



NPC 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Another National Planning Conference (NPC) is in the books. Check out some of the highlights compiled below from (as the Executive Director for the Philadelphia Planning Commission, Eleanor Sharpe would say) the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

The new President of the American Planning Association (APA), Angela Brooks (FAICP) welcomed planners to NPC23 during the opening plenary. Ms. Brooks is the first black female to serve in this capacity at the organization. In her day job, Ms. Brooks is the Director of the Illinois Office of the Corporation for Affordable Housing, and currently serves on the Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Chicago. To learn more about Ms. Brooks, please click [here](#).

Angela Brooks is passionate about making sure everyone has access to quality affordable housing.



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To that end, Ms. Brooks has worked with the National League of Cities to launch an initiative called the Housing Supply Accelerator (HSA). According to the press release issued by both organizations, the HSA is being built as a national campaign to advance and incentivize local approaches to land use, zoning and housing development and preservation. To learn more about this new partnership and initiative, please click [here](#).

Ms. Brooks encouraged planners to check out the new [Equity in Zoning Policy Guide](#). The policy guide was approved by the APA Delegate Assembly on December 15, 2022 and ratified five days later by the APA Board of Directors. Ms. Brooks contends that many communities across the country are already in the throes of an affordable housing crisis, and that planners are well qualified and positioned to bring stakeholders together to address the issue. Ms. Brooks also encouraged those in attendance to review the [2023 Trends Report for Planners](#). The report outlines ‘existing, emerging and potential future trends.’

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To help local officials and elected leaders better understand ‘the unique value, skill set and outcomes that planners bring to their communities,’ APA will be rolling out a new promotional campaign in the coming months called **It Takes a Planner**. To learn more about this new exciting resource, please click [here](#). The selfie station outside the Exhibit Hall at the Convention Center in Philadelphia was just a snippet of things to come.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Membership Committee continues its work on a welcome packet for new APA members and planners in the state. If your department has any recent hires, or you know of new planners in the state, we would love to connect. The Committee is looking for additional leadership support. If you would be interested in taking a more active role in this work, please contact lockmanj@huntingtonwv.gov

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) has been working on several goals, such as creating Citizen Planner modules, seeking APA WV representation at state and national conferences, and ways to assist members on their AICP journey. During the March meeting, it was suggested that the committee seek funding to hire a firm to develop Citizen Planner modules.

After review and in consultation with the Executive Committee, PDC submitted a grant application to the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation in June for financial assistance. If approved, grant funds would be used to develop six (on-demand) modules:

- The Role of the Citizen Planner
- The Role of the Planning Commission
- The Importance and Impact of the Comprehensive Plan
- Survey of Plan Implementation Methods
- The Role of the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

Given the Chapter’s small budget and revenue stream, the Northern Brownfield Assistance Center (NBAC) in conjunction with the WVU Foundation has graciously agreed to serve as the financial sponsor for the application. PDC very much appreciates all the collaborative efforts and will be sure to keep the membership updated on this exciting opportunity.

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UPDATES (From Page 2)

Please be aware that Patricia Usher has stepped down as Chair of PDC to pursue another career opportunity. We appreciate Patricia's service and look forward to her staying involved in the Committee/Chapter at the US Army Core of Engineers, in Pittsburgh, PA. Congratulations Patricia – we wish you all the best.

We are excited to announce that Chad Webb has agreed to Chair the PDC going forward. Chad is the Subdivision Coordinator for the City of Charleston. Thank you for stepping up to serve in this capacity Chad – it is greatly appreciated.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Legislative Committee (LC) has met many times over the past few months monitoring the legislative session in particular. As the LC had been working diligently on modifications to WV 8A language to add clarity, improve logic and timelines in a few instances, and, for those jurisdictions planning with the aid of staff, add a modicum of flexibility specifically designed to take advantage of that staff's abilities. Most of those changes were passed in HB 3215 and signed into law by the Governor. A number of proposed changes were dropped as they seemed too far for the legislature to go at this time. The LC, WV DOH and others are reviewing these to fine-tune these proposals, possibly leading to a phase II bill for next year's legislative session. Working constructively with legislators and other groups is the best way to start the process of mutual education and hopefully will lead to increased work together in the future.

The LC monitored a number of other bills as well. They composed and posted positions on the WV APA website. Furthermore, a number of LC members rallied to support/promote standard APA positions in front of the legislature where proposed bills seemed to threaten those positions – in particular, efforts to suppress local voice in development and economic decisions that impact localities, viz. power generation and large-scale farms. These had substantive, but unfortunately far from sweeping, success.

In the process of offering suggested changes to the legislation, it was noted that WV APA needs to do some work in order to clarify the internal process for feedback and endorsement, which the LC has begun undertake after the legislative session finished. A timeline/process is under review and will be improved and made available to the Chapter for review.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Andrew Gast-Bray at agastbray@monongaliacounty.gov

CHAPTER MEETING – SEPTEMBER 12TH

The next WV APA Chapter meeting will be on Tuesday, **September 12th at 1 p.m.** in Wheeling, WV at the Oglebay Resort. The meeting is being held in conjunction with the 2023 WV Brownfields and Main Street Conference. Not able to join us in-person? No problem. Please join us virtually via Zoom. Please see the login information below and check the calendar invite sent earlier this year to members.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82512128710?pwd=NktmaFMYSDZpNUFPbWxkdU10Z0U0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 825 1212 8710 | Passcode: 820500

Several members will be presenting at the conference. They include Breanna Shell, Director of Planning with the City of Huntington (Chapter President), Melissa Scott, Hardy County Planner (Executive Committee Member – Local Government Representative), Shae Straight, Director Planning and Development with the City of Fairmont (Secretary and Treasurer), Jesse Richardson, Professor of Law and Lead Land Use Attorney, Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic at the WVU College of Law, and Katie See, Brownfield Redevelopment Specialist, Northern Brownfield Assistance Center.

Organizers are working with the American Planning Association and NWVBA to qualify at least once course for AICP CM credits. Stay tuned for an agenda for the chapter meeting.

WV FLOODPLAIN CONFERENCE UPDATE

The WV Floodplain Management Association Conference was held at Cacapon Resort State Park from May 15-17. The WV APA was happy to know that several of our members were able to attend, learn, and network with this group doing important planning work in the state. Patricia Usher, former Planner for the City of Huntington and Professional Development Chair, presented a session titled Planning and Floodplain Management which described the nexus between planning and floodplain management and highlighted the WV Chapter as a potential resource and collaborator with the WV Floodplain Managers organization.



In addition, Melissa Scott, Planner for Hardy County and Local Government Executive Committee Member, was awarded WV Floodplain Manager of the Year! Jared Anderson, also in attendance stated, "Melissa has been a steadfast proponent of floodplain management and land use planning in this state for many years. She has navigated difficult situations with grace, resolve, and uncompromising values. It was also nice to see that the entire Hardy County Commission and many of the Hardy County Planning Commission came to the conference to support her."



The WV Chapter of the APA presence was felt at the Floodplain Conference and is illustrative of our Chapter's goals to liaison with aligned fields to grow our membership and advocacy for planning in WV.

Attendees also learned more about the newly created WV State Resiliency Office and the State Resiliency and Flood Protection Plan Act. Learn more here from Deputy Director, Edwin Martin.

WV STATE RESILIENCY OFFICE UPDATE

Senate Bill 677 created potential funding mechanisms to assist communities with disaster recovery, disaster preparedness, flood resiliency, and mitigation efforts. A new Flood Resiliency Plan will be developed over the coming year to provide a map to flood resiliency in the mountain state. It will replace the historic Flood Protection Plan.

Details of the State Resiliency and Flood Protection Plan Act can be found at the following link: [West Virginia Code | §29-31 \(wvlegislature.gov\)](https://www.wvlegislature.gov/legislation/legislation.aspx?legisid=1430)

Information on the State Resiliency Office can be found at: <https://sro.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

2023 WV Brownsfield and Main Street Conference

- September 12-14th
- Olgebay Resort in Wheeling, WV

Earlier this year, the Chapter partnered with APA Ohio to participate in the **Planning Webcast Series**. To access more than 50 AICP CM credits (free of charge), please click [here](#). If you have not received any updates from the Ohio Chapter on this new exciting opportunity, please email info@ohioplanning.org.



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OPPORTUNITIES (From Page 4)



Source: WVU Land Use and Sustainability Development Law Clinic

The **6th Mountain State Land Use Academy** will be held on **May 21-22, 2024** at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling. The Land Use and Sustainability Development Law Clinic and the West Virginia Chapter of the APA are now planning the Academy. We would like to hear from you on what topics that you would like see addressed at the conference.

The conference usually consists of a keynote speaker, two plenary sessions, and three breakout sessions. Each breakout session has three sessions to choose from. Each session, plenary and breakout, is approximately one hour long. Please send suggested topic ideas to Jesse Richardson at jesse.richardson@mail.wvu.edu by **September 15, 2023**.