



Arab American Association of Engineers and Architects

Capital Area Chapter (MD, DC and VA)

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Meeting Minutes

Date: 02/04/2010

Time: 6:30 pm-9:00 pm

Location: Panera Bread-Tyson's Corner Mall

RE: Meeting with Board of Trustees

Attendees:

Name	Telephone	Email Address
Eissa Hajj-Hamad		eissa_a2000@yahoo.com
Bilal Ayyub	301-405-1956	ayyub@bmaengineering.com
Ziad Sabra	410-737-6564	zsabra@sabra-wang.com
Rabih Najib	410-977-8529	Rabih.Najib@alphacorporation.com
Mohammad Labban	410-782-5603	MJLabban@co.pg.md.us
Sam Abdelfattah	703-981-6502	sam@mepdesigns.com
Saed Rahwanji	410-531-1105	srahwanji@verizon.net
Mohammad Fridy	703-209-5940	mfridy@gmail.com

Next meeting: [Date]: TBD

[time]: TBD

[Location]: TBD

I. Introduction

The Executive Committee (EC) members invited the Board of Trustees (BT) to a dinner meeting at Tyson's Corner Panera Bread to discuss the Strategic plan of the association and the National Conference/ Annual Dinner. Ziad Sabra , Bilal Ayyub and Eissa Hajj-Hamad from the BT attended the meeting.

II. Announcements

No new Announcements

III. Discussion

The following notes identify key points made in the discussion:

Strategic Plan

- Rabih welcomed the BT, introduced the association and presented the meeting agenda.
- The association is preparing to go national and our chapter will be hosting the next national conference in October.
- The most successful chapter is the Chicago chapter and we will need to learn from their experience.
- Based on a National Survey of all AAAEA members nationwide, most of the members are looking for Networking & Activities opportunities.
- The EC noted that the Strategic Plan is a long-term plan and is not meant to be implemented as a whole this year.

- The Committees, when formed, will be responsible to develop the “realistic” day-to-day plan of action and implementing it.
- The EC noted that the Strategic Plan sets the guidelines for the committees and gives them some flexibility to improvise & be creative.
- Ziad Sabra noted that the performance measures need to be quantity based & quality based.
- The BT emphasized the importance of sustaining existing members & attracting new members.
- Membership is extremely critical to get credibility.
- Ziad Sabra noted that the one-year term is very challenging & is not enough to accomplish a whole lot.
- The BT advised the EC to pick one major objective and focus on developing it for this year.
- The BT noted that the Vision Statement should be quantitative & more realistic and that the first & fifth bullet points of the vision statement are vague & need to be re-defined.
- The BT noted that we should not limit ourselves & must consider enrolling contractors in the association.
- The EC discussed the location of the monthly executive meeting and the ways to attract more people to attend.
- It was suggested that seminar type meetings can be held in both states, Maryland and Virginia, covering topics of interest to members in each state. It is better to hold these meetings during the week and right after work.
- The BT emphasized the importance of having the website upgraded and improved.
- Ziad Sabra highlighted the experience of similar organizations like the American Indian Forum & noted that we should try to learn from their experience.
- Saed asked how we can engage Arabs of diverse backgrounds to our association knowing that most of our current members are from Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian & Egyptian backgrounds.
- Bilal noted that we should extend ties to other Arab American organizations.
- We have to keep the members interested and engaged by organizing an event every month.
- We should not be labeling people as ex-members or non members. Everybody is a member, but you can be a paid or non-paid member.
- The committees were supposed to be formed this week.
- The volunteer response was very low. Only eight people volunteered for the committees. Most of the work of the committees will end up being done by the EC.
- Bilal asked everybody to identify what he or she wants from the association with one word. Following were the answers:
 - Ziad, Networking
 - Eissa; Help Arab American Community/ socialize.
 - Mohammad Fridy; Networking & professional organization.
 - Rabih; Help Arab American Community & become a resource to those students and engineers coming from our countries to help them in the US.
 - Mohammad Labban; Help Arab American Community
 - Saed; Influence/ Lobbying.
 - Bilal; Help Arab American Community
- Bilal noted that the common goal to all members is that we want to do business together.
- The BT emphasized the importance of getting the people who can benefit the association involved.
- Bilal noted that we cannot compete with other Professional engineering organizations when it comes to professional development but rather our association can act as a resource & facilitator.
- Ziad noted that the association could use the resources available at his office for members seeking PE licensing.
- Eissa submitted his comments on the Strategic Plan to Mohammad Fridy.
- The Association should try to organize more happy hours & social networking events.
- The BT advised the EC to set expectations that are more realistic.
- Mohammad Fridy noted that the connection with the Arab community as important as it is, is not an interest of the younger generation of Arab Americans Engineers and Architects.
- The BT advised that the EC contact Arab Embassies & other Arab American organizations.

National Conference & Annual Dinner

- Saed gave an introduction about the National Conference & Annual Dinner.
- The purpose of the dinner is exposure within our community.
- Saed noted that Ray Lahoud expressed interest in being the Keynote Speaker.
- Bilal noted that it might be better to do the dinner on a weekday instead of weekend because speakers would be more available.
- Bilal noted that two people could reach Ray Lahoud, George Salem & Jim Zoghbi.
- Another Candidate for keynote speaker is Elijah Cummins.
- Ziad noted that he could reach Cummins & invite him to be the Keynote speaker at the dinner if required.
- The BT asked the EC to better define the theme of the Annual dinner & brainstorm what we need from the keynote speaker.
- Bilal suggested targeting the president of one of the big Engineering / Construction companies like Clark & Bechtel.
- The Keynote speaker should be somebody who can contribute to helping our businesses and our community.
- The keynote speaker might be somebody who is from another professional organization and can talk about how we can grow our organization.
- we still need to have another meeting to discuss the Annual Dinner event in more details especially the keynote speaker research.

IV. Action Items

- No action items were generated.

V. Attachments

- Annex 1: Strategic Plan Draft

Mohammad R. Fridy
Secretary

**Arab American Association of Engineers and Architects
Capital Area Chapter**

DRAFT

2010 Strategic Plan



January 16, 2010

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Executive Summary

The Arab American Association of Engineers and Architects, Capital Area Chapter started in 2008 as a professional organization dedicated to help, strengthen, empower, and inspire its members for excellence. It promotes and advocates the Arab American Engineers, Computer Science, and Architects by providing career and educational enhancement programs; and networking opportunities through seminars and social activities and events. It is a non-political, non-religious, and non-profit organization.

Our strategic plan is developed to achieve the different objectives of the association. It is divided into multiple key areas with certain objectives that belong to each of these key areas. Each objective has a list of strategies that will be followed in order to achieve that particular objective, along with a list of measures that will indicate whether we are successful in doing so or not.

Vision Statement

- Become one of the Leading professional organizations in the Metropolitan DC area.
- Attract most if not all American Arab Architects & Engineers to become a member of our organization.
- Empower our members & their businesses towards becoming a major player in the Architectural and Engineering professional fields.
- Establish a Lobbying force capable of influencing decision makers in professional related matters of interest to our members.
- Become one of the sought after advisory organizations for public & private bodies in the Metropolitan DC area.
- Establish recognition for Arab American Engineers & Architects as a constructive force in enhancing our local communities.

Strategic Plan Key Areas

As AAAEA is looking forward to going national in 2011, the national steering committee has identified several areas that need to be worked on before the association can become a national organization.

Our strategic plan includes some of the key areas that were identified by the national steering committee as well as other areas of interest to our local chapter.

The following is a list of **Key Areas** for our business plan:

1. Membership and Outreach
2. Policies and Procedures
3. Activities
4. Finance
5. IT and Communication
6. Education and Career Enhancement

Objectives

As mentioned above, each key area includes several objectives that we need to work on. This section identifies the different objectives for each of the key areas of the business plan.

1. Membership and Outreach:
 - 1.1. Recovering ex-members
 - 1.2. Retaining existing members
 - 1.3. Recruiting new members
 - 1.4. Creating student chapters
 - 1.5. Reaching out to other organizations
 - 1.6. Increasing Businesses participation in the organization
 - 1.7. Promoting associate membership for partners of the industry.
2. Policies and Procedures:
 - 2.1. Reviewing and amending our by-laws
 - 2.2. Keeping records
 - 2.3. Email and email addresses policy
 - 2.4. Communication policy
3. Activities:
 - 3.1. Planning networking events
 - 3.2. Planning social activities
 - 3.3. Planning annual dinner
 - 3.4. Planning volunteer work
 - 3.5. Planning sports activities

4. Finance:
 - 4.1. Setting budgets for each program
 - 4.2. Collecting annual membership dues
 - 4.3. Reaching out to sponsors
 - 4.4. Creating scholarship fund
5. IT and Communication:
 - 5.1. Creating monthly newsletter
 - 5.2. Creating email communication strategy
 - 5.3. Automating our operation process
 - 5.4. Improving our website
 - 5.5. Creating members directory
6. Education and Career Enhancement:
 - 6.1. Collecting technical papers
 - 6.2. Planning and conducting seminars
 - 6.3. Establishing EIT/FE courses
 - 6.4. Establishing PE courses
 - 6.5. Establishing ARE courses

Strategies

Each of the objectives listed under each of the key areas require strategies that need to be followed to achieve that objective. The following is a suggested list of strategies and each committee needs to present its own strategies list.

1. Membership and Outreach:

1.1. Recovering ex-members

1.1.1. Communicating with ex-members

1.1.2. Informing ex-members of the new changes and interesting events

1.2. Retaining existing members

1.2.1. Establishing activities of interest to our members

1.2.2. Increasing active participation of existing members

1.2.3. Establishing scholarship program to Arab students

1.3. Recruiting new members

1.3.1. Developing presentation materials to introduce our association to potential members

1.3.2. Developing brochures about our association

1.3.3. Holding events to attract Arab engineers and introduce the association to them

1.4. Creating student chapters

1.4.1. Contacting our members at different institute to organize meeting to present the association to students

1.4.2. Contacting embassies to obtain lists of Arab students in the area

1.4.3. Reaching out to students at all colleges and universities

1.5. Reaching out to other organizations

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- 1.5.1. Contacting other Arab associations in the capital area to co-organize different events
 - 1.5.2. Contacting other Engineering associations in the capital area to co-organize different events
 - 1.6. Increasing Businesses participation in the organization
 - 1.6.1. Organizing events oriented towards promoting cooperation between members' businesses
 - 1.7. Promoting associate membership for partners of the industry
 - 1.7.1. Inviting other industry businesses to become associate members of the association and promote cooperation with them
 - 2. Policies and Procedures:
 - 2.1. Reviewing and amending our by-laws
 - 2.1.1. Reviewing the content of our by-laws to ensure that everything included is applicable to our chapter
 - 2.1.2. Reviewing the list of committees that are required as per our by-laws
 - 2.1.3. Amending the by-laws with a new list of committees that should be permanent
 - 2.1.4. Establishing ad-hoc committees for the different activities that span over a short period of time
 - 2.2. Keeping records
 - 2.2.1. Establishing a database repository for our meeting agendas and minutes
 - 2.3. Email and email addresses policy
 - 2.3.1. Establishing email policy to identify who has access to the email addresses listing and who can send mass email messages
 - 2.3.2. Establishing policy for use of email addresses of members
 - 2.3.3. Establishing policy to deal with abuse of email addresses of members
 - 2.3.4. Establishing policy of signing of email messages
 - 2.4. Communication policy

2.4.1. Establishing policy on communication methods

2.4.2. Establishing policy on initiating a communication with others

2.4.3. Establishing policy to deal with abuse of communication privileges

3. Activities

3.1. Planning networking events

3.1.1. Golf outing

3.2. Planning social activities

3.2.1. Bowling

3.2.2. Tarneeb

3.3. Planning annual dinner

3.4. Planning volunteer work

3.5. Planning sports activities

3.5.1. Volleyball

3.5.2. Basketball

3.5.3. Soccer

3.5.4. Football

4. Finance

4.1. Setting budgets for each program

4.2. Collecting annual membership dues

4.3. Reaching out to sponsors

4.4. Checking the ACCESS program

4.5. Creating scholarship fund

5. IT and Communication

5.1. Creating monthly newsletter

5.1.1. Collecting articles of interest to our members

5.1.2. Setting a template for the newsletter

5.2. Creating email communication system

5.3. Automating our operation process

5.3.1. Creating standard membership forms for new members

5.3.2. Creating standard membership forms for renewals

5.3.3. Creating standard membership forms for corporate

5.3.4. Creating standard forms for donations to the association

5.3.5. Creating standard thank-you letters to donors

5.3.6. Creating standard forms for sponsorship

5.3.7. Creating standard thank-you letters to sponsors

5.3.8. Establishing a database for members' email addresses and provide the ability to our members to remove their email address from our listing for specific email messages

5.4. Improving our website

5.4.1. Creating a plan for our website

5.4.2. Creating members and corporate directory online

5.4.3. Renewing membership and collecting donation online

5.4.4. Posting an interactive calendar of events online

5.4.5. Posting education seminars online

5.4.6. Posting meeting minutes online

- 5.4.7. Coordinating with the national association to manage our members' information
- 5.4.8. Creating email addresses to executive board members and committees' chairs
- 5.5. Creating members directory
 - 5.5.1. Creating Arab American Engineers and Architects Directory
 - 5.5.2. Reaching out to businesses for sponsorship of the directory
- 6. Education and Career Enhancement
 - 6.1. Collecting technical papers
 - 6.2. Planning and conducting seminars
 - 6.2.1. Requesting abstracts from authors/presenters
 - 6.2.2. Reviewing collected abstracts
 - 6.2.3. Requesting final presentation and handout copies
 - 6.2.4. Scheduling seminars
 - 6.3. Establishing EIT/FE courses
 - 6.4. Establishing PE courses
 - 6.5. Establishing ARE courses

Committees

As we come up with the list of committees that we need in 2010, each executive board member should oversee at least one of these committees. It would be the responsibility of the executive board member to ensure that either the committee chair is available during the monthly board meeting to provide a report about the committee, or the board member will be responsible to provide such a report.