



West Virginia *PLANNER*

Winter 2003

Published by the West Virginia Planning Association

WVPA Website Features a New Look

There are some changes occurring at the West Virginia Planning Association's website – www.wvplanning.com

The website has recently undergone an update and subtle redesign. It been rearranged to make the “surfing” experience more enjoyable and more effective.

The changes will increase the utility of the site. The WVPA can now directly post news and information. Now there can be more frequent updates about planning issues that are important to the communities around the state.

The reason for this update is part of a move to make communications quicker and more responsive. There is also the need to make them more economical. To do that, the West Virginia Planning Association is moving toward extensive use of electronic communications. As a result, this will be the last printed issue of the *West Virginia Planner*.

Beginning in 2004, the website will be the main communications vehicle for the WVPA. New features such as e-mail alters and membership lists that can be updated on-line will be introduced as resources and expertise allow.

You can sign up for email alters now though, just by sending an email to webmaster@wvplanning.com. The email should have the subject line of “Email Alters” and be sent from the email where you would like to receive the electronic notes.

Anything that you would have previously submitted for publication in the quarterly newsletter should be sent to the webmaster for posting onto the website. This might be planning news in your local community or events that might be of interest to the WVPA membership or some general interest information related to the profession. And where it used to take weeks or even months to get the word out, it will now take just days.

Right now, the WVPA home page features basic information about the association. While the main features won't change, what is behind them will change over time. So keep your news and information coming to that the West Virginia Planning Association so the planning community can stay on top of the import happenings and issues in the Mountain State.

Inside this issue ...

- *President's Message* Page 2
- *2004 Meeting Info* Page 3
- *Legislative Focus* Page 5
- *Meeting Focus* Page 6

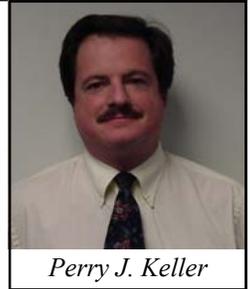


The header is the same but the rest of the WVPA website has substantially changed.

President's Message

New Things Happening with WVPA

Several new things have happened since we last met. You hopefully have noticed that our web site, www.wvplanning.com, has been received improvements that will allow certain association members access to update our site. This will be most helpful in making sure our organization has the most up-to-date for its membership, as well as promoting sound planning practice in West Virginia.



Perry J. Keller

Another on-going project that our Legislative Committee has been working on has been the updating of the enabling legislation for planning and zoning. The committee has been working on this issue for sometime and is hoping that the fruits of our labors are about ready to pay off. We have been meeting with a group of stakeholders to insure that we give this bill the best chance of passage.

An important factor throughout this process has been the help that Leff Moore has provided the WVPA. We knew we needed some legislative lobbying help and Leff has helped to champion our cause while providing some key insight into the workings of the Legislature. We are certainly not out of the woods, but we have gained some much needed support, thanks largely to Leff and the rest of the Legislative committee, Marjorie Ryan – Chair, Jim Wood, Chris Fletcher and myself.

As this year ends, so too does my term as President of this Association. I have had the privilege of serving with a group of professionals that have made my job rather easy. I truly believe that any organization is only as good as its officers and the WVPA's executive committee has worked tirelessly to promote planning and provide the resources that our members need.

I also want you to know that they can not do it all. They will need your help and commitment in order for the WVPA to reach its potential. At the upcoming annual meeting, take the time to thank those who have worked so hard on your behalf, as well as inquire how you can play a larger role in *our* organization. For with that, we can continue the phrase.....*Almost Heaven West Virginia, Keep Planning, We'll Get There!*

Sincerely,

Perry J. Keller

President, West Virginia Planning Association

Nominations Sought For WVPA Positions

With the coming of the new year, it is time for the West Virginia Planning Association to choose new officers.

Elections will take place for four positions at the WVPA annual meeting – President, Vice President, Secretary

and Treasurer. In addition, any necessary appointments for other offices and regional representatives.

If you are interested in holding any of these offices, or serving the association in any capacity, please contact President Perry J. Keller. His email is President@wvplanning.com. The deadline in January 21, 2004.



2004 WVPA Annual Membership Meeting

WHEN: Thursday, January 29, 2004

WHERE: Walker Theatre
Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences – WV
Charleston, WV

TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PRICE: \$40 (includes lunch)

SCHEDULE

- 10:00 a.m. **WELCOME**
Mayor Danny Jones, Charleston
- 10:30 a.m. **THE CLAY CENTER** – Project Presentation & Tour
Sue Sergi, CEO, Clay Center
James Ross, Director of Development, Clay Center
- 12:00 p.m. **LUNCHEON**
- 12:45 p.m. **BUSINESS MEETING**
See Agenda on Page 4
- 2:00 p.m. **KEYNOTE – Stuart Meck, FAICP**, is a Senior Research Fellow with the American Planning Association and the Principal Investigator for the APA's Growing SmartSM Project, a long-term effort to draft and implement the next generation of model planning and zoning legislation for the U.S. The Project is based in APA's Chicago Research Department, where Meck participates in other research initiatives, including planning statute reform studies for Montana, Michigan, and the Czech Republic, and two major reports, *Regional Approaches to Affordable Housing* (2003) and *Model Smart Development Codes* (2004, forthcoming). A former APA National President, Meck was also a Commissioner on the American Institute of Certified Planners Commission (AICP).
- 3:30 p.m. **TOUR OF CAPITAL COMPLEX**
WV Division of Tourism

2004 Business Meeting Agenda

Thursday, January 29, 2004

12:45 p.m.

Walker Theatre – Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences – WV
Charleston, WV

- **Call to Order**

- **Roll Call**

- **Approval of 2002 Minutes**

- **Reports**

President's Report	Perry Keller, E.L. Robinson WVPA President
Legislative Report.....	Marjorie Ryan, AICP, Benetec & Associates WVPA Legislative Liaison
Annual Conference Report	Chris Fletcher, AICP, Monongalia County WVPA Vice-President
Membership Report	Jim Wood, AICP, City of Morgantown WVPA Secretary
Financial Report	Sue Ann Morgan, Berkeley County WVPA Treasurer
Professional Development Report	Richard Dixon, AICP, City of Huntington WVPA Professional Development Officer
Website & Newsletter.....	Michael Dougherty, WVU Extension Service WVPA Webmaster and Newsletter Editor
Nominating Committee Report	Perry Keller

- **New Business**

Election of 2004 Officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer)

Service Recognition – Leff Moore

Scheduling Next Executive Committee Meeting

Other Issues for the Good of the Association

- **Adjournment**

West Virginia Planning Association

“West Virginia — Almost Heaven ... Keep Planning, We'll Get There!”

WVPA Working to Update State Planning Law

Members of the WVPA Legislative Committee have been converging regularly in Charleston for the past several months. The hours and miles traveled appear to be paying off with the development of seven bills drafted by legal counsel for the Senate Committee on Government Organization. WVPA member State Senator Brooks McCabe, AICP has taken the lead in calling together stakeholders from across the State to collectively assist with the development of the draft bills. It is anticipated that the individual bills will be consolidated into one, comprehensive bill when it is presented to the full Senate Subcommittee at January Interims.

The draft bills prepared to date focus on four major areas within the State planning enabling legislation: comprehensive planning, the zoning ordinance, expanding the subdivision ordinance to include land development on single parcels, and expanding the list of definitions.

WVPA is advocating for the following revisions to § 8-24 of the State Code:

- Expand the description of the contents of a comprehensive plan, including community development goals and objectives
- Review future land use in coordination with new infrastructure
- Include a strategy for long-term comprehensive plan implementation
- Recommend review of the comprehensive plan every five years with an update every ten years
- Clarify that a comprehensive plan must be prepared prior to a subdivision or zoning ordinance
- Eliminate the requirement that only “freeholders” (property owners) may be appointed to a planning commission or board of zoning appeals; open it up to “residents”
- Authorize the appointment of alternate members to a board of zoning appeals

- Incorporate land development standards for single-lot developments such as shopping centers or big box retail
- Permit administrative review and approval (by staff) of minor subdivision plans where the criteria for approving such plans are clearly and objectively included in a local ordinance
- Require only a 15-day notice for zoning variance requests
- Permit the regulation of exterior architectural features in any zoning district
- Require consistency between the comprehensive plan and the zoning ordinance
- Generally update the language within State Code to reflect more modern planning principles, concepts and terminology, and
- Require payment of attorneys fees and court costs to municipalities and counties which must seek judicial enforcement of their ordinances.

Stakeholders representing the following West Virginia organizations have been invited to participate in the legislative update process: Municipal League, County Commissioners Association, Association of County Officials, Farm Bureau, League of Women Voters, Manufactured Housing Association, Preservation Alliance, Home Builders Association, American Institute of Architects, Contractor’s Association, Association of Realtors, Citizens Action Group, Environmental Council, Rivers Coalition, Highlands Conservancy, Canaan Valley Institute and Land Trust.

Once the single draft bill is presented to the Subcommittee and made public, a copy of the draft bill will be posted on the WVPA website: www.wvplanning.com

Marjorie Ryan
WVPA Legislative Liaison

WVPA Annual Meeting Registration Form

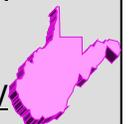
I will be attending the WVPA Annual Meeting on January 29, 2004 in Charleston, WV

I will bring payment of \$40 to the meeting

I have enclosed pre-payment of \$40 (payable to WVPA)

If you want to make payment in advance, please send it to (by Jan. 21, 2004):

WVPA
PO Box 2537
Morgantown, WV
26502



WVPA Annual Meeting Set for Charleston on Jan. 29, 2004

The West Virginia Planning Association will hold its annual membership business meeting on **Thursday, January 29, 2004** at the Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences in Charleston, W. Va. With all of the work and time committed by the Association's leadership and dedicated volunteers this past year to draft and revise legislation that we hope will overhaul WV State Code § 8-24, we were unable to devote enough energy to organize and conduct a full conference.

We will conduct our annual meeting in Charleston to coincide with the Legislative Session. In an effort to build on the tremendous progress we made this past year in promoting our legislative agenda, we are hopeful that this event will foster the enthusiasm within the Association necessary to significantly improve our State's

Planning Enabling Legislation. As an added bonus, we are also preparing for the 2004 Annual Conference.

The Clay Center is one of the most exciting development projects in West Virginia that celebrates our arts and sciences. Sue Sergi, CEO, Clay Center will guide us on a tour of the facility. After the luncheon and business meeting, Stuart Meck, FAICP will join us from the American Planning Association's Chicago Office to discuss the role and importance that state chapters play in leading state planning law reform. To end the day, we will take a guided tour of the Capital Complex where we hope to meet with some key legislative leaders and demonstrate our interest in revising the State Code.

The fee for the day's activities and

luncheon will be **\$40.00**. There is a registration sheet on **Page 5** for your convenience. Please **register via phone (304-291-9570) or email (VicePresident@wvplanning.com) by Wednesday, January 21, 2004** so that we can get an accurate count – *even if you send in the registration form*. We will accept pre-payment or payment at the door.

We have a lot of exciting organizational issues to report and discuss – election of officers, legislative progress, redesigned website, future newsletters, improved services to the membership, goals for 2004, etc. Our Association is getting stronger – for you! Together, “...*We'll Get There.*” See you on January 29th!!!

*Christopher M. Fletcher, AICP
Vice-President, WVPA*

**West Virginia Planning Association
Post Office Box 2537
Morgantown, WV 26502 USA**