) is a patented, multilayered, ultra-thin (1/4"), one-of-a-kind product that combines art with lighting in a durable laminate, creating a unique focal point for any home or business. This low-voltage system emits light evenly across its surface and has impressive impact, scratch, chemical, and abrasion resistant properties. Plug it in or hardwire for permanent installations by a local electrician.
- [NuMetal](#) is a collection of High-Pressure Laminates with a real metal surface and phenolic paper backing suitable for vertical and light-duty horizontal applications. This collection features embossing, hand painting, etching, and other innovative techniques to enhance the look of metals.

Anthony Riggi then discussed Sanfoot Real Wood Veneer. He explains how this product is cut into micro thin slices in Japan and emphasizes the attention to detail in its manufacturing process.

In conclusion of seminar Vanessa and Anthony held a short question and answer period. Members expressed the Chapter's appreciation of their time and that they have done a terrific job on a very interesting subject. It was requested that Vanessa send Surface Material's Inc. contact information of whom within her company should be contacted for help with a specific project or location.

Vanessa and Anthony offered to assist architects with their projects and urged members to contact:

**Local Sales Reps:**

**Long Island, Westchester, Brooklyn & Bronx areas:**

Vanessa Anderson

P 516.592.9353

E [vanessaa@surfacematerials.com](mailto:vanessaa@surfacematerials.com)

**Manhattan:**

Danielle Yohai

P 917.817.1299

E [danielley@surfacematerials.com](mailto:danielley@surfacematerials.com)

Adam Cherit

P 917.968.5116E

E [adamc@surfacematerials.com](mailto:adamc@surfacematerials.com)

**New Jersey:**

Claudia Febres-Kerr

P 609.668.8886

E [claudiaf@surfacematerials.com](mailto:claudiaf@surfacematerials.com)

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

The November 2023 minutes were emailed to everyone and briefly outlined. A motion to approve the AIA Bronx Chapter minutes of November 16, 2023, meeting was made by Sara Djazayeri. Bryan Zelnik seconded the motion to accept and the minutes were accepted unanimously by the attendees.

**3. Next meeting dates:**

The calendar for AIA Bronx Chapter meeting for the next few months was reviewed. Additionally, Bob Esnard took the opportunity to introduce Valarie Kagan, who will work with him to take the meeting minutes and prepare the monthly newsletter. She will be the first and only employee ever. Sara asked how having an employee will work. Bob explained that the position is part-time to help with the minutes. Valarie (or Val) and he will speak to work together on how to efficiently produce the newsletter.

With the exception of the 12/21/2023 luncheon, these next meetings are held virtually via ZOOM. The link and password will be emailed prior to the meeting.

Thursday,	December 21, 2023	1:00PM Luncheon at the New York Botanical Gardens
Thursday,	January 18, 2023	6:00PM Virtual meeting via ZOOM
Thursday,	February 22, 2024	6:00PM Virtual meeting via ZOOM
Thursday,	March 21, 2024	6:00PM Virtual meeting via ZOOM
Thursday,	April 18, 2024	6:00PM Virtual meeting via ZOOM

**4. Review and Adopt 2024 Bronx Chapter Budget**

The next item on the agenda is to review and adopt the 2024 AIA Bronx Chapter budget. The Chapter Charter requires that members review and approve an annual budget once a calendar year. It is usually presented in October and adopted in December and be effective in January of the next year.

Chapter Treasurer Ken Koons Jr. prepared a comparison of the 2023-chapter budget to the 2024- chapter which was physically presented on the shared zoom screen and reviewed . In summary, the 2023 and 2024 budget line items were unchanged, while many of the line-item amounts had to be increased from 2023. The increased line-item costs for insurance and accounting, reflected in the 2024-chapter budget, are due to inflation. Also there are proposed increases for the Empowerment Program designed to assist undergraduate architectural students, extended for another year. The grants will now include Bronx residents attending two schools, Pratt Institute, as well as, those attending CCNY. Finally, the 2023 CCNY Studio Competition was funded and extended for another year.

Therefore, the total budget was increased from 17,000 dollars to 18,000 dollars, with the income increased to accommodate the Chapter's adopted program costs.

After a short discussion, a proposal to accept the Bronx AIA Chapter 2024-budget was initiated by Bryan Zelnik and seconded by Boris Baranovich. The Bronx AIA approved and accepted the Chapter's Treasurers proposed 2024-budget.

**Appendix I – Adopted 2024-Bronx AIA Chapter Budget**

**5. Marketing – “Find a Bronx Architect”**

Patricia Semmler, a Brooklyn Chapter associate volunteered to assist us in a marketing effort to develop a “Find a Bronx Architect” link, on the Bronx Chapter website. Sara explained that Patricia has emailed members regarding the marketing of “Find a Bronx Architect”.

After the last meeting, Patricia had estimated that about seven members have submitted information to join our website and she hoped for more. Bob stated that if any members want to be listed as; an architect, consultant, or in another professional role, Patricia should be contacted at; [patricia.semmler@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.semmler@gmail.com)

**6. Chapter Committees**

**CCNY Student Competition**

Sara reviewed the chapter's 2024 CCNY Student Competition. She explained that Michael Goldblum had to leave the meeting and asked her to update the members. Michael had been reviewing potential government public projects with the Bronx EDC (Economic Development Corporation), the Bronx Borough President's office and CCNY's professor Fabian Llonch who directed last year's competition, and will again include his upper class design studio. The goal is to find a site/project similar to last year's King's Bridge Armory project which was very successful. All who have seen it, in academia and in architectural community/offices are talking about it positively .

After a lot of “back and forth”, yesterday a site was identified near the Hunts Point area of the Bronx. It is a parcel of land that the EDC has been working on for years and feels that now with the chapter's student competition effort will be an auspicious time to publicly draw attention to it and “push it” to actually get built. Sara indicated the project is a traditional neighborhood project as it combines affordable housing and a community center for residents. So, we have a project, a site, a community committee, students and professor. Everything is set to start in the spring CCNY term with professor Llonch and students enthusiastic to work on the Chapter's Second Design Competition.

Sara also pointed out that professor Llonch also teaches Design at Pratt with her, and asked if the Bronx Chapter would think of doing an additional joint public project with EDC and borough president's office for his studio at Pratt. Sara expressed, we are very flattered that he believed our efforts should expand and that more people want to be involved with our AIA Bronx Chapter. However, Sara also expressed her concern about additional costs, and chapter efforts always require members to be involved to work on how to implement any new effort. Sara communicated that if the professor is interested in a new collaboration, the next step would be

to review with him the idea and who the specific interested parties would be to partner with us. In addition, she needed to discuss the idea with Bronx Chapter members and if any members would volunteer to work on it. Furthermore, members in a discussion of an additional competition indicated that Sara and Michael now spend a lot of time on the CCNY competition we would need additional volunteers to participate with Pratt. It was pointed out, that historically in our chapter, this or any new initiative can only happen if a member takes responsibility for it. After a short discussion, it is clear that at this time there are **not** any volunteers for a Pratt Competition initiative. However, Sara stated she wanted more time to think more about it, to see if she has the time available to commit or could think of someone to take the new initiative on.

#### Student Awards/Empowerment Programs

Bryan Zelnik who has taken over for his father Marty Zelnik, was a “champion” of the Empowerment Program, asked if the CCNY scholarship contacts are the same people as last year and asked if he should send an email now or wait until after the first of the year. It was suggested, that Bryan should write after the first of the year which is better, because everybody is busy with the Holidays. Bryan agreed and didn’t think anyone would respond at this time.

In addition, Bryan mentioned that today is his dad’s, Marty Zelnik’s birthday and that he is here in spirit. Members indicated that they think of him very fondly and we all miss him very much!

#### Associates License

Regarding the Architectural Record Exam (ARE), Linda Infante has been work hard on trying to implement a study program. Linda unfortunately, was not able to attend tonight’s meeting. However, she is working to schedule a few ARE study sessions and theoretically has three professionals willing to take part. Bill Davis, who also couldn’t be here tonight, Bob Esnard, and Richard Montana all preliminarily agreed to take part. Bill Davis she hopes will do January and Bob will do February. Then she is planning to have Richard Montana who used to be a NYC DOB plan examiner, and was the chief examiner in the Bronx. Bryan Zelnik confirmed Robert Montana’s professional background.

It is hoped she will be able to update the Chapter at next month’s meeting.

#### 7. **DOB – Update**

Due to a scheduling conflict Tony Freda was not able to attend the last meeting of the NYC Architect’s Council. However, he and the chapter received a summary letter highlighting the significant Code and DOB Processing efforts of 2023 by the council and DOB staff. This summary was developed by **Robert Holub, RA** | NCARB | LEED BD+C, the Executive Director of DOB’s Code Development who has been working with the Council’s Code Development team.

Robert’s letter outlined some successes and challenges. DOB staff in Technical Affairs and Code Development and NYC Architect’s Council representatives worked together to improve construction codes, the Department, and ultimately construction practices in our city.

The issues reviewed are the;  
Adams 90-Day Commission

Existing Building Code (EBC)  
Electrical Code (EC)  
Waterfront Code (WFC)  
Construction Code Revision

## Appendix II - DOB's Code Development and DOB Processing Update

### 8. New Business

Sara had two items for discussion;

**First** to have Bryan Zelnik review his inspiring story and successful effort he led to preserve his grandfather, Simon Zelnik's reputation and a residential building he designed from destruction.

**Second** to invite members to the Chapter's Holiday Luncheon next week on December 21, 2023.

- Discussion of Scarsdale house  
Bryan had started his "preservation" efforts about two years ago, when some Scarsdale homeowners reached out to him to assist the community in saving his grandfather's building. Bryan produced a series of public statements and attended meetings at the Scarsdale Committee for Historic Presentation (CHP), and the Scarsdale Board of Trustees, the governing body of Scarsdale.  
Sara indicated that this is a very good story and that Bryan is an architectural "hero". This is very important in Scarsdale. Bryan said although it is a very important story and that Scarsdale is now proposing a moratorium, many Scarsdale residents have been stepping up after his efforts, supporting the preservation of well-designed buildings though out Scarsdale.

Members thought that this effort should be made public in the Bronx as well as in Scarsdale. The thing about publicizing it in the Bronx is about **us**, as the Bronx AIA, and Bryans' grandfather a former "charter" chapter member as well as a Bronx resident. It is a perfect human interest story about Bryan and how he saves his grandfather's building. A suggestion was made for Bryan to put together the "story" to be submitted to the Riverdale Press and possibly cable channel 12, both media outlets that do these types of stories.

- As Sara discussed at the October and November meetings that the Bronx Chapter will have both a scheduled virtual meeting, as well as, an informal luncheon in December. She as Chapter President sent individual members, invitations to the Botanical Gardens Luncheon on December 21, 2023, as she did last year. Sara at this meeting, again invited members to simply contact her if they would like to attend.

The floor was opened for anyone to bring up other topics that need to be discussed.

As there were no further discussions, **the meeting ended at 7:46PM.**

### III. **Next meeting:**

**Thursday, 01/18/2024**

**6:00PM Virtual meeting via ZOOM**

**IV Appendix**

**Appendix I**

**Adopted AIA Bronx Chapter 2024 Budget**

**Appendix II**

**DOB's Code Development and DOB Processing Update**



Appendix I

Adopted AIA Bronx Chapter 2024 Budget

1/1/2024

<b>AIA BRONX CHAPTER</b>						
<b>Adopted Budget For 2024</b>						
EXPENSES						2024
MEETING VENUE						\$ 2,000
INSURANCE						\$ 2,200
WEB SITE						\$ 700
EXPENSES FOR OFFICERS/DIRECTOR TO ATTEND MEETINGS						\$ 900
AIA COMPLIANCE AND CONSULTANTS						\$ 3,000
ARCHITECTS COUNCIL						\$ 550
MEMBERSHIP/ASSOCIATES SUPPORT						\$ 500
ZOOM/FACEBOOK						\$ 750
AWARDS PROGRAM						\$ 6,000
LEGAL						\$ 1,000
ACCOUNTING						\$ 400
<b>TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES</b>						<b>\$ 18,000</b>
PROJECTED INCOME						<b>\$ 19,000</b>

## Appendix II

### DOB's Code Development and DOB Processing Update

#### Adams 90-Day Commission

The Mayor and Commissioner wanted to take a bold approach to reforming the Department of Buildings, both our regulations and our processes. Given our experience working with volunteer stakeholders and committees, the staff of Code Development and Technical Affairs were tasked with organizing those meetings, and shepherding hundreds of recommendations through the review process. These efforts were marked with the Deputy Commissioner Gus Sirakis' presentation on November 21st, announcing the implementation schedule to the full Commission body.

#### Existing Building Code (EBC)

The bulk of our text has been reviewed by the Law Department and compiled into our draft bill. We're also working with our consultant team in drafting a code commentary! This is an important milestone as we transition to a new regulatory scheme for alterations in existing buildings. The commentary text will help users understand both the new triggers and the specific technical requirements. With this important document, we hope to provide benefits of greater transparency and consistency for RDPs, permit-holders, and owners. We are looking forward to the legislation being introduced at Council in the first half of 2024.

#### Electrical Code (EC)

Our bill has cleared the legal review process at the Law Department and was shared with Council staff. As the city's administration works toward reducing carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels, we're confident that our proposed code will help facilitate the transition toward an electrified future. We hope to brief the Council on the many improvements in the text and look forward to a Council Introduction in early 2024. With that said, please feel free to express your support for the electrical code to the City Council.

#### Waterfront Code (WFC)

Like the EBC, our work on this new code for waterfront construction has been a long time in the making. Never before has the city been able to regulate construction on its 520 miles of waterfront with a code drafted for the purpose. Working with our consultant team, we have modified our workplan to regain some of the time lost during the covid contract pause. As the text is drafted, it is being reviewed internally by DOB, then by the assigned committee. Since our large kickoff meeting, we have been able to engage both the Administrative & Maintenance Requirements Committee; and the Use, Occupancy, Egress & Accessibility Committee. We hope to bring more chapters forward for committee review in the first half of 2024.

**Construction Code Revision**

Our periodic revisions to the construction codes have always been a large undertaking. This cycle is no different, in that regard. It is especially ambitious that we have embarked on another revision with these other ongoing code projects. Acknowledging the recent vintage of our 2022 code, we have taken the opportunity to revise our approach to construction code revision. During our large kickoff meeting over the summer, we explained our new proposal-driven process model. Shortly after, we invited our committee members to submit their proposals for code changes. Since that submission window closed at the end of September, DOB staff have been hard at work processing the 719 items we received and preparing their committee review documents. We have already begun work with three of our committees: Plumbing, Elevators & Conveyors, and Construction & Demolition Safety. More committees will commence in January.

Here's to a healthy, happy holiday season and a productive New Year!

With utmost sincerity and appreciation,

**Robert Holub, RA** | NCARB | LEED BD+C  
Executive Director

Code Development  
NYC Department of Buildings  
[RHolub@buildings.nyc.gov](mailto:RHolub@buildings.nyc.gov)

**The End**