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Highlighting activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect

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I Current Activites



June 20th, 2024
AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Bob Esnard calls to order the virtual meeting at 6:08PM.

Attendees:

Sara Djazayeri
Robert Esnard
Antonio Freda
Linda Infante
Ken A. Koons, Jr.
Ken H. Koons, Sr.
Julian Misiurski
Robert Markisz
Ofe Peterson
Matthew Rezkallo

Guest:

Canceled
[SlipNot Flooring](#)
Sponsorship/Presentation

Agenda / Discussion

1. Seminar Presentation:

The presenter, Brandon Guse, Sales Representative of SlipNot Flooring, called a half hour before the meeting indicating that he has to cancel his attending this meeting. He was driving home in a very strong storm and noticed all the streetlights and buildings were without power. As he could not contact his wife at home. He wanted to alert us that he had planned to do the virtual presentation from home and that he may have an electric power problem.

When he arrived, there was no power and the power company would not be able to restore it for 12 plus hours. Therefore, Brandon requested that the chapter reschedule his presentation. The chapter members agreed to move the SlipNot presentation and company sponsor ship until the fall and October's AIA meeting. Since we have been doing virtual AIA meetings over many years, this will be the first such rescheduling of a meeting event due to a power outage.

2. **Adoption of Minutes**

Bob Esnard, the chapter secretary, indicated due to the chapter Awards Event on May 30th, 2024, there are no May Minutes. Therefore, the last AIA Bronx Chapter meeting minutes are for April 17th, 2024. He then briefly outlined the minutes and then asked if there are any changes to the April minutes. As there were none, a motion was made by Julian Misiurski to accept the March 2024 meeting minutes and Linda Infante seconded the motion. With no opposition to the April 17th, minutes, they are approved as submitted, and entered into the record.

3. **Schedule of next meetings**

The meeting schedule for the meetings through December 2024 was reviewed. It was pointed out that in the summer the chapter does not meet with full membership unless there are issues or the need for a pressing significant problem requiring it. Otherwise, the Chapter officers handle the operational activities until the first fall meeting in September.

Sara Djazayeri, the Chapter President presented the idea of having one or two meetings in person each year. Many of the meeting attendees agreed that in person meetings are socially and professionally important. The chapter has about half of its members as young associates, many whom the older members have never met. After a general discussion, the issue of a venue with parking and mass transit access that the Chapter can afford is the problem. The pre pandemic chapter meeting restaurant location on City Island is hard to get to without a car and now is charging a large fee to regularly use their meeting room. However, it was suggested that members rethink about where we could meet to try to schedule an in person session in late fall.

The next Meeting Dates are:

Sept 19, 2024,	6:00PM - (Virtual)
October 19, 2024,	6:00PM - (Virtual)
November 21, 2024,	6:00PM - (Virtual)
December 19,2024,	Holiday Luncheon (date tentative TBD)

4. **Mott Haven - 2 Tour:**

The Bronx Chapter on May 25, 2024, at 10:00am – 12:00pm for 2-CEU held its first Tour this year. It was a beautiful day and as we had done in the past, it was organized with the Bronx County Historical Society. The Tour was led by Roger McCormack, the Bronx County Director of Education and supported by Julian Misiurski the chapter’s Vice President. Julian indicated that the tour was popular with attendees but also received some feedback about its length. Shorter might have been better. He suggested we could stop more and assess/review specific buildings and historic details, as well as the importance of zoning in the tour neighborhood. All agreed that the tours are important and are pleasant way to socialize and easily gain CEU credits.

6. **Chapter Committees**

The Chapter Award Event for 2024

Sara Djazayeri was the developer, mastermind, and master of ceremonies for the **2024 Annual Empowerment Scholarship and Competition Award Event** on May 30, 2024. She reported on the event as a very successful activity due to the hard work and determined efforts of many chapter members specifically, Michael Goldblum, Bryan Zelnik, Ken Koons Jr. and Bob Esnard. In addition, there were many guests that included, the Chapter Vice President, Julian Misiurski and member Soany Marquez who took pictures. Also present, were the Dean of the CCNY Spitzer School of Architecture, Marta Gutman, and the President of the NY Chapter AIA Gregory Switzer.

Wonderfully, Sara negotiated the event to be sponsored and paid for by **Artistic Tile Company @** the A&D Building, 150 East 58th, Street, NYC, 10155. The event included drinks and a generous selection of hors d'oeuvres and allowed for a significant time for attendees to socialize and enjoy themselves. The event was split into gathering and a presentation celebrating CCNY the Student Studio Competition Awards and Student Pratt and CCNY Empowerment Grants.

Bronx Public Project/CCNY Studio Competition

Michael Goldblum had originally suggested the Student Competition two years ago which was a great success. This year working with Sara, he developed linkage with the Borough President, CCNY, NYC, and community leaders to work with the chapter. The competition site was a triangular lot it Hunts Point at Longfellow and Holms Streets in the South Bronx. The program for the project was to design a neighborhood structure that will be housing in addition to community/retail uses. The winning student teams and individual empowerment grantees were publicly announced, brought to the podium and presented their awards.

Appendix I - Annual Empowerment Scholarship and Competition Award Ceremony

Student Awards

Sara and Bryan Zelnik both worked with Pratt Institute, and the CCNY teaching faculty's, as well as school administrators in the selection of this year's Chapter Empowerment Grant Award program. Each school chose two candidates for \$1,000 cash grant.. In addition, the CCNY student design team 1st Place winners shared a \$1,000 award with the 2nd Place team splitting the \$600 prize.

The popularity and publicity of these chapter grants triggered an inquiry from the Columbia School of Architecture about expanding the Empowerment Grants to include two Columbia students. After a brief discussion, it was agreed to have Sara explore the feasibility and if the chapter budget for 2025 can accommodate it.

Appendix II - Awardees and Grants

Associate/License Exam

Linda Infante the head of the Bronx Chapter ARE Study group indicated that the second Associate/License Exam ARE Study Session will be on June 26th at 6:30PM. For this session, Bob Esnard will be illustrating "Cracks & A Case Study Façade Repair". Linda will publicize the session and email all members. Also, she created a flyer to be distributed and posted on line announcing the ARE study session date., she will attempt to get more participants by reaching out to other firms in order to get more than just Bronx Chapter members and associates.

Linda will point out that this session would be 1-1.5 hours and attendees will get one 1 Continuing Education credit.

Appendix III – Flyer - Cracks & A Case Study Façade Repair

7. **AIANY – Built by New York**

The chapter and its members annually receive an invitation from our state professional organization members to submit their architectural work for a competition and cash awards. Sara indicated that she is sure the members have many wonderful designs to choose from. So she suggested that although in past years the Bronx Chapter didn't participate, that this year should be different. As the **AIANYS Design Awards** are sponsored and held by the New State AIA Organization and offers each chapter in our state complimentary entry for two projects, if they are winners of the individual chapter's design award program for that year. This year we should take advantage of the offer for our members and the Bronx Chapter to get some public and professional exposure.

This Bronx Chapter Design Awards concept was discussed and it was agreed that the Chapter Executive Committee, composed of the Officers, the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary over the summer break, should investigate and develop a **Bronx Chapter Design Award 2024** program for member participation. The hope was that in the next weeks members would submit their design projects to the chapter Executive Committee for participation in the **AIANYS Design Awards 2024** program as the chapter selected projects.

Appendix IV – AIA Bronx Chapter Letter to AIANYS

8. **DOB – Update**

Tony Freda the chapter representative at the Architects' Council (ACNY) reported on two significant issues that were discussed at the council among many.

- There is a need for additional resources at DOB for staff.
And,
- The unbelievable rise in insurance costs throughout the construction industry.

Tony highlighted a reduction in DOB staff and a subsequent slowdown in agency tasks such as, plan examinations and inspections. Julian suspected that the budget of the DOB may have been reduced due to a shortage of vacancies across all of New York City. It was also discussed that the NYC budget is in terrible stresses due to the major number of city homeless and influx migrant issues.

Tony raised another important issue facing architects and the construction industry. The significant increase in insurance rates has affected all architects, contractors, and particularly those involved in hazardous work like scaffolding. One contractor shared with Tony how his annual insurance bill had exceeded \$300,000, making it difficult for him to earn a profit from his jobs. The high insurance costs were attributed to regulation and the risk of lawsuits, leading to some job sites being shut down. The increasing number of lawsuits and regulations in the construction industry are identified as the main issues affecting both architects, contractors and building owners. The members also noted that these issues, along with the rising insurance costs since the Covid-19 pandemic, might be deterring some people from wanting to invest in the NYC construction industry.

Additionally, other members identified the economic challenges the real estate industry building owners, particularly those of older buildings, face. They highlighted the high costs of

maintenance, the difficulty of securing funding for repairs, and the tendency of owners to leave protective sidewalk sheds up indefinitely. They also noted the legal and financial risks this strategy poses. Further topics reviewed included the historical context of the 1970s and 80s, where people began abandoning buildings due to high costs and over government regulation, and the current trend of insurance companies avoiding high-risk buildings. The discussion concluded with the hope that these increasing costs can be addressed by the industry and will not lead another destructive round of properties being abandoned.

8. **New Business**

Sara Djazayeri briefed members on two subjects; the *Chapter Website* and the expansion of *In person events and /meetings*.

- **Chapter Website**

Bill Caplan, who for many years has been doing a wonderful job as a volunteer webmaster, updating our website, is unable to continue which means, that the chapter will need a new website manager starting in September 2024. Sara has two volunteers, Jessica Tasmin and Mona LI to develop and update the site in September. However, we can use some additional help to regularly maintain and update it. If any member is interest please contact Sara at; info@studio360s.com .

- **In-person Meetings**

A proposal was suggested members to meet/know each other, either a normal monthly chapter meeting or a special social event perhaps in a Manhattan location, at 6:00 or 6:30PM be held inviting newer associate members to meet not only older members but each other. This was tabled with the Sara requesting that members think about how and where this location could be. The goal is for it to be easily accessible, where members can get to interact with each other, in person.

Julian Misiurski raised an item that was reviewed at an AIASNY board meeting he attended concerning the **AIA National Scholarship Reimbursement** program which matches AIA local chapter efforts supporting architectural students. He reported that National AIA has a program to match local chapter grants to offset the Chapter's current costs up to \$500, by splitting at least one of the chapter \$1,000 grants. Julian volunteered to research the idea and will report on it at the September Meeting.

9. **Adjournment**

As no additional new business was presented a motion to adjourn was made by Linda Infante and unanimously seconded,

The meeting ended at 7:33PM.

III. **Next meeting:**

Thursday, April 18th, 2024.

6:00PM Virtual meeting via ZOOM

ZOOM meeting link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766>

IV Appendix

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Appendix I

Annual Empowerment Scholarship and Competition Award Ceremony

- Invitation



Sponsored by Artistic Tile Company – A&D Building
150 East 58th Street, 9th Floor,
NYC , 10155

- Some of the Bronx Chapter Members attending



- **New York Chapter President and Bronx Chapter President**



- **Dean of Architecture School - CCNY**



- **CCNY 2024 Design Competition Winners**



Appendix II
Awardees and Grants

Competition CCNY Studio Winners:

- 1st place**
- Shiva Abbaszadeh \$400
 - Leora Santoriello \$400
 - Nily Baratian \$400

- 2nd Place**
- Gema Cabrera \$200
 - David Stinga \$200

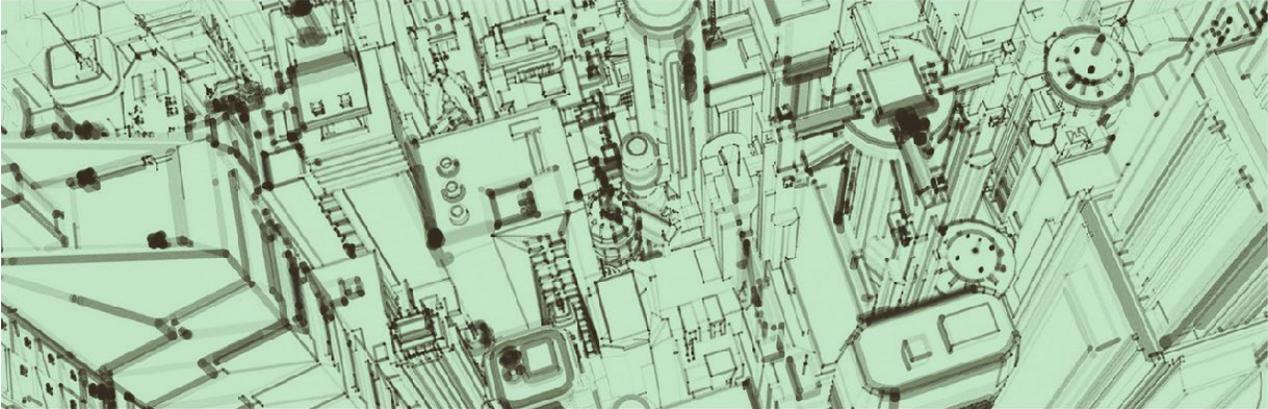
Grant Winners:

- CCNY**
- Alba Hysaj \$1,000
 - Jaydin Parker \$1,000

- Pratt**
- Laura Jimenez \$1,000
 - Crystar Lopez \$1,000

Total Grants Awarded for 2024 = \$5,600

Appendix III
Flyer - Cracks & A Case Study Façade Repair



ARE 5.0: PDD TOPIC: Cracks and their causes **JUNE 26, 2024@ 6:30 P.M.-7:30 P.M.**
An in depth look at case study relating to crack patterns in buildings and their underlining causes.
PLACE: Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766>

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: Robert Esnard, AIA, Secretary
Hosted By: Linda P. Infante, Assoc. AIA - Linda@build-tech.org

SESSION 2
ADMIT 1



Appendix IV AIA Bronx Chapter Letter to AIANYS

Bronx Chapter Design Awards for 2024;

As in past years AIANYS has held a statewide annual awards program which the Bronx Chapter or individual members did not participate in. The AIANYS Design Awards are sponsored and held by the New State AIA Organization which offers each chapter in our state complimentary entry for two projects if they are winners of the individual chapter's design award program for that year.

Over the last Months, several members recommended that this year, 2024, the chapter should publicize the offer and participate. Therefore, in May the chapter received the AIANYS Design Awards for 2024 and in June President Sara Djazayeri indicated that we would participate. The chapter requested members to submit their projects for the Executive Committee of the Chapter to review/consider and select the projects for entry to the Awards program. This committee is composed of the chapter officers; the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

On July 15, 2024, the Chapter invited members to participate. Then reminded them on July 20, 2024, of the opportunity and indicated that submissions must be received by email before July 31, 2024, at 5:00PM.

Of the projects the Chapter received there was a unanimous decision to select the following two projects for submission:

Rivera Toyota Automobile Dealership, Mt. Kisco, Westchester, New York Bran Zelnik, AIA
Young Israel Ohab Zedek Synagogue, Riverdale, Bronx, New York Michael Goldblum, AIA

This selection had to be submitted on or before August 23, 2024, and is attached as submitted on August 7, 2024.

Bob Esnard, AIA
Secretary



Cell: 917- 318 - 7097

The End