

Ontario Association of Architects

Meeting #305 Open

MINUTES

May 12, 2026

The three hundred and fifth meeting of the Council of the Ontario Association of Architects, held under the *Architects Act*, took place on Tuesday May 12, 2026 at the Delta by Marriott Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario and virtually via Zoom.

Present:	Lara McKendrick	President
	Anna Richter	Senior Vice President and Treasurer
	Kristiana Schuhmann	Vice President
	Susan Spiegel	Vice President
	Settimo Vilardi	Vice President
	Loloa Alkasawat	Councillor
	Donald Ardiel	Councillor
	J. William Birdsell	Councillor
	Maxine Blais	Councillor
	Jim Buttici	Lieutenant Governor in Council Appointee
	Kimberly Fawcett-Smith	Lieutenant Governor in Council Appointee (virtual)
	Natasha Krickhan	Councillor
	Jenny Lafrance	Councillor
	Michelle Longlade	Lieutenant Governor in Council Appointee (part attendance)
	Elaine Mintz	Lieutenant Governor in Council Appointee
	Angela Panacci	Lieutenant Governor in Council Appointee
	Nicola Russo	Councillor
	Ted Watson	Councillor
	Thomas Yeung	Councillor
	Kristi Doyle	Executive Director
	Christie Mills	Registrar
	Tina Carfa	Executive Assistant, Executive Services

Regrets: None

Guests: Member, Andrew Thomson (virtual – part attendance)

The President called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m.

The President noted that a land acknowledgement and recognition of the Indigenous land and its people is being shared with Council in a video from the Bachelor of Indigenous Environmental Science and Practice (BIESP) at the University of Guelph <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byTvZQ4fmeY> . Following the video, the President shared with Council a recognition of Traditional Lands specific to the Region of Waterloo.

The President welcomed staff and members in attendance at the meeting. The President noted that member, Andrew Thomson was attending the meeting to present OpenBuildings proposal for the OBJECTIVE software funding.

DECLARATION RE CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The President called for declaration of any conflicts of interest.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

AGENDA APPROVAL

10065. The President reported that there were no new items to be added to the agenda.

It was moved by Butticci and seconded by Lafrance that the agenda for the May 12, 2026 open meeting be approved as circulated.

-- CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

10066. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Draft minutes of the March 5, 2026 Open Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the March 5, 2026 Open Council meeting were reviewed.

It was moved by Birdsell and seconded by Richter that the minutes of the March 5, 2026 Open Council meeting be approved as circulated.

-- CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

10067. There was no business arising from the minutes.

ITEMS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

10068. *Reference Materials Reviewed:* Memorandum from Vice President and Chair, Communications and Public Education Committee, Susan Speigel and Vice President and Chair, Policy Advisory Coordination Team, Settimo Vilardi dated April 20, 2026 re. Funding Request for OpenBuilding's OBJECTIVE Energy and Carbon Modelling Software and attached supporting documentation.
(APPENDIX 'A')

Andrew Thomson joined the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

The President welcomed Thomson to the meeting.

Thomson presented Council with a demonstration of the software in real time, highlighting that the new tool closes the gap between estimates and targets vs. real time data.

Thomson noted that the PRO version of the new software allows for additional analysis and to study a group of buildings in the aggregate. The target audience for the PRO version is generally client groups with a stock of buildings. Subscriptions to the PRO version would sustain the current version which would continue to be free to OAA members.

A member of Council expressed some concern with respect to the high software costs incurred in architectural firms and ongoing subscription costs.

Thomson reiterated that the PRO version is suited to large scale projects, for example, a block-style study of buildings. The simplified version remains complimentary with funding to be assisted in part by the pro version. Subscription fees are not contemplated in the free version.

Thomson noted that the funding request is intended to assist in the development of the PRO version. If there is not sufficient funding then the software would likely be privatized which may limit the free access by the profession.

A Councillor noted the high cost of software licensing fees in general and requested clarification as to whether the Pro fee includes support and training.

Thomson responded that there is currently information available online thru blogs, and on YouTube. There is education and training offered by OpenBuildings currently running at \$2,000 for a large group session,

A member of Council expressed some concern with the process for this request and that it is suggested that the funds are to be drawn from the Policy Contingency. As an alternative, consideration could be given to multi-year funding request I with a clearer business plan and that the request be deferred to the September Council meeting.

It was suggested by a Councillor that there may be a benefit to repackaging the branding of the product so there is a better understanding of the purpose and benefits.

A Council member noted that architects generally look at sustainability at the outset of the program. As part of the OAA's Strategic Plan, climate action is one of the pillars and the OAA should demonstrate itself as a leader in that respect.

Thomson noted that there have been over 800 downloads of the software and many architects are using the tool right from the RFP stage. Over 2000 have taken the training noted earlier. Public Awareness Sponsorship has also been received to date adding that the project was started under the former Sustainable Built Environment Committee. Thomson suggested that ask is small considering the quality of the software and the level of volunteer, in-kind contribution.

A member of Council noted that PACT and CPEC considered the request, suggesting that the OAA should continue to invest in this ongoing project. There is more feedback on the tool to support grant applications to CMHC and would be beneficial in replacing the retention of external consultants for projects.

It was suggested by a Council member that the key for acceptance is to have it recognized widely in the sector.

Clarification was requested by a Council member as to whether there are existing public business cases which demonstrate firms which have used this software.

Thomson responded that the data is not available at this point. . He would need to provide a demonstration to a firm to the cost and end outcomes as well as take into account the non-monetary benefit to the firm such as education for the staff.

There was some concern raised about the funding request and process to request the funding. It was further suggested that a better understanding of the business case and deliverables is needed since it is likely that further funding will be needed, specifically from the OAA.

The President called for a vote.

It was moved by Vilardi and seconded by Speigel that Council fund the OBJECTIVE Energy and Carbon Modelling Software in the amount of \$50,000, subject to further discussion about free access to the professional version for OAA members.

-- CARRIED (14 in favour, 4 opposed (Alkasawat), 1 abstention (Ardiel))

The President thanked Thomson for his presentation.

Thomson left the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

10069. *Reference Materials Reviewed:* Memorandum from Executive Director, Kristi Doyle dated April 27, 2026 re. Alternative Programming to Conference in 2027. **(APPENDIX 'B')**

The Executive Director reminded that Council had agreed to pause OAA Conference proper in 2027, however, a review of the approach to programming and the following key goals and objectives will be considered: Celebratory elements; public awareness; networking; and, education. The next conference will take place in 2028.

It was suggested by a Councillor that staff may wish to do a comparative of the OAA versus the RAIC Conference, adding that RAIC's attendance surpassed 1,000. It was suggested that other conferences encountered relatively higher attendance.

It was suggested by a Council member that one event falling under each objective be held in the spring/summer of 2027.

A Councillor suggested that the format should be more of a conference than a tradeshow.

A member of Council suggested that the Conference generally receives the same number of attendees but is lower as a percentage of the membership. The team may wish to visit areas which need improvement including a need for increased media outreach. There should be more in-person localized events.

It was suggested by a member of Council that the keynote could be held in a specific geographic location to allow for attendance as well as to share on a virtual platform. In addition, brief happy hour could follow the event. A Councillor suggested that the focus of the keynote could be to bring it to the members in regional hubs and from an online perspective include online commentary and breakout rooms.

The Executive Director suggested that there is a need to focus on ways to engage more members. The SHIFT challenge will fall next year which may potentially be held in the OAA Headquarters. In addition, it could be coupled with a road show travelling to the various societies in the province.

A Council member suggested that the venue may be potentially held in large firms throughout the city.

It was suggested by a Council member that 2027 and the ideas shared may be an opportunity to renew interest and engage with members.

A member of Council suggested that the OAA may wish to couple its event with another larger event to gain traction (ex. TIFF in Toronto).

A Councillor suggested that the OAA may wish to reach out and engage the public with the World Architecture Day.

It was suggested by a member of Council that the OAA may be an ideal venue as the Landscape Project would be expected to be completed at that time and would facilitate drawing attendance.

A Council member suggested that there are theatres in the city which are typically closed on Mondays but rent out for events as a consideration and include an online link to those events.

It was suggested by a member of Council that a bi-annual regional event could be held with architectural firms and universities providing the space.

The Executive Director noted that a location for the 2028 Conference will be discussed in the next while with the Conference team and through CPEC.

The report was noted for information.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

10070. *Reference Material Reviewed:* President's Activities for the months of March 2026 to May 2026. **(APPENDIX 'C')**

The report was noted for information.

10071. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Report from Executive Director, Kristi Doyle dated May, 2026 re. Executive Director Report to Council. **(APPENDIX 'D')**

The report was noted for information.

10072. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from Registrar, Christie Mills re. Office of the Registrar Statistical Report to Council for the period February 18 to April 28, 2026. **(APPENDIX 'E')**

The report was noted for information.

10073. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from Senior Vice President and Treasurer, Anna Richter, dated April 21, 2026 re. Unaudited Financial Statements for the Three Months Ended February 28, 2026 and attached supporting documentation. **(APPENDIX 'F')**

The Senior Vice President and Treasurer reported.

The report was noted for information.

10074. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from the Communications and Public Education Committee (CPEC) dated April 24, 2026 re. Update from the Communications and Public Education Committee (CPEC) and attached background information. **(APPENDIX 'G')**

The report was noted for information.

10075. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from Governance Committee dated April 1, 2026 re. Update from OAA Governance & HR Committee. **(APPENDIX 'H')**

The report was noted for information.

10076. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from the OAA Building Committee dated April 15, 2026 re. Update from the OAA Building Committee. **(APPENDIX 'I')**

The report was noted for information.

10077. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from the Practice Resource Committee (PRC) dated May 4, 2026 re. Practice Resource Committee (PRC) - Update. **(APPENDIX 'J')**

The report was noted for information.

10078. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from Vice President and Chair, Settimo Vilardi dated April 24, 2026 re. Update on the Policy Advisory Coordination Team's (PACT) work. **(APPENDIX 'K')**

The report was noted for information.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

10079. *Reference Material Reviewed:* OAA HQ Landscape Revitalization – OAA Council Update – May 5, 2026. **(APPENDIX 'L')**

The report was noted for information.

10080. *Reference Material Reviewed:* Memorandum from Vice President and OAA Representative to the ROAC, Settimo Vilardi, dated April 27, 2026 and attached background information. **(APPENDIX 'M')**

OTHER BUSINESS

10081. There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10082. The next regular meeting of Council is Thursday June 25, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. at the OAA Headquarters, 111 Moatfield Drive, Toronto, Ontario.

ADJOURNMENT

10083. **It was moved by Butticci and seconded by Panacci that the meeting be adjourned at 2:00 p.m.**

-- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

President

Date