



Ontario Association  
of Architects

# Fall 2018 Local Architectural Society Workshop

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SESSION REPORT

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## OVERVIEW

*Representatives from 13 local Societies and Council met on September 14, 2018 at the OAA's temporary Headquarters for a full-day workshop. The third annual workshop with representatives of the Societies allowed for feedback, consultation and evaluation of a number of the OAA priorities and projects. The opportunity also provided for inclusion of regional viewpoints, a cross-section of member points-of-view, as well as aligning OAA messaging with Society messaging. These were all shared and discussed in an open forum with the objective of affirming or completing priorities and initiatives as well as identifying priorities and directions for the year.*

*The focus of the 2018 fall workshop was on gathering feedback on a number of key items including: the role of local societies; regulation of interior design under the Architects Act; an Architecture Policy for Canada; World Architecture Day/Queen's Park event; and society fees.*

*The following is a summary of the feedback gathered during the session. This report will be presented at the November 2018 Council meeting for information and will play a role in Council's 2019 planning session which will be held in February 2019. Society Chairs are encouraged to share this information with local members to ensure that two-way communication continues and is further enhanced.*

## Role of Local Societies

*The Local Society Mandate was reviewed, followed by an open discussion about local advocacy, how to manage conflict in local areas and new ideas for Society activities and involvement. President John Stephenson emphasized that the key role of societies is to be the connecting element between architects in the community and the OAA and he spoke about the value of architects using their collective voice in the communities to speak out about important issues.*

### FEEDBACK

#### Local Advocacy

- Society Chairs shared some of the advocacy issues that their Society membership had been focused on recently.
- Settimo Vilardi, Chair of the Windsor Region Society of Architects (WRSA), was asked to share how the WRSA voiced their concerns over the RFP for the Windsor Hospital. Kristi Doyle noted that when it comes to local advocacy issues, crafting the right message is crucial and that the OAA can assist the Societies with creating effective communications to ensure that constructive conversations are the goal.
- It was suggested that if Societies are advocating similar issues, they should collaborate and start sharing resources. For instance, some of the smaller societies such as the northern societies, should come together to move forward issues that are of importance in their communities.
- John Stephenson recommended to the societies to use PACT to help with local policy issues. Societies tend to take direct and quiet approaches, but sometimes we need to gather more public support and make these issues known to the broader community for support.

#### Discussion of Society Activities and New Ideas for Involvement with the Public

- Society Chairs shared ways that they are engaging with the community in their local areas.
- Toon Dreessen, Chair of the Ottawa Regional Society of Architects (ORSA) discussed their plans for Ottawa Architecture Week. With the theme of this year's festival being "[Re]Defining Housing Affordability", ORSA helped to present a platform for important discussions showing how architects and the local Societies can take a stand as leaders without taking sides. Throughout Ottawa Architecture Week, the role of architecture and the related trades is celebrated in a way that is fun and engaging. The goal is to bridge the gap between the architectural community and the public; to facilitate a constructive dialogue on the relationship between the built environment and Ottawa's people.

**Action Items:**

- John Stephenson encouraged Societies to send any requests for advocacy assistance to Courtney Meagher (Architectural Graduate Intern, Society Liaison) who can then help to funnel it within the OAA to the correct person or committee to help them (i.e PACT).
- Communications (Erik Missio and Courtney Meagher) to send info to the architectural schools about OAA free student membership and encourage them to get involved.

## Society Membership & Fees

*As part of the Workshop Agenda Package, Kristi Doyle prepared a memo on Society Membership Dues, which summarized the history of Society fees and how the OAA arrived at the current fee structure. Topics of discussion included a review of the history of membership fees, other sources of funding from the OAA for Societies, how each Society raises their own funds, and increasing society membership fees.*

### FEEDBACK

#### Society Executive Membership

- Maria Denegri, Chair of the Toronto Society of Architects (TSA), mentioned that the TSA wants to look at how to include foreign-trained professionals on the Society's executive. The TSA has a large number of foreign-trained professionals who are keen to get involved.
- Kristi Doyle explained that the composition of the executive committee for Societies is such that those executive positions would be held by members of the OAA (including intern architects, student associates, honorary etc., so long as they are OAA members). It is a policy, but it is not legislated so it is open to discussion.
- John Stephenson said that it was a fair ask and addressed the other Societies for their feedback. No one objected or raised an issue with this.

#### Society Membership Fees

- Kristi Doyle discussed the need for consistency of fees as one factor in how the OAA arrived at the current fee structure for Societies, but now with online billing there is the capability for some flexibility. Each Society can set the fee they want and there is no restriction on that through OAA or our by-laws etc. She explained that the per capita funding that we flow through to Societies from the OAA is based on paid memberships. If Societies would like to change their fees this year it should be done very soon and the communication of this is important so that Society members understand how the decision to increase the fees was arrived at.
- Kristi Doyle reminded the Society Chairs to keep in mind that OAA members can choose to join whichever Society they choose and consider how fee increase would affect this. Societies are varied in how they operate and what they deliver in programming, therefore, we need to ensure that there is justification to members and demonstrate why the fee increase is justified – programming etc.
- Special Project Funding is set by Council each year as part of the annual budget process.
- It was generally agreed that each Society would like to see free membership offered to students to increase involvement, and that the base membership fee should be increased by \$15 to a total fee of \$65.

**Action Items:**

- Chairs were asked to notify Courtney Meagher about locally planned events and she will share them amongst Chairs and the OAA's various social media.
- TSA to forward the draft letter that they have prepared in anticipation of a fee increase to Kristi Doyle. OAA staff will coordinate a communication plan for members regarding the fee increase.

## Architecture Policy for Canada

*OAA President John Stephenson gave an overview of the work done to date on the development of an Architecture Policy for Canada. The main topics discussed were: grassroots involvement, next steps nationally, OAA Conference plenary session – Quebec City 2019, other ideas, and open discussion around a National Architecture Policy. The main purpose of the discussion was to give the Society Chairs an overview of the progress and to obtain feedback from them.*

### FEEDBACK:

#### Overview on the Evolving National Policy

- The working draft/consultation draft has the broad support of the regulators now and industry participation (including schools of architecture and the RAIC)
- It is focused mostly on architecture not architects or individuals
- Basic goals of the document: address lack of coherent overall vision for why the quality of the built environment is important, define and enforce the role of architects, societal benefits (this is what is important to politicians), hope for a systemic response to better procurement practices, to make Canadian architecture more compelling on the world stage, connect architects and the public, empower the profession and strengthen advocacy.
- John Stephenson emphasized that he is interested in feedback and asked what do you imagine the role of local Societies could be over the next year? The question was raised about what resources are available to the Societies to help disseminate this information. John Stephenson outlined how they are developing a modular kit of parts so that it is ready to use, scalable to resources available, hopefully by the end of this year early 2019 and there will be a plenary session on this topic at the OAA 2019 Conference in Quebec City.

#### Action Items:

- John Stephenson asked that each Society keep their members informed about this on-going project and if anyone has thoughts about the draft please funnel them back to him through Courtney Meagher. Suggest ideas about how your society may tackle the public engagement so that we can tailor the “kit of parts” to each Society.



**Regulation of  
Interior Design  
under the  
Architects Act**

*President Stephenson reminded that the most recent communique of July 27 to OAA members confirmed that the majority of members that responded to the consultation document survey preferred model one – the direct regulatory model. Also noted in that communique was that both the ARIDO membership as well as OAA Council voted in favour of proceeding with the first model - direct regulation, and directed that the next steps to pursue implementation be taken. Discussions with the Ministry of the Attorney General and the new Attorney General herself are expected to take place shortly to move ahead with implementation.*

*The Architects Act would be amended to remove the “interiors exemption,” from the public realm which currently permits anyone to provide interior design services within buildings otherwise regulated under the Architects Act. The interiors scope described by the current “exemption” would then be reframed as definition of the scope of interior design practice either in the Act or through regulation under the Act—the effect of which would be to restrict the practice of this scope to licensed members of the OAA and registered members of ARIDO.*

*Oversight over the regulation of Interior Design in Ontario by the OAA is being further defined, however, it is direct regulation. ARIDO and the OAA will determine education, experience and examination requirements for their respective members to maintain consistent licensing requirements relating to the practice of interior design under both organizations. This would be assessed and evaluated jointly on an ongoing basis as to remain current and consistent.*

*Architects, Licensed Technologists OAA and Interior Designers will continue to have mandatory continuing education to maintain their respective licenses. The respective professions will also be subject to professional conduct requirements and a complaints and discipline regime for the protection of the public interest. Interior Design firms will all be required to hold a Certificate of Practice to provide interior design services to the public for work within regulated buildings, along with minimum levels of mandatory professional liability insurance. Controlling ownership of an Interior Design firm will require to be by Licensed Interior Designers.*

**FEEDBACK:**

- The group discussed specific elements of the proposal including:
  - Ensuring building code competency for Interior Designers
  - The effect on small practices
  - Insurance for Interior Designers via Pro-Demnity
  - Need for considerable communications relative to scope of practice, titles, etc.

**Action Items**

- Courtney Meagher to re-circulate the “Path to Licensure” infographic that breaks down the steps for becoming licensed as an architect, a Licensed Technologist OAA and an Interior Designer for information.

**Procurement, RFP's  
and Contracts**

*The OAA's Strategy and progress continues the previous year's agenda with three areas of focus: Clients- proactive engagement, Clients-reactive, targeted in response to issues found, Members- professional responsibility and standards.*

**FEEDBACK**

**Procurement, RFP review and Alerts**

- There was concern expressed and discussion regarding project management roles being outsourced to third parties.
- The OAA asks that members continue to flag bad RFPs/ poor language and send them to Practice Advisors so we can follow up on it with the client.

**OAA Advisory re. IO VOR**

- OAA issued a detailed advisory and analysis of IO SC's to Document 600 with the recent refresh of the IO VOR
- Concerns over liability and insurance strongly articulated
- John Stephenson explained that the intent of the language in Doc 600 is so that architects aren't exposed to liability above what insurance covers. It is better to have a limit on liability that is known and that may be insured – the OAA anticipating an answer next week from IO. From a positive viewpoint, it teaches the membership about the power of resistance. It is precedent setting for and will change the dynamic between us and big clients.
- The OAA held a roundtable with a group of lawyers, clients/in-house legal, with the purpose to share their most important concerns in regard to Doc 600.
- This document was created when architects practiced in a fairly prescribed way. Now clients want a prime consultant to manage all consultants, so we need to reconcile ourselves to this business model.
- John Stephenson reminded the Societies that there was a survey sent to members about Doc 600; please share and encourage members to share their feedback

## World Architecture Day at Queen's Park

*OAA is hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual World Architecture Day at Queen's Park. MPPs were invited to nominate a building in their riding that they believe to be of significant value to their local communities. The OAA has received 28 building nominations from MPPs. PACT has chosen 8 buildings to highlight as part of the Queen's Park Picks contest. Recognition of every MPP building nomination will be done via Twitter, with tweets thanking the MPP for their nomination and sharing the building with our Twitter followers. Society chairs are invited to attend and meet MPPs at a lunch at Queen's Park on October 1, 2018. The afternoon session will be one on one meetings with MPPs and their local Society Chairs/members. Society Chairs are encouraged to contact their MPPs to attend. MPPs wish for more engagement with their local members of the profession.*

### FEEDBACK:

- Most of the nominations are heritage buildings or restoration/renovation projects.
- Meetings are casual affairs, MPPs want to hear concerns from their local architects (i.e. a streamline site approval).
- Local Society Chairs are encouraged to reach out to MPPs and ask for a meeting during the afternoon session.
- As of the Workshop, the planning for World Architecture Day was still underway, and the PGR team was working on setting up meetings between Society Chairs and MPPs.
- Society Chairs to contact OAA staff for hotel booking (costs of travel are also covered)

**CLOSING  
DISCUSSION**

*At the close of the workshop, the President opened the floor to general feedback and open discussion. The key items listed below were highlighted for consideration.*

**FEEDBACK:**

- The OAA is hosting two roundtables this fall, one being focused on Project Management, the other on Indigenous Communities and Reconciliation. We asked Society Chairs to encourage any experts in the field they may know to participate.
- Importance of supporting RAIC – we need to strengthen the national voice and RAIC needs the support of membership because membership brings resources and voices.