



Center for Architecture prepares for major changes

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By Lance Brown, AIA

As we gear up for the new year, the Center for Architecture is preparing for major changes. After housing the AIA New York Chapter and the Center for Architecture Foundation for over 10 years, the Center for Architecture is reorganizing and creating a new 501(c)3. The reorganized Center for Architecture will continue to celebrate design excellence and the architectural profession, while expanding outreach to encourage a broad public dialogue about the importance of design in shaping our built environment.

Beginning in January 2015, the reorganized Center for Architecture Foundation will convene a new board and begin operations under a new set of bylaws as the Center for Architecture. The new board will include representatives from the current boards of the Center for Architecture Foundation and AIA New York Chapter as well as individuals who have skills, interests, and resources to further the Center for Architecture's mission.

As we prepare for a new era at the Center, AIANY continues to participate in conversations about upcoming city programs and share the perspective of architects in New York City. At the New York Building Congress Architects Leadership Council meeting on November 17th, guest speaker Shola Olatoye, chair and CEO of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) discussed NYCHA's extensive capital program as well as resiliency and planning initiatives. I had the opportunity to discuss with her NYCHA's approach to accommodating its aging population. Although housing for seniors is not explicitly stated in NYCHA's plan, Olatoye is determined to address the needs of NYCHA's growing number of senior residents. She acknowledged the associated challenges but also the importance in addressing these issues. I made it clear that AIANY and the AIANY Design for Aging Committee are available to assist NYCHA approach design for aging strategies.

I, along with AIANY executive director Rick Bell and our colleagues Gino Longo and Willy Zambrano from AIA Queens, Jeff Geary from AIA Staten Island, and Ida Gallea from AIA Brooklyn, met with NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) Commissioner Rick Chandler on November 19th. We had a productive discussion about DOB's 10-year capital plan, collaborative review, and zoning protocol. The AIA chapters in NYC want to champion DOB's initiatives and work together with the Department to improve the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

In this spirit, many of the AIANY program committees have planned policy-oriented programming over the past month. AIANY continues to honor architects who have worked to advance the lives of the public in NYC. On November 17th at the annual Ratensky Lecture, organized by the AIANY housing committee, Alan Mallach was awarded for his lifetime commitment to affordable housing planning and community development. The AIANY Design for Risk and Reconstruction Committee (DfRR) and AIANY Health Facilities Committee collaborated with the New York Society for Health

Planning (NYSHP) on the November 18th "Ebola, How New York Hospitals Brace for Pandemics." The program answered questions as to how well prepared healthcare delivery systems and hospital facilities in New York City are to deal with outbreaks of contagious diseases. The program covered the medical, public policy and physical components to staying safe. The Chapter and the CFA continue to present a wide variety of programs that continue to reinforce the 2014 theme "Civic Spirit: Civic Vision." On November 24th, there were two simultaneous programs on affordable housing and diversity and music and architecture. On November 25th, another three programs took place that addressed coastal resilience

AIANY, the AIANY committee on the environment, and a number of partner organizations are also working to ensure that the mayor's "80 by 50" plan is enacted city-wide. Following the lead of Architecture 2030 founder and CEO Edward Mazria, AIA, AIANY will continue efforts to educate the profession on the ins and outs of recent energy codes and green financing options while also lobbying policy makers to take charge. I suggested the establishment of an 80x50 Corps to visit offices and encourage engagement with this most critical initiative. AIANY's sustainability work will be highlighted at the 2015 Board Inaugural on December 9th.

The 2015 Inaugural program will include a review of the past year's highlights and accomplishments, and we will discuss key initiatives that we hope to move forward in the new year. The event will also include a preview of what is to come in 2015 as incoming president Tomas Rossant, AIA, founding partner and design principal at Ennead Architects, realizes the vision of his presidential theme, "Dialogues from the Edge of Practice."

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