



## **AIANY's advocacy efforts have not slowed down**

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The summer is in full swing, but AIANY's advocacy efforts have not slowed down. We are squeezing in important summertime meetings with New York City commissioners and council members before hearings commence in September.

In July, AIANY continued to hold meetings with newly appointed commissioners. On July 2, a small group of architects, landscape architects, and engineers met with NYC Department of Design + Construction (DDC) commissioner Feniosky Peña-Mora. It was the second such roundtable discussion organized by AIANY to discuss ways in which DDC and design professionals can streamline the process of designing together.

Just two days after testifying before the Landmarks Preservation commission on Kohn Pedersen Fox's proposal for One Vanderbilt, Rick Bell and I had the opportunity to meet with the new chair of the LPC, Meenakshi Srinivasan. In addition to recapping our thoughts from the hearing, we discussed her goals for the commission under her leadership and how AIANY can help achieve them.

Our meeting with Vicki Been, commissioner of the NYC Department for Housing Preservation and Development, was very productive as well. After recapping the work that AIANY and HPD have done together in the past, commissioner Been had a number of items on which she needed AIANY input, including equitable design solutions for mixed-income developments, the HPD architectural review process, and unsuccessful rezonings. HPD is committed to achieving the mayor's affordable housing plan, so commissioner Been is actively seeking advice from various stakeholders.

We also met with a series of council members who chair committees that relate to the work of AIANY. Council member Mark Treyger, of District 47 in Brooklyn, is the chair of the Committee on Recovery and Resiliency. He had a number of questions for us and was intent on learning from the research of the AIANY Post-Sandy Initiative. His office is planning a forum on resiliency planning and preparedness, and AIANY is eager to collaborate on its content. He is also looking for ways to effectively relay the important information to the public. Treyger requested our input on an upcoming bill that, if passed, will evaluate aging infrastructure in New York City and make the ratings public and transparent.

We also met with council member Margaret Chin who represents District 1 in Manhattan and is chair of the Committee on Aging. I, along with members of the AIANY Design for Aging Committee, talked with council member Chin about ways to accommodate her district's growing senior population and how we can help carry out her initiatives, such as through the senior housing task force that her office is working to assemble.

Council member David Greenfield, who represents District 44 in Brooklyn and is chair of the Committee on Land Use, was also looking for input on his upcoming projects as well as our thoughts on his committee's work. We discussed long-term solutions to some of New York City's planning and

infrastructure challenges.

At the Center for Architecture, the current exhibitions form an ensemble that underscores the importance of public space, which coincides with my 2014 presidential theme, Civic Spirit: Civic Vision. QueensWay Connection: Elevating the Public Realm, up through Oct. 31, presents entries to the AIANY Emerging New York Architects (ENYA) committee's ideas competition. Entrants designed vertical gateways for the elevated viaduct portion of the abandoned railway in Queens. The Trust for Public Land, Friends of the Queensway, and their design consultants hope to convert the site into an urban greenway.

Designing Free Speech: A Call to Design New York City Public Spaces for First Amendment Rights, organized by Theatrum Mundi, in partnership with AIANY, asked architects, designers, activists, artists, and anyone interested in imagining new spaces in the city for free expression and propose re-designs that transform public spaces in New York City into places that activate the rights enshrined in the First Amendment. The jury, on which I served, selected nine proposals that are on display at the Center for Architecture through Sept. 6.

Open to the Public: Civic Space Now, open through Sept. 6, and the related programs continue to garner praise. The exhibition was the primary topic of an interview that AIANY executive director Rick Bell, FAIA, and I had with the Commercial Observer. City Lab also took note of the exhibition and the importance of the changing function of open urban centers. Together, the exhibitions at the Center for Architecture highlight the value of public space in the future of our city.

I also continue to prioritize the AIANY resiliency efforts. On July 11, AIANY and the AIANY Design for Risk and Reconstruction Committee (DfRR) co-organized the third AIA Regional Working Group Resilience Workshop with AIA New Jersey, AIA New York State, AIA Connecticut, AIA Rhode Island, and Architecture for Humanity. The day-long workshop focused on the Post Sandy effects on infrastructure and transportation systems in the region. Representatives from the Federal and State governments, private industries, and the general public discussed what changes have been made since Sandy and what is planned for the future. These discussions on will lead to recovery solutions that communities can adopt.

On July 3, I, along with other DfRR members participated in the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Disaster Resilience Workshop at the Stevens Institute. Attendees were divided into facilitated working groups to review the draft Resiliency Framework Manual, due for publication in 2015.

Meetings continue with the presidents of the other four borough AIA chapters, and we are actively looking at ways to establish closer working relations that will give us a greater voice in city-wide policy decisions.

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