



AIANY honored for advocacy efforts by AIA National

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By: Lance Jay Brown, FAIA

At this year's AIA National Convention in Chicago, AIANY was recognized for its advocacy efforts. The Post Sandy Initiative received the 2014 Institute Honors for Collaborative Achievement. The award recognizes the work of those involved in the multidisciplinary project, spearheaded by the AIANY Design for Risk and Reconstruction committee (DfRR), the results of which furthered the conversation about the role of architecture in building resilient cities. The expertise provided by AIANY and others enabled city agencies to respond by enacting changes to zoning and other construction regulations that enable short- and long-term recovery and resiliency. Architect and journalist Michael Crosbie, Ph.D., FAIA, interviewed me for a podcast during which I suggested that other AIA chapters look to the Post-Sandy Initiative as a template for their own regions. Service and advocacy oriented AIANY executive director Rick Bell, FAIA, was also honored with this year's prestigious Edward Kemper Award. AIA delegates elected new national leadership, including two members from New York State. For more information on the elections, please read it in last week's e-Oculus, AIANY's on-line newsletter. Other related programs at AIA National Convention that highlighted AIANY members' diverse advocacy efforts included, "HURRIPLAN: Training for Resilient Buildings Design at Coastal Communities," "Coordinated Disaster Recovery: Lessons from Hurricane Sandy," and "FitNation: Changing Culture."

Active design is also making its mark in the U.K. The FitLondon exhibition, which opened on June 28th and is on view through July 25th at the NLA in London, is an adaptation of the traveling FitNation exhibition by AIANY and the Center for Active Design. FitLondon celebrates design solutions to public health challenges with a focus on London projects. Read more about it online or visit NLA at The Building Centre, 26 Store St., London. Closer to home, AIANY executive director, Rick Bell, FAIA, was quoted in a recent Washington Post piece on Active Design. Read "City planners are increasingly aware of health benefits of clean, living landscapes" by Philip Kennicott.

On June 25th, "Affording Resilience: Housing Retrofits for Climate Threats," opened at the Center for Architecture. The exhibition, on view through August 7th, showcases the ideas from the January "Retrofit Solutions Workshop," organized by the NYU Furman Center in partnership with AIANY and Enterprise Community Partners. The exhibition explores the challenges and opportunities that multifamily buildings face when preparing for long-term climate resilience. N.Y.C. department of housing preservation and development commissioner, and former director of the Furman Center Vicki Been commented on the importance of advancing this conversation in N.Y.C. and the value of such discussions that bring together professionals from various fields. On July 15th the conversation continues with "Affordable Resilience: Housing Retrofits for Climate Threats Panel" at the Center for Architecture.

On June 14th, architects, artists, planners, government officials, and activists participated in the

"Open to the Public Symposium," building on themes presented in the "Open to the Public: Civic Space Now" exhibition now on view at the Center for Architecture. The day-long information-packed program offered insight into constructive principles guiding the design of public space. Keynote speaker Christine Bräm, executive director of the Office of Parks and Open Spaces for the city of Zurich, addressed public space as it relates to Switzerland's municipal services, direct democracy, and communal culture. Department of City Planning commissioner Carl Weisbrod and N.Y.C. Department of Parks and Recreation commissioner Mitchell Silver took part in a concluding conversation and emphasized the de Blasio administration's grassroots priorities and the synergies possible when agencies collaborate efficiently. The interdisciplinary panels brought to light some of the most important and relevant policy issues in N.Y.C. and around the globe. The speakers fostered an environment for productive sharing of achievable concepts, encouraging significantly more leadership and cooperation between agencies responsible for the civic realm. The Open to the Public: Civic Space Now series of programs began on July 2nd with "Public Space: Community and Privacy," which I introduced and NYC Department of Design + Construction (DDC) deputy commissioner David Resnick, AIA, moderated.

On June 12th, Antoni Vives, Barcelona's deputy mayor for Urban Habitat made a pit stop at the Center for Architecture for the opening of Barcelona Glòries: Dialogues & Transformation. The exhibition, in keeping with the theme 2014 presidential theme "Civic Spirit: Civic Vision," highlighted the finalists of the Barcelona city council's design competition that called on architects to submit proposals to transform a 32-acre roundabout of elevated highways into a sustainable and useful public space. Vives shared other government-supported plans for Barcelona and expressed enthusiasm about the BCN-NYC Urban Bridge 2014, Year of Catalan Architecture in New York. Rick Bell also visited the Glòries construction site in Barcelona on June 19th, accompanied by deputy mayor Vives and Maria Sisternas, director of Urban Habitat for the City of Barcelona

Our advocacy efforts this past month went international, but our focus remains on N.Y.C. This summer we will continue to meet with city council members and other agency heads. AIANY is a vital resource in the future of the city.

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