



AIA BRONX CHAPTER APRIL NEWSLETTER

Published by

Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee Info@studio360s.com

Highlighting activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect

Events and Education Opportunities

- **AIA Bronx & AIA Westchester + Hudson Valley**
Summer School 2026 on Tuesday nights through July and August
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Rockman Windows & Doors, Elmsford, NY 10523
[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER](#)
- **The AIANYS Design Awards**
Showcase your work before a distinguished jury of design professionals
Receive statewide recognition for design excellence.
Celebrate your achievements at the first in-person Design Awards program since 2019.
Submission Deadline: August 10, 2026
[Click Here to Learn More and Submit Your Project](#)
- **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



June 18, 2026

AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

The virtual meeting started at 6:04PM.

Attendees:

Antonio Freda
Bryan Zelnik
Julian Misiurski
Ken A. Koons, Jr.
Linda P. Infante
Michael Goldblum
Nico Zapata
Robert Esnard
Sara Djazayieri

Guest:

Christine Cole & Igor Zgodic
Architectural Sales Rep., NYC
Polycor
1 332 227 3477
Christine.cole@polycor.com
polycor.com

Agenda

1 Seminar Presentation

The meeting began with **Christine Cole**, Polycor's New York City Architectural Representative, presenting an overview of Polycor, a natural stone company based in Quebec City with operations across North America. She outlined the company's history, brands, and notable projects, including the Empire State Building and the Lincoln Memorial. The presentation covered the benefits and features of natural stone, standard testing methods, and fabrication processes, with a focus on the geological aspects and types of natural stone used in architecture and design.

Natural Stone Architecture Properties

Christine provided a detailed explanation of the geological formation and properties of natural stones used in architecture, covering metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary rocks. She discussed how stone properties like density, absorption rate, and strength affect performance in different applications, emphasizing the importance of considering environmental and usage factors beyond just aesthetics. Christine also explained modern extraction methods for granite, including the use of pneumatic and mechanical drills, diamond-embedded wire saws, and techniques for safely removing large stone blocks from quarries.

Natural Stone Selection and Installation

Natural stone selection and installation methods were illustrated covering key considerations for vertical and horizontal applications including weight load, joint design, anchor selection, and finish requirements.

The importance of understanding material variation and working with suppliers close to the source for accurate specifications were explained. The discussion included specific questions about onyx applications, pricing for wall tiles, and customization options for stone installations, with Igor providing technical details on sealing and installation processes.

Summary and Contact Information

Christina summarized Polycor organization as a vertically integrated natural stone company with over 160 years of experience. Through company-owned quarries and fabrication facilities across the U.S. and Canada, Polycor delivers project-specific natural stone components for commercial, institutional, infrastructure, landscape, and residential applications with stringent quality control, dimensional accuracy, and supply chain reliability. Polycor is responsible for block production, precision fabrication, cut-to-size architectural stone, slabs, tile, façade systems, hardscape products, and custom-engineered stone solutions. She concluded the presentation offering members to feel free to contact her and senior professional staff who are willing to assist on any project who can review drawings and real time assist on issues.

Polycor Contact Information:

Architectural Sales Representative

Christine Cole 332-227-3477

Senior Professional Staff

Igor Zgodic 202-870-2102

Hugo Vega 212-380-6649

2. **Adoption of Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:10 PM. The minutes of April 16, 2026, **Bob Esnard** briefly reviewed the major topics discussed during the April meeting, including **Sarah Jazayeri's** elevation to Fellowship, the planning of the Annual Awards Event and University Heights tour, discussions regarding Chapter organization, committee restructuring, and the possibility of reducing the number of monthly meetings. Since no corrections or additions were offered, **Tony Freda** made a motion to approve the April 16, 2026 meeting minutes, which was seconded by **Julian Misiurski**. Hearing no objections, the motion carried **unanimously and the minutes were adopted**. Bob also shared that he had begun using artificial intelligence to assist with drafting meeting minutes, noting that while technology significantly improves efficiency, careful editing is still required to eliminate occasional inaccuracies and typographical errors.

3. **Schedule for Next Meetings**

The Chapter traditionally does not meet during the summer months but reserves the option to schedule a special meeting if urgent business arises. Therefore, the next regular meeting will be held virtually in the fall in September, October, and November, all as usually to begin at 6:00 p.m. The scheduled dates of the next meetings were outlined, with the proposed next chapter meeting dates as:

September 17, 2026,	6:00PM – (Virtual)
October 15, 2026,	6:00PM – (Virtual)
November 19, 2026,	6:00PM – (Virtual)
December 17, 2026,	Holiday (TBD)

Appendix I – AIA Bronx – Leadership, Committees & Initiatives

4. **AIA Bonx Chapter Awards Event**

Members reflected on the success of the Student Competition 2026 AIA Bronx Chapter Awards Event. **Linda Infante** described the event as beautiful, noting the excellent attendance, positive atmosphere, successful raffle, and the opportunity to see students representing multiple architectural schools. **Sarah Jazayeri** reported receiving appreciative emails from several school deans thanking the AIA Bronx Chapter for organizing the program. She noted that attendance exceeded expectations, with approximately 65 guests attending instead of the anticipated 30 to 35. Despite the larger-than-expected crowd, the venue accommodated everyone comfortably, and the event was considered highly successful. **Bob Esnard** praised **Sara** for her outstanding leadership in organizing the event and highlighted that, for the first time, all six New York City architecture schools were represented.

Bryan Zelnik complimented the overall quality of the awards event and had conversations with the student recipients who demonstrated how much they appreciated the recognition and encouragement they received. He also shared that; one winning student invited him to visit Cooper Union to view the students' work. However, Bryan expressed one concern regarding the inclusion of a musical performance during the ceremony. While recognizing the performers' efforts, he felt the performance distracted from the primary purpose of honoring the students and suggested that future ceremonies devote most of the time directly to student recognition and interaction.

Sara explained that the performers had contacted her seeking an opportunity to promote their Off-Broadway production. Because their performance centered on the theme of pursuing dreams, she believed it complemented the event's message of encouraging future architects. She acknowledged that opinions regarding the performance were mixed and welcomed constructive feedback for future planning. It was agreed that while artistic performances can add value, they should never overshadow the students who are being recognized.

5. **AIA National Convention**

The Chapter then received a report from **Sara Jazayeri** on the 2026 AIA National Convention. She attended the convention in San Diego as an awardee and as the Bronx Chapter representative. She summarized the national leadership elections, noting that **Ilya Azarov** continues serving as AIA President while **Joyce Owens** of Florida was elected President for 2027. She also shared that New York candidate **Willy Zambrano** from Queens had campaigned strongly but was not elected. Ms. Jazayeri described participating in numerous educational programs for Fellows and proudly reported that she officially received her Fellowship medal during the investiture ceremony held in a beautifully restored historic theater. She shared that seventy-eight new Fellows were inducted nationwide, including eight from New York State, one from Brooklyn, and she from the Bronx. Family members traveled from across the country to attend the ceremony, making the recognition especially meaningful. Members congratulated Ms. Jazayeri on this significant professional achievement for her and our chapter.

6. **Committee Reports**

Committee Updates were generally reviewed with short discussions, of the activities of the Student Competition, the Empowerment Grants and the Emerging Professionals & Women in Architecture. It was agreed that all were active and successful and that the Chapter intends to continue its current program structure, and it was emphasized that they are intended to assist deserving students and beginning architects.

The Empowerment grants have been very effective as they are based on need rather than simply recognizing the highest academic achievement. It was observed that all six of New York architectural schools have embraced the program because it allows each institution to identify a student who would benefit most from the award. **Brian Zelnik** was recognized for his efforts and strengthening relationships with the architecture schools while expanding the Chapter's educational outreach. The Chapter also acknowledged the need to continue rebuilding committee participation for Emerging Professionals (EP) and Women in Architecture (WIA) as academic schedules change each year and new volunteers become involved.

7. **Bronx Chapter Spring Tour**

Julian Misiurski reported on May 30, 2026, spring tour that was on the weekend following Memorial Day, despite intermittent rain showers, the tour was very successful and attracted nearly twenty participants. The group toured the Bronx Community College and several significant architectural buildings throughout the **University Heights Tour** area. He described the tour area, including historic buildings on the former NYU campus of architectural contributions by Marcel Breuer, along with New York's linear park over the city's aqueduct features. Members noted that attendance was stronger than in previous years which also included numerous architects from outside the Bronx, particularly from Westchester, reflecting increased interest in Chapter programming. **Bob Esnard** commented that the stronger participation by architects, especially younger professionals, was encouraging and demonstrated growing engagement within the profession. This was probably due to the distribution of flyers and information posted both on the Bronx chapter and listings shared with the Westchester chapter websites. These tours are a bi-annual chapter event that brings together architects, historians, and members of the public for an exploration of architectural history within the Bronx. Specifically, these are organized jointly with **Julian Misiurski** representing the chapter and with the **Bronx Historical Society's** **Roger McCormick** coordinating the tours historical research and programming.

8. **Bronx Chapter Treasurers Audit**

On behalf of **Treasurer Ken Koons**, who was unable to attend the meeting. **Bob Esnard** presented the Treasurer's Audit report. He explained that the Chapter remains financially stable and has maintained a positive financial position for many years. The budget spending to date is consistent with spending at **\$10,000** under appropriations at **\$24,000**. The chapter currently has \$60,000 in its account. He emphasized the importance of maintaining transparency regarding Chapter finances and noted that the National AIA encourages chapters to discuss financial matters periodically with their membership. He added that the Chapter has recently increased spending to support additional programming while continuing to manage its finances responsibly.

Appendix I – AIA Bronx – Budget June 2026.

8. DOB Update

Tony Freda provided a DOB update engaging members in an extensive discussion regarding ongoing concerns with the New York City Department of Buildings. Significant delays in plan reviews and approvals, explaining that projects often remain unreviewed for several months despite statutory review timelines. He described numerous instances in which simple projects required repeated follow-up before receiving attention and stated that similar conditions exist throughout all five boroughs. Members expressed concern that **unnecessary objections, inconsistent reviews, and communication failures have significantly delayed** construction projects and increased costs for both architects and clients.

The discussion expanded to the broader causes of these delays. Members suggested that insufficient staffing, low compensation, inadequate training, employee turnover, and limited political attention have all contributed to declining service at the Department of Buildings. Several participants noted that experienced examiners frequently leave for higher-paying positions in the private sector, leaving less experienced staff to conduct plan reviews.

Sarah Jazayeri asked whether the Chapter could collaborate with other AIA chapters to advocate for improvements. **Tony** responded that meaningful change would likely require broader political involvement from elected officials and the public, emphasizing that delays in permitting ultimately discourage investment, reduce housing production, and negatively affect neighborhoods throughout New York City.

Linda Infante suggested that architects, engineers, developers, and homeowners could collectively advocate for reform and even organize a public demonstration if necessary. Members agreed that any effort should focus on constructive solutions rather than criticism alone.

Treasurer **Ken Koons** recently met with the new Bronx Borough Commissioner, Chintan Desai, and indicated that Commissioner Desai expressed interest in meeting with the Chapter. Members enthusiastically supported **scheduling a dedicated meeting with the Commissioner** rather than incorporating the discussion into a regular Chapter meeting. Members agreed that such a meeting would provide an opportunity for an open and respectful exchange regarding communication, permitting challenges, and possible improvements to the review process.

9. New Business

There were two items briefly reviewed for members attention **Summe Summer School** for CEU Credits and the DOB **Bronx Commissioner meeting**.

- Members were reminded that **AIA Bronx Chapter** has an agreement with the AIA **Westchester+ Hudson Valley Chapter** to offer a summer school program once a week where throughout the summer, for

members to assist in satisfying their state licensing continuing education requirements. The sessions are offered in person in lower Westchester County.

Appendix II – Summer School for CEU Credits

- Members agreed that improving communication with the Department of Buildings should remain one of the Chapter's highest priorities. Members hoped that direct dialogue with the Bronx chapter meeting with a **Borough Commissioner's Meeting** could begin building a more collaborative relationship between the Chapter and the Department of Buildings.

10. Adjournment

As there being no further business, the meeting concluded with wishes for a wonderful summer. The next Chapter meeting will be held virtually in the fall at the September meeting.,
The **June 2026** meeting ended at **7:41PM**.

II Next meeting:
Thursday, September 17, 2026, @ 6:00PM
Virtual - ZOOM meeting link
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766>

Appendix I – AIA Bronx – Budget June 2026

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Appendix II – Summer School for CEU Credits

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Appendix I – AIA Bronx – Budget June 2026

Adopted 2026 Bronx Chapter Budget		
EXPENSE CATEGORY	AMOUNT	Spent
ACCOUNTING	\$ 400	\$ 300
Annual tax filing and bookkeeping services.		
AIA COMPLIANCE AND CONSULTANTS	\$ 750	
Required AIA reporting, filings, and consultant support.		
ARCHITECTS COUNCIL	\$ 550	\$ 660
Annual dues to participate in the statewide Architects Council of New York (ACNY).		
COMMITTEE - FELLOWSHIP FAIA	\$ 1,000	
Support for AIA Fellowship candidates (FAIA = Fellow of the American Institute of Architects).		
COMMITTEE - STUDENT EMPOWERMENT	\$ 7,000	\$ 6,500
Scholarships, competition awards, printing, event materials, and ceremony support.		
COMMITTEE - WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE & EMERGING PROFESSIONALS	\$ 1,000	
Workshops, networking initiatives, and competition awards.		
COMMUNICATIONS / MARKETING / DIGITAL PRESENCE	\$ 2,700	\$ 618
Website hosting, Zoom subscription, social media, and marketing.		
EMERGENCY RESERVE FUND	\$ 5,000	
Mandatory safety buffer for unexpected or urgent chapter needs.		
INSURANCE	\$ 2,200	
Annual liability insurance required for chapter operations.		
LEGAL — \$1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 200
Legal review, contract support, bylaws updates, and compliance needs.		
MEETING VENUE	\$ 1,000	
Covers costs for in-person chapter meetings, and events		
MEETING EXPENSES FOR OFFICERS/DIRECTORS	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,518
Local travel, meals, and incidental expenses for leadership meetings.		
MEMBERSHIP / ASSOCIATES SUPPORT	\$ 400	
Student sponsorships, fee assistance, or small stipends for emerging professionals.		
TOTAL	\$ 24,000	\$ 9,796
As of June 1st Chapter Bank Account Balance		\$ 60,000

Appendix II – Summer School for CEU Credits
AIA Bronx & AIA Westchester + Hudson Valley

AIA BRONX
AND
AIA WESTCHESTER + HUDSONSON VALLEY
SUMMER SCHOOL 2025
EARN AIA CREDITS ALL SUMMER LONG

Date: Tuesday nights through July and August

Time: 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm, includes dinner

Price: AIA \$25 / Assoc AIA \$15 / Non Member \$35 - **At checkout you can purchase multiple tickets/nights, include dates of sessions attending**

Discount if purchase all 6 Sessions - AIA \$125 / Assoc AIA \$75 / Non Member \$175

Credits: 2 AIA HSW PDH

Venue: Rockman Windows & Doors, 444 Saw Mill River Rd, Elmsford, NY 10523

Join us for our Summer School Sessions! Each evening features an independent seminar, and you can enjoy a discount if you sign up for all sessions. Network with peers, gain new insights, and enjoy provided refreshments. **ALL CLASSES SAME TIME SAME LOCATION**

July 8

Course: Roof Preservation: A Sustainable Option and Traffic Coatings: PMMA/PUMA Technology

Speakers: Tremco

July 15

Course: Deflection and Performance Considerations In Residential Wood- Framed Floor Design

Speakers: Weyenhauser

July 22

Course:

Speakers: OLA Consulting Engineers

July 29

Course: Natural Stone and Green Design and Why Chose Natural Stone

Speakers: UNI Stone

August 5

Course: How to Intelligently Visualize the Build World® with Above| Below-Ground Data|

Your Secret Weapon: Digital Twins for Small Firms

Speakers: Existing Conditions

August 12

Course: Durable & Resilient Retrofits – Solving with stone wool insulation| Understanding
Advancing Wall System Design around Continuous Insulation

Speakers: Rockwool

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER](#)

Register here

THE END