

**MnAPA Legislative Committee**  
**2/6/09 Meeting Notes**

**Legislative Committee**  
**Third Meeting for 2009 Legislative Season**  
**2:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**Coon Rapids City Hall**

**Present:** Bob Patton, Andrew Mack, Paul Mogush, Matt Brown, Michael Noonan, Blair Tremere, Mark Ostgarden, Brad Scheib, Steve Goltry, John Baker, John Sevald, Suzanne Rhees.

Andrew Mack, co-chair, called meeting to order at 2:15 pm

**Welcome and introductions**

**Approval of agenda and minutes** from previous meeting (with corrections from John Shepard). Agenda and minutes were approved.

**MnAPA Liaison Report** – No new report from Board at this point. Brad reported that the Board is planning a district-wide program with a legislative focus and seeking approval for cost. Program will include both citizen and professional planner training; to be held first in NW District, sponsored by District Director Wayne Hurley.

**Planners Day at Capitol Update** – Bob Patton provided a draft handout. Michael has contacted chairs of House and Senate Local Government Committees; trying to nail down meeting dates. Paul Mandell is working on securing a room for the 2 pm meeting. The Association of MN Counties offered free parking in their lot; so did the Coalition of Greater MN Cities. (Program Committee could also pay for parking or order passes in advance.) We are trying to get CM Credit for the 2 p.m. program. Content for program will be somewhat fluid to accommodate drop-ins from legislators; updates from affiliate organizations. We need to firm up outline by March meeting, since we need to specify names for CM credit. There was a suggestion that some lobbying firms would be available to provide legislative updates.

**DNR Rulemaking** – No formal update, see link from Jean. Bob reports that DNR is doing forums on agriculture several locations. Also note the EQB Rulemaking on Environmental Review Rules – a set of hearings are coming up around the state. Changes under discussion include thresholds for shorelands and cumulative effects – adjustments per recent court case. Changes proposed in AUARs would make the process more like the EIS, with a scoping process.

Mark – See the LMC report on state rules and mandates. Is this appropriate time for rulemaking? Note that shoreland rulemaking may be postponed. John Baker notes that this period is similar to 2003, when many mandates were retained because interest groups lobbied for them, with the result that little changed in '03. Discussion of federal mandates – inflow and infiltration remediation efforts based on pressure from Metro Council, based on federal pressure for compliance with EPA standards.

Discussion of federal stimulus legislation – rule of thumb that projects must be ‘done within 6 months starting in May’ John Baker noted the potential for exemptions from environmental review.

**Coordinator Staff Position Report** – still looking for more applicants. Members are urged to contact potential applicants. Next step will be to set up phone interview with Andrew, Dale and candidate(s).

**Activities at the Legislature**

- The AMC will not be coming in with recommendations for point-of-sale septic inspections this year

- Transportation – SF 152 would prohibit new toll roads. SF 287 and HF 430 would divert funds from public transportation to school transportation.
- Residential Construction Board being set up to ensure State Building Code is met. Builders and LMC are working on issues such as development agreements and moratoria. On moratoria, are considering requiring advance notification and grandfathering of applications that meet all city requirements.
- Agriculture: Green Acres changes would try to undue problems from last year's changes under which nonproductive land became ineligible for program. Nine bills are currently in play!
- Governor's budget calls for disbanding the EQB and transferring responsibilities to the PCA and elsewhere.
- Review of comp plans by neighboring jurisdictions in the Metro area could be reduced to 60 days from current 6 months.

### **Discussion of policy platforms:**

Brad reviewed the mission statement of the Legislative Committee, including “influencing” and “promoting” legislation, efforts to hire interns; tiered approach. Suggestion that our focus should be to mobilize for the 2010 legislative session. The web site needs to be a better resource for dialogue.

Discussion of the need for immediate responses vs. general policy statements, long-term issues. There is currently a vacuum at the legislature with regard to planning – most initiatives come from coalitions or special interests. A previous generation of legislators aware of planning issues were succeeded by less interested ones. Planning is not important enough to anyone's constituents. Note that improved uniform statutes (for PUDs for example) are being worked on elsewhere but not making it into Minnesota. Examples of bad legislative initiatives like HF 157 – zoning district for “owner-occupied homes” – are items we should be tracking.

Blair: “Keys to kingdom” are in the state enabling laws. Lack of a champion at state level makes reform more difficult. We will eventually need to find an author/sponsor of legislation – need to play offense and defense at same time. Board needs to authorize the LC to be ‘nimble’ – but do we watch, educate, or influence?

Mike: The Builders Association goes through the same process each year. Process involves producing short briefing papers on various topics; building expertise. Internet communications tools should make everything easier.

Brad drew a chart (see next page -- he will be sending a sketch) that shows a schedule for policy position development.

Mike W. and Blair volunteered to work on a white paper on legislative reform.

Discussion of how to organize first district roundtable – include update on what's happening at legislature. Discuss priorities among topics that Brad suggested.

- Next meeting – review process
- April – set up district forums

Other ideas: seek a chapter grant from APA to assist with leg reform? Andrew says that MnAPA will get help from APA if needed.

**Next meeting will be held at Cuningham Group offices, Friday, March 6, 2 – 4 pm**

Meeting adjourned approximately 4:15 pm.

