

AIAVT - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES - APPROVED
ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT

June 22, 2011 / Miklos Residence / Charlotte, VT

Attending: Tom Bachman (Treasurer), Barbara Conrey, Lauren Davis, Cam Featherstonhaugh, Katie Hill (Secretary), Harry Hunt (President), Diantha Korzun (Vice-President), Carol Miklos (Executive Director), Lisa Rovner, Aron Temkin.

Called to order: 9:15 am.

Open Discussion

The retreat started with an opportunity for each person in attendance to raise comments or concerns, for the group to consider during the course of the day:

- Hosting AIA New Englands in 2012 is a Big Deal and a great opportunity to show the value of the organization to potential members.
- We need to break the mold of discussing design in a closed-loop within the design community; AIAVT should be a conduit to the general public.
- Raising the stature of architects and the value of good design among the general public is one of the best ways we can serve our members.
- We should provide more opportunities for local architects (including younger members) to present their own work, both to other architects and to the general public.
- How do we get more members to volunteer? It is always the same small group of people who do everything.
- Providing learning units at cost-effective prices to members increases the value of membership.
- The alliance with CSI for the symposium was a good thing; how do we build on this moving forward?
- The newsletter and web site need updating - very important for communicating with members.
- The golf tournament doesn't earn a lot of money in comparison to the cost of putting it on. Should we consider other fundraisers?
- We should do more things locally to promote the value of design & architects. Need to reach out to the general public at large, not just people with the money to build high-end homes.
- New continuing education requirements for LEED AP's have just kicked in and it is difficult to get "approved" credits locally. Could AIAVT become an approved provider, to reduce the cost for members?

Review Goals from 2010 Retreat

Progress on the major goals that came out of the 2010 retreat was reviewed. These goals were:

1. Increase value of membership in AIAVT
2. Increase revenue.
3. Build strong public presence.
4. Initiate process to create a foundation (501-c3?), so that AIAVT will be eligible for a broader range of grants.

Significant improvements have been made over the past year on increasing sponsorship and revenue, thanks to Carol. This is still a work in progress, but we now have a road map in place. Increasing the value of membership and building a strong public presence remain priorities for the board; much of the discussion during the rest of the retreat was about how to accomplish these goals. While the board sees the value of creating a separate foundation, this was pushed by the AIA National representative who attended last year's retreat and is not high in the priorities of the current board. However, we should continue to investigate this

option.

Action Item:

- Clarify which entity type is appropriate for a foundation, and determine what would be involved in setting it up (Carol).

Themes of the Retreat

The discussion for the remainder of the day varied widely, but tended to return to certain themes, which are addressed individually below. We did not establish formal action items during the course of the retreat. I've taken the liberty of listing "action items" below that seemed to match the general consensus of the group, to provide a measure of guidance to the board for the coming year.

How Can We Increase the Value of Membership in AIAVT (and thus increase membership)?

Concerns:

- Southern members complain they are underserved by AIAVT events.
- Continuing education can be costly.
- Learning unit requirements are lower for Vermont licensure than for AIA membership, and it is easier for non-members to self-report their credits. Thus AIA membership increases the cost and hassle of continuing education, in addition to the cost of the membership dues.
- Some long-time AIAVT members have recently chosen not to renew.
- Several members expressed unhappiness that no awards were given in 9 of the 10 categories in last year's design awards.
- The board needs more focus on building/enhancing membership.

Board agreed on the following key benefits to joining AIAVT should be promoted to potential members:

- professional camaraderie
- professional development (at discounted rates for members)
- design awards
- AIA National advocates for the profession as a whole
- local advocacy

Action items:

- Research geographic demographics of the membership. [Note: per Carol's email of 6/27/11, 56% of our members are located in Chittenden, Grand Isle & Addison counties, and 44% in central and southern counties.]
- Plan more events in southern VT, including at least a studio social and a house tour.
- Consider White River Junction and Rutland as possible locations for events - closer for southern members, but still a reasonable drive from the Burlington area.
- Consider using webcasting to make major events accessible to more members.
- Emphasize value of membership throughout our planning efforts; don't make too much available to non-members.
- Increase spread in design award entry fees for members vs. non-members.
- Increase spread in event registration fees for members vs. non-members.
- Determine whether it makes sense to become an approved provider for LEED learning units.
- Consider hosting an OSHA jobsite safety course (VOSHA has fined firms for sending staff to site without such training).
- Reach out to firms that chose not to renew membership to discuss their concerns (Harry).

- Reach out to firms that renewed after a long hiatus to determine why they rejoined (Harry).
- Consider appointing a member "champion" from the board to monitor membership issues.
- Send letters to non-members, encouraging them to join. These should be personalized somehow, so they don't look like form letters that will go straight into the trash. Follow up with personalized contact.
- Increase public awareness at the local level of the value of architects (see below).
- Consider opportunities for AIAVT to better support sole practitioners. For example, could we make a simple and inexpensive webpage available (for a fee) via the revamped AIAVT website?

What Can We Do to Get More Members Actively Involved?

The Board identified the need to get more people and "new blood" involved in planning AIAVT activities. Most people who are currently on the board first got involved because someone asked them to. Mass email requests for assistance are not very effective in bringing new people forward. There is a lot that younger members can contribute, but they may be reluctant to volunteer because they don't feel they have enough seniority or experience.

Action Items:

- Board members to personally invite people to join the board and/or get involved.
- Make a point of encouraging younger members to get involved.
- Reach out to affiliate members too, when volunteers are needed.
- Use AIA New England's as a way of bringing in new people. We will need a lot of help!

How Can We Increase Public Awareness of the Value of Architects?

Board agreed that an important role of AIAVT (and a significant benefit to members) is to increase local public awareness of the value of good design and the value of hiring an architect. The board decided that more events should be designed to reach out to the general public. Challenges in doing this include getting program announcements out to a broad audience, and making the general public feel comfortable/welcome approaching architects and attending such events. In particular, the board would like to reach out to homeowners who might not normally think that they could benefit from an architect's services. It is also important to get into the schools, at all levels, to encourage students to consider architecture as a career, and to start them thinking about the value of good design.

Action items:

- Design some events each year to include the general public, or even be targeted primarily to the general public. One model is Fletcher Allen's community medical school - free lectures on health issues presented for the layperson. The goal is to emphasize the importance of good design and the value of hiring an architect, even for small projects.
- Try at least one targeted public outreach event next year (and more, if it goes well). Event would be free, informal, held in a public library (less intimidating than an architect's office), and on some theme of interest to homeowners. Maybe a panel discussion, or a couple architects presenting their work, but also including an opportunity for attendees to ask about other design/construction issues of interest. "Everything you wanted to know about architecture, but were afraid to ask"?
- Make the NH/VT tour more inviting to the general public.
- Use selective NPR spots (such as for the house tours) to promote AIAVT and the value of good design.
- Consider giving radio/tv interviews, or volunteering to write a regular column for a newspaper on design issues. Carol can arrange these.
- Consider issuing coupons for a free architectural consultation that can be redeemed at a list of offices printed on the back (i.e., those firms that agree to participate). Goal would be to encourage people to

- make initial contact with an architect, especially those who might not otherwise think they need one.
- Consider getting a booth at a farmer's market or the fair, to bring architecture to the masses. Idea would be to staff it with volunteers from different firms each day, to make architects easily available for general questions/advice, to provide free (1-hr?) design consultations so people can "try out" architectural services, and have drawings/pictures of projects available for people to look at for ideas.
- Encourage all members to visit schools to promote architecture, provide mentoring for prospective architecture students, or allow students to shadow them at work.
- Consider acting as a facilitator to match up members willing to visit schools/mentor/job shadow with schools who would like to take advantage of these opportunities.

Increasing Revenue

AIAVT succeeded in getting more organized over the past year with fundraising efforts and coordination. However, it would help for the long-range planning committee to take a more active role.

Action Items:

- Increase sponsorship income from the design awards, either by allowing multiple sponsors, or charging a larger sponsorship fee for an exclusive sponsor.
- Continue development of the master list of sponsorship levels/opportunities.
- Seek sponsorship of studio socials - recent trial run in combination with learning unit event went well.
- Continue to co-sponsor events with CSI as a means of increasing revenue.

Committee Structure

- Board reviewed the list of existing committees (Executive, Programs, Public Policy, Communications, Development & Long-Range Planning, Golf, YAF) and concluded that it meets our needs. Membership could use some more attention, but does not warrant a new membership committee.
- Committee Chairs: Currently the officers cycle through as committee chairs each year, in preparation for the President's role (Treasurer = Communications, Vice President = Programs, President = Public Policy, Past President = Long-Range Planning). This got mixed reviews - the constant change is dizzying for the chairs and more work for Carol, the President has too many other responsibilities to keep up with Public Policy, the Public Policy committee would benefit from greater continuity at the helm, and not everyone has the skill set for Publications.
- Board agreed to modify committee structure as follows: Treasurer to be on the Communications committee, VP to continue to chair the Programs committee (great training for the presidency), President to be freed up, Past-President to continue to chair the Long-Range Planning Committee. Need to find people with the interest/skills to assume the chairs of Public Policy and Communications, which will no longer cycle yearly. Chair of Public Policy needs to keep the President up-to-date, so President can speak on behalf of AIAVT when needed.

Action Items

- Harry to ask David Epstein if he would like to return as chair of the Public Policy committee.
- Need to find a continuing chair for Communications (Note: Cam expressed interest, once the YAF is passed onto the next person).
- Consider appointing a Membership "champion" from the board.
- Set up conference calling for board members who can't be present at board meetings.

AIAVT Mission Statement

The board reviewed the existing AIAVT mission statement and concluded it was too long, and that the last sentence alone would suffice: *"AIA Vermont aspires to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of the architectural profession, expand the knowledge of all participating in the architectural process and improve the quality of services provided by architectural professionals."*

Action Item: Harry to follow up on the process for formally revising the mission statement.

AIA Logo

Carol noted that we are using several different versions of the AIAVT logo, including one that is poorly pixelated. We don't have a current letterhead, and the variety of logos is causing confusion with sponsors. Carol recommends we pick one logo, have it professionally prepared, and get this sorted out before New England's communications need to go out. The Board agreed.

Action Item: Communications Committee to make proposal for the logo and a graphic designer to do the update.

Member Communications

Concerns:

- Website was created several years ago and needs a structural overhaul.
- We need a new newsletter package that better meets our needs.

Action Items

- HIGH PRIORITY: Need proposal for restructuring the website.
- Include a program registration option in the updated website (eventbrite.com is one option)
- HIGH PRIORITY: Need proposal for a replacement newsletter package. Cam suggested Constant Contact.
- Consider creating an AIAVT facebook page.

Strategic Alliances

- Co-sponsorship of the Designed in Vermont symposium with CSI went well. There was some grumbling from CSI that AIA did not help out more with the clean-up, and that they would have liked to see more technical content in the seminars. We'd like to continue the relationship with CSI, so need to address these issues.
- Hanne is still monitoring the Vermont legislature for issues of concern to the architectural community. We explored the cost of a lobbyist in the past but it was too much for AIAVT alone (\$20,000? for one session). The purpose of the lobbyist is to monitor bills as they develop, stay on top of the committee schedule, and let us know when and where we need to appear to speak on issues of interest to AIAVT. Board agreed that there is value to this, and that this is something where we could team up with other organizations from the design community.
- AIAVT created the Building Professionals Summit a few years ago to bring together representatives of the various professional organizations involved in design and construction. It was very effective in building relationships between the organizations and finding common interests (such as the building code) where we could be more effective by working together. Board agreed that it should be restarted, and it is good publicity for AIAVT to continue to lead the effort.

Action Items

- Reconvene the Building Professional Summit this fall.
- Use the summit to explore the possibility of a joint lobbyist for the design professions.
- Use the summit to gauge interest in a joint legislative day in Montpelier.
- Continue to co-sponsor events with CSI.
- Respond to ASHRAE's interest in cosponsoring events with us.
- Consider sending AIAVT representatives to other organizations (chamber of commerce, VBSR, VGBN, BSR, BSA-VT, Preservation Vermont, etc) to promote the value architects bring to design.

Preliminary Planning for Next Year

- Incoming president Diantha proposed "Why Design Matters" as the theme for next year.
- AIAVT is hosting New Englands in fall 2012; this will have big impact on planning for the year (see below for more on New Englands).
- Other fall events will include the NH/VT event, and the AIAVT awards dinner/annual meeting in December (which is still held on years when we host New Englands).
- Proposed to move the house tours from fall to spring next year on account of New Englands in the fall.
- Host another event with CSI; perhaps a lecture, as New Englands will take the place of the symposium next year.
- Studio socials in the spring, perhaps with the host firm presenting some of their work before the social?
- Other options to consider for house tours: NH's model of five tours plus a dinner afterwards, or a bussed tour.
- Goals to keep in mind when planning programs:
 - provide professional development for architects
 - build camaraderie within the profession
 - show the public the value of design

AIA New Englands 2012

- 2012 AIA New England conference is to be hosted by AIAVT.
- Typical event: three days (Fri to Sun), usually in November but can vary, tours & lectures, needs to provide CEU's, design awards/dinner on Sat night is a big fundraiser for the hosting organization (nets \$18k-\$20k), out-of-state attendees tend to treat it as a vacation, program has a broad theme presented in a local context.
- Last time in VT was at Middlebury, with 110 registered attendees (61 from out-of-state), 140 for Saturday awards dinner, program was mostly tours.
- Goals for organizing: good time for all (family friendly), LU's for attendees, revenue for the host
- In past, AIAVT prepared a written walking tour, to outlast the event.
- Keynote speaker is a big draw for attendance, need to budget at least \$10k.
- Board agreed to Burlington as location for logistical reasons (planners based in Burlington area, easy access to airport, walkable downtown area near hotel)
- November is an unpleasant time for walking around Burlington. Consider holding it before foliage season (late September), or even during foliage season if we can secure rooms (great time to visit VT)
- Will need to form a New Englands committee. Diantha, Barbara and Lisa are the kernel of the team for now.
- Board discussed holding a one-day technical course on Thursday, to provide extra LU's and a higher profit margin for AIAVT. Perhaps software training, such as Sketchup or Revit, through a vendor or VTC? This would help small practitioners, for whom in-house training is not an option.

Action Items

- PRIORITY: Pick dates. Lisa will check hotel availability & report back on options for dates.
- Reserve a block of rooms ASAP.
- Send someone to observe this year's New Englands, in western MA.
- Barbara to explore options for VTC to lead a Thursday software training session.
- Establish a formal New Englands committee (reach out to affiliates and younger members)
- Carol to get the "New England conference notebook" from Carolyn Isaak
- Carol to contact other New England executive directors about budget for when they hosted

AIAVT Design Awards

Concerns:

- Some members were disgruntled that no awards were given last year in 9 of the 10 categories.
- Juries have a mind of their own ... not productive to tell them what to do.
- Should entrants be required to be AIAVT members to promote value of membership?
- Should entrants be required to be licensed, to promote the value of licensure?
- We should match entry requirements for the New England and AIAVT awards next year, so that AIAVT members can use the same submission for both.
- We don't know what the "standard" is among other New England states for entry eligibility.

Action Items:

- Eliminate the "categories" from this year's AIAVT awards.
- Open entries to all, but charge a lot more for anyone who is not an AIAVT member.
- Carol to research entry eligibility for past New England awards.
- Harry to select jury, and meet with them to guide them.
- Find new location for the Public Choice award (Programs Comm.) - previous site is no longer available.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 9 at Gossens Bachman in Montpelier.

Adjourn: Approximately 5:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Katie Hill, Secretary
7/7/2011