

COMMITTEE UPDATING GPA BYLAWS

by Tim Preece and David Kirk

GPA President Jeff Watkins has named a committee to review GPA's current Bylaws and propose amendments to be considered by the membership this fall. The Bylaws are the rules adopted by GPA for its internal governance and speak to such issues as the roles and responsibilities of GPA officers and committees, the requirements for calling meetings, electing board members, and the like. GPA's membership last approved a comprehensive update to the organization's Bylaws in 2001 and several minor amendments have been approved in the intervening years.

The Bylaws Committee, chaired by David Kirk, and including Eric Bosman, Jeff Rader, Paul Forgey and Tim Preece, will consider potential changes that may:

- Require a policy for financial reserves and a periodic audit to ensure the financial resources of GPA continue to be well managed;
- Revisit policies for Board elections;
- Provide for the use of electronic media for Board votes and GPA elections;
- Revise the Board terms such that election for seats are staggered (i.e. not all in same year);
- Revisit policies for Board composition, including the number and roles of the Board members and any specific responsibilities of the District Directors; and
- Revise time-sensitivity of Board actions to reflect the volunteer nature of the organization.

To assure continuity with past revisions, the Committee will consult on specific issues with Jerry Weitz and Bill Ross – each of whom was involved in previous revisions of the Bylaws. Since GPA is a chapter of the American Planning Association, coordination with APA will be required as well.

In addition to the potential changes noted above, the Committee will identify other appropriate revisions, and would appreciate any comments from members. The GPA Bylaws are available at www.georgiaplanning.org. Please send any comments or suggestions to one of the Committee members before April 30, 2010.

The Committee will coordinate with the full Board on the total package of proposed changes, and will develop the specific language and assemble the proposed amendments this Summer. A notice including any proposed amendments then will be provided to GPA members for their consideration prior to the vote on any amendments at the membership meeting to be held during the Fall Conference to be held at the end of September in Valdosta.

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*Thank You to All of Our Sponsors
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of the Quarterly Newsletter.**

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President

Jeff Watkins, AICP
 president@georgiaplanning.org
 678.493.6107

Past-President

Ellen Heath, AICP
 ellen.heath@aecom.com
 404.965.9600

VP/Programs

Adam Hazell, AICP
 ahazell@gmrhc.org
 770.538.2617

VP/Chapter Services

Laura M. Keyes, AICP
 chapter.services@georgiaplanning.org
 404.463.3243

Secretary

Tracy Dunning, AICP
 tdunning@cityofnewnan.org
 770.254.2354

Treasurer

Eric Bosman, AICP
 ebosman@urbancollage.com
 404.586.0277

Executive Director

Jessica Gibson
 executive.director@georgiaplanning.org
 770.314.9646

AICP Director at Large

David C. Kirk, AICP
 david.kirk@troutmansanders.com
 404.885.3415

AICP Director at Large

Tim Preece, AICP
 tpreece@arcadis-us.com
 770.431.8666

Non-AICP Director at Large

Diana Wheeler
 dwheeler@alpharetta.ga.us
 678.297.6070

Non-AICP Director at Large

Kathleen Field
 kfield84@comcast.net
 770.263.7706

Non-AICP Director at Large

Cheri Hobson-Matthews
 770.288.6427
 cmatthews@county.henry.ga.us

Professional Dev. Officer

Gary Cornell, AICP
 gary.cornell@jgg.com
 678.333.0229

Planning Officials Dev. Officer

Kellie Brownlow
 kbrownlow@atlantaregional.com
 404.463.3212

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY JEFF WATKINS, AICP, PRESIDENT OF THE GA CHAPTER

Spring conference season is officially over! Just returned from New Orleans where the Georgia contingent was surprising large. Many folks were attending to gather their CM credits to complete this first reporting period for AICP. If you are still lacking credits, APA has 32 credit hours of free courses online available to you. I encourage you to use them to close the gap you may still have.

At the APA National Conference, a topic of interest is the focus the current Administration is giving to Planning through the Partnership for Livable Communities, a working partnership of HUD, US DOT and EPA ([download the PDF](#)).

Our Spring Conference in Macon was well attended considering the current economic climate. Our opening plenary speaker Mr. Frank Jenkins, esq. who gave us a great update of the current legal climate in Georgia related to Planning. As usual, Mr. Gary Cornell and company delivered a whimsical approach on Planning Ethics. There were many other great sessions dealing with topics from Sustainability, to Building Lifelong Communities and even a session on the Planner's Job Market. The Host committee arranged for two great mobile tours, one to Carlyle Place a CCRC, and a second tour of several improvement initiatives under way in the Mercer University and Downtown Macon areas. I would like to extend my gratitude to those of you who presented at the Spring Conference, and also offer a special thank you to Ms. Mary Huffstetler, Ms. Kristi Harpst, Ms. Charlotte Weber and Ms. Allison Duncan who did a fantastic job putting on this conference.

The Fall Conference will be coming to Valdosta, GA! We received a 40 page proposal from our local host committee! The conference will be at the end of September to the first weekend in October, exact dates to come soon. Since October is the National Community Planning Month, it would be my wish that GPA do something in Valdosta to spotlight our mission of Creating Great Communities in Georgia. There is a lot going in down south, so plan to join us and see what great things are happening in South Georgia. ■



Jeff Watkins GPA President

CM Credit for GPA Spring Conference Available

Log your credits now.

The GPA Spring Conference CM credit is now posted to APA's website. You can search for the conference and log your credit now. Please follow the link below, search for the GPA 2010 Spring Conference and enter your CM credits.

APA Calendar: <http://www.planning.org/calendar/>



CALENDAR OF EVENTS - please visit our website for more events

May 12, 2010 GPA Planners Lunch	Cartersville, GA rosborne@cityofcartersville.org
May 12 – 15, 2010 Rethink. Recover. Rebuild.	Philadelphia, PA kenyatta.burney@phil.frb.org
May 18, 2010 Training for Planning Officials	Atlanta, GA tpospring2010.eventbrite.com
May 19 - 21, 2010 GEDA Spring Workshop	Brasstown Valley, GA www.geda.org
May 19 – 22, 2010 Rx for Healthy Places	Atlanta, GA www.cnu.org/cnu18/
June 3 - 4, 2010 ArcGIS Desktop III	Atlanta, GA gisthreespring2010.eventbrite.com
June 20 - 23, 2010 GMA Annual Convention	Savannah, GA www.gmanet.com
July 21 - 23, 2010 GAZA Summer Conference	St. Simons Island, GA www.georgiazoning.org
September 22 -24, 2010 GEDA Annual Conference	Savannah, GA www.geda.org
September 28 - 30, 2010 Roads and Bridges Live	New Orleans, LA www.roadsbridgeslive.com

Good Urbanism 101 (CM | MULTIPLE)

Who should attend?

Anyone interested in planning, designing, and building a better Atlanta – neighborhood residents, government officials, engineers, non-profit advocacy and advisory groups, architects, landscape architects, planners, , attorneys, and, developers.

More information on the GPA Website.

District 1 Director
Richard Osborne, AICP
rosborne@cityofcartersville.org
770.387.5614

District 2 Director
Lynn Tully
lynntully@yahoo.com
770.561.3971

District 3 Director
Jim Summerbell, AICP
jim.summerbell@jgg.com
678.333.0475

District 4 Director
Frederick Gardiner, AICP
fgardiner@cityofgriffin.com
770.233.4130

District 5 Director
Kristina Harpst
kharpst@mgrdc.org
t: 478.751.6160

District 6 Director
Paul DeCamp, AICP
pdecamp@augustaga.gov
706.821.1796

District 7 Director
Patti Cullen
pcullen@rivervalleyrc.org
706.256.2910

District 8 Director
Paul Forgey, AICP
pforgey@swgrdc.org
229.522.3552

District 9 Director
Marc Hawkins
mhawkins@waycrossga.com
912.287.2944

District 10 Director
Geoff Goins
goingsg@thempc.org
912.651.1449

Chair - Legislative Affairs
James Shelby
jshelby@atlantaga.gov
404.330.6070

Planning Official
Fred Boykin
fboykin@bicyclesouth.com
404.636.4444

Planning Official
Jeff Rader
jrader@co.dekalb.ga.us
404.371.2863

Student Representative
Kirsten Berry
kirsten@cycleexpressions.com

AICP Advanced Specialty Certification Program

Want some more initials after your name? AICP now offers two specialized credentials – AICP CTP (Certified Transportation Planner) and AICP CEP (Certified Environmental Planner). A third is in the works – AICP CUD (Certified Urban Designer)!

The AICP CTP and AICP CEP exams will both be offered in November-December 2010. Applications will be due in July-Sept. 2010. To qualify, an applicant must be a member of AICP with 8 years of experience in the area of specialization and pass an exam. Other than the cost of the exam, there will be no additional cost- no increase in your AICP dues because of the specialization. However a minimum of 10 hours of your AICP –CM credits will need to be in your area of specialization. For more information, go to www.planning.org./asc.

2010 SPRING CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

Even during tough times the 2010 GPA Spring Conference produced another successful event with more than 140 people joining us in Macon, Georgia! There was plenty of opportunity for professional development through over 20 educational sessions and mobile workshops, with a wide array of topics such as helping communities pursue “green” development, Safe Routes to Schools programming

and maximizing economic development policies. Attendees also had the opportunity for a reception and trivia at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and tour other parts of this beautiful and historic city during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival. A special thank you to our local host committee and our sponsors for helping us with another great event!

[View conference presentations on the GPA Website.](#)

District Planners Luncheon

The Northwest Georgia district of GPA invites you to attend the May 12th GPA Planners Luncheon in Cartersville. The topic is “Planning for Parks and Greenspace in Tough Times,” and the event will be held at the new Tellus Northwest Georgia Science Museum, conveniently located on Interstate 75. The event includes a meet-and-greet, lunch and discussion, and museum admission. The event has been submitted for CM credits.

Discussion will include challenges and opportunities for planning to add or make improvements to parks and greenspace in communities. Examples will be given from the Rome-Floyd County Parks & Recreation department, as well as from the City of Cartersville Parks & Recreation department. In addition, current and near-future federal funding opportunities for greenspace and tree plantings will be discussed by a representative of Rolling Hills RC&D (Resource Conservation and Development) Council.

A similar event was held in early 2009 in Cartersville, and there was 100% attendance, filling up well before the event date. Seating is limited and you must register to reserve a seat. If you are interested, contact Richard Osborne, City Planner for Cartersville, at rosborne@cityofcartersville.org or 770-387-5614. We hope to see you in May.



Steve Logan

Steve Logan, who once served as the director of planning for Gwinnett County, is retired, and now paints full time while living in Wilmington NC.

Steve recently opened an art show in his old stomping grounds – Duluth GA – in his exhibit titled “Landscapes, Here and There.” This was his second One-Person-Show, and was installed at Chocolate Perks in Duluth, with a reception held for the new show in early April.

Steve has been described as a “luminous artist” who explores the landscape from Atlanta to the tidal lowlands of the Atlantic Coast, and spans a blend of rural heartland, urban architectural and coastal scenery.

Who knew?



“A Bridge Between Us” acrylic by Steve Logan

FALL CONFERENCE 2010

While we gathered in Macon it was announced that GPA will make its first formal visit to Georgia’s deep south as the Fall Conference debuts in Valdosta. This will be a special opportunity for members to see more of the state and give GPA the chance to reach out to members and communities in Georgia’s historic farmlands. We hope you’ll join us for what promises to be an innovative conference as GPA continues to support better planning in Georgia!

Support Our Sponsors!!

A Huge Thank You to 2010 GPA Annual Sponsors

Planners will have a full year of challenges and opportunities with regards to economic conditions and changing trends in all sectors of planning. The Georgia Planning Association stands ready to provide members with opportunities for networking, information and education. These services are made possible through the continued support of GPA annual sponsors and conference sponsors.

Please take time to review the [2010 Annual Sponsors](#) list on the GPA website and access their company websites.

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We appreciate your support in 2010!

Laura Keyes, VP Chapter Services

FORM BASED CODES REACH CRITICAL MASS

by Philip Langdon

A wave of enthusiasm for new urbanist codes has spread from the Southeast to other regions, especially the West.

At the American Planning Association conference in Minneapolis last year, Laura Hall noticed audience members responding differently than they had a few years ago. “When I tried to sell them on form based codes, people got impatient,” Hall says. “They said, ‘We don’t want to be sold on it anymore. We want to know how to do it.’”

Something is changing — for the better. Across sizable portions of the US and Canada, codes aimed at shaping communities into compact, walkable, mixed use configurations have crossed a threshold. A constituency has begun to solidify in support of form based codes (FBCs).

“At the New Partners for Smart Growth conference in Seattle in February, about 150 people showed up for an FBC panel on which I spoke about the form based SmartCode, and about 80 percent said they were either working on a form based code or there was one going on in their town,” says Hall, a planning consultant with San Francisco-based Hall Alminana. “For those of us who’ve been doing this a long time, this level of growth in interest is shocking. At a certain point, it was as if someone had flipped a switch.”

Altogether, 294 form based codes have been adopted or are being prepared or proposed in the US and Canada, according to a count by Hazel Borys of the consulting group PlaceMakers. “They’re in 40 states and three Canadian provinces,” says Borys. “We’re seeing more every week.”

Recent progress includes the drafting of a new zoning code for Denver, Colorado, which aims at replacing a code that has been repeatedly patched during its 53-year existence. The code being proposed in Denver pays close attention to neighborhood context. It follows by a few months the adoption of a new code in Miami, which may be implemented May 20. Geographic distribution of proposed or adopted codes. Source: Hazel Borys, Emily Talen.

FBCs are on the rise in the Pacific Rim and in Europe, too. In March, Andres Duany conducted three “test charrettes” in Scotland. Through the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative, Chief Planner Jim Mackinnon is setting up what Duany describes as “an entirely new planning system” for that country.

Why the surge?

In the US, says Borys, “When FBCs first started getting traction, we saw a predominance of them in the Southeast. Now it’s really expanded significantly, with many of these codes being prepared or adopted in the West and the Southwest, and everyone else following.” Borys, who relocated from Sarasota, Florida, to Winnipeg, Manitoba, notes, “In Canada, the West is the innovator, but here it’s called ‘form based bylaws.’”

“A lot of places are using form based codes as an economic development tool,” Borys says. Here are recent examples of codes intended to spur economic development:

- Owensboro, Kentucky, completed a form based code last September, hoping to spur downtown investment. Because of the new code and other factors, including public investment in critical projects, the city now has projects worth \$120 million under way in its center. “There are almost 20 applications for development in downtown,” says Scott Polikov of Gateway Planning Group, which helped prepare the code for the 56,000-population city.
- Hamden, Connecticut, a suburb of New Haven, implemented a SmartCode that is mandatory along the town’s three main corridors. The new Hamden document, which took effect in January, is a “blended” or “hybrid” code in that it makes form based regulations compulsory in the corridors but leaves the existing Euclidean zoning intact in other sections of town.

The Form-Based Codes Institute, founded in 2004, says, “Form based codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. They are adopted into city or county law as regulations, not mere guidelines. Form based codes are an alternative to conventional zoning.” Borys adds: “The way form based codes differ from use-based codes is that they regulate the form of the built environment first, and as a secondary measure they determine the mix of compatible uses.”

Hamden’s code — one of the first moves toward form based regulation in New England — is expected to bolster the commercial base of the 58,000-population town, thus boosting tax revenue. An inner suburb, Hamden has mostly been built out for years, but much of the land in its commercial corridors is

occupied by single-story buildings and parking lots. The corridors could generate substantially more tax revenue if they evolve into denser, mixed use areas.

Planning Director Leslie Creane, who prepared Hamden's code with assistance from architect Robert Orr, Planimetrics, and others, anticipates that the major corridors will gain new stores and housing. She expects the transformation to take 15 to 20 years.

- Montgomery, Alabama, began offering a version of the SmartCode in early 2006 as a regulatory option for sites of at least 40 acres, anywhere in the city. The 202,000-population capital later made the SmartCode (as calibrated by Dover, Kohl & Partners) mandatory in five square miles containing the downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods. This year the city had Dover, Kohl start tailoring the SmartCode to yet another area — an old urban corridor with the potential to become a Main Street kind of setting.

Since the onset of the recession in 2007, little development has taken place in conventionally zoned parts of Montgomery. By contrast, developers are fairly busy in areas where the SmartCode is in force. Those are the 416-acre Hampstead traditional neighborhood development — it was the first site to get a SmartCode overlay — and the urban core says Planning Director Ken Groves.

An old department store was turned into loft apartments. The Alabama Association of Realtors knocked down a suburban-style headquarters surrounded by surface parking and erected a new building with a more urban character. Other existing buildings have been fitted out with lofts. An area containing largely vacant warehouses is being converted into “The Alley” — with restaurants and retail on the ground floor and mostly apartments above.

The new code is a boon to redevelopment partly because it encourages mixed uses and reduces the volume of off-street parking that a property owner must provide. On-street parking is counted toward a development's parking requirement, Groves emphasizes.

Few governments are willing to discard use-based zoning entirely. So far, Borys has learned of only three that have done it: Pass Christian, Mississippi; Miami, Florida; and Ridgeland, South Carolina. All did so within the past year. More commonly, governments make form-based zoning mandatory for central business districts and corridors while offering it as an optional overlay elsewhere.

Consultants such as Polikov warn that an FBC should not be expected to generate development in the absence of other local

initiatives or investments. Often government or other institutions must allocate money to public improvements. “We put in angled parking on a street that adjoins The Alley,” Groves points out. The city also built two public parking decks nearby.

As part of an overall strategy, a form based code is valuable, Groves says, because it “provides certainty about how a downtown is going to be built out. It gives developers confidence to proceed.”

NIMBY softening

Other trends are also encouraging the spread of form based codes. Laura Hall says:


- Citizens who spent much of the past 20 years opposing development have learned that a “no growth” stance is futile in the long term. Activists won a lot of battles, Hall says, but later watched as their successes were overturned, letting sprawl march on. “They're tired of the fight,” Hall says. “In the meantime, they've been educated.”
- Many environmentalists have been won over by the rural-to-urban Transect. The Transect and the SmartCode have the virtue of providing “a place for everything,” from dense, walkable urban settlements to preserved natural terrain, Hall observes. “We've found that people living in a traditional town get the Transect concept immediately if you walk them along a local transect,” says code consultant Sandy Sorlien. Hall says people increasingly desire a planning system that “creates places where people can get around on foot.”
- Residents are feeling less threatened by the advocates of density. “For a long time, a lot of people thought New Urbanism and smart growth were about adding density to their neighborhood,” Hall says. They've come to understand that Transect-based planning generally allows existing low-density suburban neighborhoods to remain as they are. “They can keep their house and neighborhood. There are enough [other] places where density can be encouraged. You can densify the corridors.”

Consultant Jennifer Hurley suggested identifying barriers that stand in the way of adopting FBCs in a particular state and making those the focus of work on a template tailored to that state. There has been some movement toward devising statewide model FBCs. “They generally provide regional character calibrations, along with a portion of the legal enabling language,” Borys says. One state with a model SmartCode is Mississippi. Regional model FBCs have been adopted in New Castle County, Delaware; Jefferson County, Alabama, and other places. See www.smartcodecomplete.com/learn/links.html.

This article is available unabridged in the April-May 2010 issue of New Urban News, along with images and many more articles.



AECOM
 One Midtown Plaza
 1360 Peachtree St. NE, Suite 500
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you are interested in joining GPA or the American Planning Association, contact the national headquarters at the address above or call (312) 431-9100 or visit their website at www.planning.org.

CONTACTS

Direct financial inquiries and address payments to the Treasurer. Direct questions about chapter records to the Secretary. Direct matters for the Board of Directors to the President. See email addresses inside on pages 2 & 3.

SUBMISSION

The Georgia Planning Association welcomes articles, letters to the editor, photos of planning events or state happenings, calendar listings, job notices, planners on the move, etc. We are always interested in publishing items you think may be of interest to others throughout the state. Graphics are especially welcome. Articles may be edited for space. Articles printed in any issue of The Georgia Planner are not the expressed opinion of the Chapter.

DEADLINE

The deadline for the next issue is **July 31, 2010**.

Send items for the newsletter to: William F. Ross, ROSS+associates, 2161 Peachtree Road, NE Suite 806, Atlanta, Georgia 30309, Bill@planross.com

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GEORGIA PLANNER – April 2010 Newsletter of the Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association



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1130 Bluffs Parkway
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