AIA Michigan

Huron Valley Director Message

April 30, 2024

The change to 2024 brought AIA Huron Valley some new board members, and also new leadership as Scott Gustafson moved out of the presidency and Jason Ennis moved in. Many board positions are 2-year terms, staggered so not everyone changes out at the same time.

In February, Jason led us through a Saturday morning board retreat – partly informing new members about what each of us do and how their roles fit in, and partly a strategic planning session to determine where we want to go.

That led into a new draft Strategic Plan for 2024-2026, which we're still refining. No real plans for dramatic changes in direction but hoping to build energy for increased involvement in the community, and to create additional reasons for local architects to become and stay active AIA members.

Many of the traditional activities are continuing as we discuss what else we can take on. So we have continuing education activities at least monthly (A2Zero events about green design, and other aspects of practice), and are hoping to have a more active roster of social and educational gatherings now that the weather is a little more supportive (including an Ann Arbor mural walk on May 2, weather pending, and hopefully a June walking tour of interesting buildings in Ypsilanti). And preliminary planning has started for the fall design awards and banquet.

We have also restarted a chapter newsletter, by email of course. In an earlier generation of involvement, I wrote and edited the printed newsletter for many years, back when such things existed, and it's nice to have a new version (and nice that we can produce and distribute it at much lower cost!).

Unfortunately, we have had a couple reasons to include an "In Memoriam" section in the newsletter as we've lost some long-time and very active members this year. These include Michael Strother, AIA, who overlapped with my earlier service, and was instrumental in developing the chapter design awards; and Gary Cooper, AIA, whom I didn't know well but was a long-time fixture of the community.

We have also continued involvement with the larger AIA community, with a couple board members going to the national AIA Leadership Summit in Washington DC, and a few members participating in the state legislative day in March.

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As all you readers know, it is a challenge balancing work, family, and community involvement through all life throws at us. But we at AIA Huron Valley continue to try!

David Esau, AIA
Huron Valley Director