



AIA BRONX CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Published by
Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee Info@studio360's.com
Highlighting activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect

Events and Education Opportunities

- **AIA Conference on Architecture & Design**
June 4-7, Boston
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Exhibit Hall A-B
[AIA Conference on Architecture & Design 2025](#)
- **AIA Environments for Aging Conference + Expo**
APRIL 26-29, 2025 DESIGN FOR AGING (DFA) CENTRAL BANK CENTER
430 WEST VINE STREET, LEXINGTON, KY40507
Network with peers while learning the latest innovations and best practices in senior friendly design for long-term and residential care settings.
Conference **Register**
- **Bronx Chapter Welcomes New Members**
Ellianys Betances, Associate AIA
Riffath Sultana, Associate AIA
Michael Marun, Associate AIA
Eric Schneider, AIA
Nicole Tsai, AIA
Jason Ventura Tecua, Associate AIA

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I Current Activites



February 20, 2025

AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

The virtual meeting started at 6:03PM.

Attendees:

Antonio Freda
Bryan Zelnik
Hal Dorfman
Julian Misiurski
Ken A. Koons, Jr.
Ken H. Koons, Sr.
Matthew Rezkallo
Michael Goldman
Robert Esnard
Sara Djazayeri

Guest:

Jean Dumitrescu
North East Sales Manager
Savaria, Handicare & Matot
4350 Highway 13 | Laval QC H7R 6E9
800.931.5655 ext. 255 | 450.254.0118 direct
jdumitresc@savaria.com

Agenda

1. Seminar Presentation

The presenter, Jean Dumitrescu, North East Sales Manager, of Saveria, Handicare & Matot, presented a seminar "Vertical Platform Lifts & Limited Application Elevators". He utilized slides and illustrations of physical examples how the codes/rules can be satisfied safely and economically.

Elevator Codes, and Safety

Jean illustrated the different elevator codes, emphasizing their importance in ensuring safety and accessibility. He discussed the advantages and limitations of each type, including hydraulic and screw drive technologies, and the various platform configurations available. Jean also highlighted the challenges of retrofit applications, especially when dealing with tight spaces and the need for shaftway construction. He emphasized the importance of planning guides in determining the necessary shaft size and the minimum running clearance required by code. He addressed the gray area in the location of the disconnect box, urging elevator contractors to consult with each local code for their specific requirements.

Wheelchair Lift Electrical Requirements

Jean discussed the electrical requirements and accessibility of wheelchair lifts. He explained that most 750-pound weight capacity wheelchair lifts run on a simple 120 line, 20 amp with a fuse, disconnect, and an auxiliary contactor. He also mentioned that standalone options like automatic door operators and ventilation fans are connected to the main control board

discussed the ideal setup for a wheelchair lift, which includes a type 2 platform, with on off at of the lift. Jean emphasized the importance designing for safety during power failures. He also opposite sides and a 3-inch pit or a ramp. Jean further explained the options of call stations and the need for emergency power in case of power failure.

Wheelchair Lift Accessibility and Codes

Jean discussed the accessibility codes for wheelchair lifts, emphasizing the importance of automatic door operators for cost efficiency and user convenience. Jean also explained the differences between the two families of codes, ADA and ANSI, and the requirements for automatic door operators. Jean highlighted the need for wider doors on 90-degree platforms and the necessity of hands-free phones for communication. Jean also discussed the maximum weight capacity for wheelchair lifts, the need for constant pressure, and the requirement for standby power in accessible means of egress. Sara Djazayeri asked about the need for a shaft under the lift, and Jean clarified that a shaft is not necessary for commercial settings with less than 60 inches of total vertical travel. Jean also explained the need for a ramp in some cases and the flexibility of regulations in residential settings.

Limited-Use Elevators in Commercial Settings

Jean discussed the use of limited-use/limited application elevators (LULAs) in commercial settings, particularly in older buildings or additions where a full passenger elevator is not necessary. LULAs are limited to 25 feet of travel, have a maximum speed of 30 feet per minute, and are designed for reduced mobility users. They are available in three cab configurations and are generally less expensive to maintain than full passenger elevators. Jean also mentioned that LULAs require a machine room and two high voltage lines, and that they are not as common in New York City as in other areas. An attendee asked about the availability of LULAs for bath handicapped and non-handicapped can use. Jean confirmed that they are not keyed or restricted in any way. Jean also explained the time period for LULA orders to be manufactured, which typically range from two to six weeks.

Summary

Jean Dumitrescu concluded the presentation reviewing the unique features and benefits of using Lift Platforms and the benefits of using Limited Use Elevators by emphasizing their adjustability and energy efficiency. He explained that LED systems can be designed to fit specific spaces, unlike traditional lighting systems which are often limited to fixed sizes. Jean also mentioned the possibility of customizing platform and elevators to fit specific design/construction needs. Finally, Jean indicated that he and the employees of the NYC area contractors are willing to assist in the design development stages of any member's projects. He can be reached at:

Jean Dumitrescu
North East Sales Manager
Savaria, Handicare & Matot
4350 Highway 13 | Laval QC H7R 6E9
800.931.5655 ext. 255 | 450.254.0118 direct

Here are the contact information for our two Elevator Contractors in the NYC area;

Mobility Elevator & Lift Co.

4 York Avenue
West Caldwell, NJ 07006
T: (800) 441-4181
Web site: www.mobilityelevator.com

Day Elevator & Lift

147 East 2nd Street, Suite 101
Mineola, NY 11501
T: (516) 486-5438
Web site: www.dayelevator.com

2. Adoption of Minutes

Bob Esnard started the business portion of the meeting shared on the screen the minutes of the last meeting and a short discussion of a few items.

He followed-up with the agenda item on the AIA Accreditation of our chapter’s activities. As an update, we were supposed to hear back from them in February 2025, however, we have not. In the past years, there was one instance that they had an issue with our submission and we heard from them immediately. Since we haven’t heard back from the Board, its he’s assumed everything is in order until we hear differently.

Also, the chapter’s holiday luncheon was terrific and was arranged and photographed by Sara Djazayeri. All expressed a heartfelt “thank you” to Sara for all she did to make the event happen and be successful.

Bob opened the floor for any objections to the January 2025 minutes. As no objections were raised and the January 2025 minutes are unanimously approved.

3. Schedule for Next Meetings

The schedule of the next meetings was discussed, and reviewed the proposed meeting dates for the first quarter of 2025:

March 20th (virtual)	6:00PM
April 17th (virtual).	6:00PM
Event in May	To be determined
June 19, 2025	6:00PM – (Virtual

The May meeting is planned to be converted into a May in-person public Awards Event, like prior years celebrating the Chapter’s Empowerment Student Grant and a CCNY Student Competition of a Public Project was also discussed with the location to be determined.

Although, the meetings in March, April, June, and September the meetings have sponsors it is a time consuming task to find sponsors. As currently most sponsors prefer in-person presentations as they did in the past.

4. Chapter Committees

Sara Djazayeri updated us on the Student Competition and the Empowerment grants.

Student Competition

A few hours before this meeting, Sara had a Zoom meeting with some people from the city, the team, and community members. Michael also attended this meeting. Explaining this year’s project, Sara explained the project will be the Old Bronx Borough Courthouse, which has been vacant for 45 years, in the Melrose neighborhood. In attendance at the meeting was a historian who shared a lot of interesting facts of the old courthouse. Sara was enthusiastic about learning about the court house history. For example, when the court house was built in 1905 it had a projected cost of \$800k. However, in the end the building cost the government \$2M. In today’s dollars, this amount is equivalent to approximately \$64.2M. Fortunately, the result was a gorgeous Beaux-Arts style building that was in use for many years.

Sara indicated that it was great to have such a variety of attendees at the meeting giving interesting suggestions. Some community members voiced the preferences, which included a pool, a community center, and assistance for medical services for people who do not have healthcare. Other suggestions included converting the building into something more residential. The building has three floors and that one suggestion was to convert these floors to five floors since the ceilings are so high. In addition, students gained information about what the community envisioned as uses for the empty courthouse. Members of the community and the students visited the neighborhood to better understand the physical relationship to the site. They concluded the most of the community members in attendance wanted a healthcare clinic to assist and encourage people to stay healthy.

The conclusion is that the project is moving forward on time and there is no doubt this will be another great year and this is going to be large and impressive competition.

Appendix I - Old Bronx County Court House

Empowerment Grant

Regarding our chapter's scholarship grants, Sara indicated that Brian Zelnik has been heading this effort and very effectively. They collected applications from several schools. Columbia University did not respond, then, yesterday morning we received an email informing us that they have a student who wanted to participate. Currently, we now have five schools but the budget for four student grants and our chapter has a budget of \$4000 for four students. Brian's had an **amazing/generous** idea to solve the budget issue. Brian volunteered to donate the needed \$1000 in the names of former officers of the Bronx Chapter, his father Martin Zelnik, AIA, and grandfather Simon Zelnik, FAIA. He will support the Cooper Union student as, that is where they both attended. In fact, his grandfather is in Cooper Union's Hall of Fame. Everyone expressed appreciation for Brian's generosity.

Finally, Sara and Brian confirmed the schools who are participating which are CCNY, Cooper Union, Pratt, Parsons, NYIT. Bob says this is really great and a perfect solution to the situation. Members at the meeting again thanked Brian for his generosity.

5. Chapter Nomination for Fellowship

After last month's meeting concerning a Bronx chapter member being elevated to AIA Fellowship status, Sara Djazayeri the chapter president indicated she would like to apply and that in order to be considered for this year she needed to the Chapter had to support her application prior to this March meeting. During discussions, the board officers decided that it would be very positive for our chapter to have a member elected to fellowship status. The chapter officers discussed her nomination and fully supported her submission and due to the pending deadline, which was last week, directed the chapter Secretary to send the recommendation meeting the deadline on time and in anticipation of the full board ratifying the nomination at this meeting.

The issue was opened for a members review/discussion which was whole heartedly positive. In addition to the officers' confirmation of Sara, many members spoke in favor and everyone was on board. Therefore, as no objections were expressed and, with unanimous approval Sara will be the Bronx our chapter's nominee for fellowship status.

Sara thanked Bob, Julian, Brian, Michael and other members who support her efforts. She also learned, the process is complicated, requires a lot of work and success is not guaranteed. Members indicated that he will support her in any way and wish her luck and success.

Appendix II – Fellowship Nomination of Sara Djazayeri

6. **DOB – Update**

Tony Freda is the Chapter's representative to the "Architects' Council of New York", ACNY, although he had to leave this meeting prematurely, reported that the last month's ACNY meeting was mostly about budget and some DOB rules and regulations unrelated to Bronx issues. However, Bob informed the attendees that the chapter received its annual bill from the council. The bill was forwarded to our treasurer for payment. He pointed out that even if sometimes a little late we always pay this bill. The Council is one of the few organizations that represent architects who are not Manhattan or large project oriented. Keeping the council operational and lobbying for us is very important to the small practitioner and applicants who are involved with the day by day DOB New York city governmental process.

7. **New Business**

Two items were raised;

Participating in this year's AIANY Chapter Competition

Bob Esnard raised a new item concerning last year's "abbreviated", **2025 Chapter Competition AIANY – Built by New York**. The chapter and its members only had a limited time to participate and prepare submissions. Unfortunately, as a chapter, we did not win however, the exposure is always good. There is a great number of chapters who apply each year so the fact that we didn't win isn't a negative. The state has this design effort every year if we want to be part of this year's effort perhaps, we should go forward, discuss if members would like to enter again. The chapter and its members annually receive an invitation from the New York 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 start sooner and hopefully more members with more advance notice can take advantage of the offer for our members and the Bronx Chapter to get some public and professional exposure.

After a short discussion it was agreed that that we should work on being a little more organized with our submission. Bob requested that if members are interested on working or have any suggestions of getting members interested on this Chapter completion they should directly contact him at; 917 318 7097 or by email at; bensard@dzco.com.

Julian Misiurski

Julian was only able to attend a portion of the meeting his father is very ill in the hospital. All the members thank him for attending at all and wished his father well and hoped for the best.

Note

As these minutes were being prepared it is with great regret the chapter learned that he lost his father as he passed away on March 3, 2025. The chapter expresses and sends its deep and heartfelt condolences to Julian and his family. May he rest in peace.

8. Adjournment

As no additional new business was presented a motion to adjourn was agreed to, and the meeting ended at **7:32PM**.

II Next meeting:

Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 6:00PM

Virtual - ZOOM meeting link

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

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Old Bronx County Court House

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Fellowship Nomination of Sara Djazayeri

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Appendix I Old Bronx County Court House



Current View

The courthouse was built between 1905 and 1914 near Boston Road, Third Avenue, St. Anns Avenue, and 161st Street. The Bronx Branch of the New York City Criminal Court remained here until 1977 when the city formally sealed the doors. It is a National Register of Historic Places listing and a New York City Landmark.

Appendix II Fellowship Nomination of Sara Djazayeri



Dear Suzanne and Members of the AIANY Fellows Committee,

On behalf of the AIA Bronx Board of Directors, I am honored to formally nominate **Sara Djazayeri** for elevation to Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects (FAIA).

Sara's exceptional contributions to the field of architecture, her unwavering commitment to mentorship, and her leadership in advancing the profession make her a distinguished candidate for this honor. As a respected architect, educator, and advocate, she has played a pivotal role in shaping the architectural community, particularly through her work with underserved communities, her dedication to professional education, and her impactful leadership as President of AIA Bronx.

The Board of Directors at AIA Bronx fully supports Sara's nomination, recognizing her as a leader whose work embodies the highest standards of the profession. Her achievements in practice, education, and service exemplify the values of the AIA and the meaningful contributions that merit elevation to Fellowship.

Please accept this letter as our formal endorsement of Sara Djazayeri's nomination for FAIA. We appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing her application and look forward to seeing her continued contributions recognized at the highest level.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any more information.

Sincerely,

Bob Esnard
AIA-Bronx Secretary

The End