

STaR Division Newsletter

Small Town and Rural Planning Division — July, 2008



A Division of the
American Planning
Association

APA

STaR Award Winner

Moreland, Georgia Comprehensive Plan



By Marilyn Hall, Hall Consulting, Watkinsville, GA

In 2006, the Town of Moreland, Georgia was facing significant development pressure. The western half of the Town was largely vacant, and a large “mega site” of 1,500 acres to the west of the town was likely to be developed over the next few years. In an environment of impending massive change, the citizens of Moreland embarked on their comprehensive planning process. Moreland is located in Coweta County, Georgia. The Town has a population of about 450 people. On average, residents of Moreland are less educated and have lower incomes than the county and region in which they live.

The State of Georgia required only that the plan include an updated vision and Short Term Work Program. It did not require a public involvement program. However, Moreland understood that a public involvement campaign would be necessary in order to develop an accurate vision and ensure public support. As a result, with the help of Hall Consulting, Inc. they developed a Community Participation Program that actively pursued public involvement and included the following strategies:

- * Identification of individual stakeholders;
- * Education of residents and elected officials on the comprehensive planning process;
- * Distribution of a survey to every household;

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This newsletter is published electronically by the STaR Division.

From the Chair

Dave Gattis, FAICP

On behalf of the other members of your STaR Executive Committee, I'd like to thank you for your support and we look forward to serving you over the next two years. The Division is only as successful as the participation of its members, so I encourage you to become involved. Feel free to contact us if you have an idea or a suggestion regarding the activities of the Division.

I enjoyed meeting many of you in Las Vegas and hope that you had a beneficial experience at the National Planning Conference. I thought that the two STaR Division sessions on Volunteer-written County Plans and Planning in Rural Communities after Katrina were excellent. I also enjoyed getting out of Las Vegas and visiting many of the small towns in southern Nevada and southwest Utah, including a trip to Zion National Park after the conference.

Of course, it is not too early to begin thinking about the 2009 National Planning Conference in Minneapolis next April. The deadline for submission of conference sessions is August 15th (for more information, see the article on Page 6.) Thanks to the efforts of Dale Powers, we are also trying to arrange a mobile workshop that will concentrate on small town and rural issues. Finally, we are investigating the possibility of holding our Annual Business Meeting in a small town setting (along with bratwurst and beer.)

I appreciate those of you who have responded to my questions to begin our "conversation on small town planning," that I included in my July 3rd e-mail. I will compile the responses and get those back to you within the next 30 days. If you haven't responded, the questions were:

- * What are the benefits of practicing in a small town or rural area?
- * What has been the highlight in your community, your department, or your professional career during the last two years? Was there a particular project or victory that you are proud of?
- * What is the biggest challenge facing your community?
- * Why do you belong to STaR? What do you like about it? What do you wish we were doing that we are not doing now?

E-mail your responses to me and I'll include them in the compilation.

Mickey Rhoades and Joni Graves currently are revising the criteria and application form for the Division grants programs. Look for new information on this shortly.

Finally, you'll see some changes in the look of our newsletter and letterhead over the coming months as we try to conform with APA's new Branding Guidelines. Here in Texas, branding usually involves hot branding irons and singed hides, but we'll see what we can come up with without too much pain.



Dave Gattis, Deputy City Manager
City of Benbrook, Texas

STaR Division

2008 - 2010 Executive Committee

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STaR Provides Grant to New Mexico Chapter to Develop Tool for Community Planning

By Victoria Hirschberg
 NMAPA Board Member/ UNM CRP Graduate Student
 Victoriah413@yahoo.com

Across the state of New Mexico, mountains, historic irrigation ditches and deserts slice through the landscape that consists of numerous small communities with scattered urban centers. The varied landscape and the diverse people that visit or call New Mexico home presents numerous challenges and opportunities for planners. The New Mexico chapter of the American Planning Association (NMAPA) wants to hear stories about these planning challenges and opportunities and create an informative book that chronicles the Land of Enchantment's unique tale.

With funding provided by the APA Small Town and Rural Division and the APA Chapter Presidents Council, NMAPA will create and produce *A Gathering of Places*, a book that can serve as a tool for community members and planners who deal with issues of water conservation, tourism development and historic preservation. The grant application reads, "The NMAPA hopes to use this booklet that will be available on-line and in print, to illustrate the unique challenges planners in New Mexico face and how they can help to facilitate the creation of better communities. This booklet will help show the need for a state planning office in the Land of Enchantment."

NMAPA Board members believe the production of the booklet and the community outreach component will facilitate a dialogue among public citizens, officials, organizers and planners about making great communities. The grant, written by a board member, received funding through summer 2009 and will partner with the University of New Mexico's Community and Regional Planning program in Albuquerque.

While initial preparation is under way, the official kick-off for the project will be at the annual NMAPA conference October 9 to 11, 2008 in Ruidoso, NM. Following the conference, chapter members and participants will travel to several places and cities to hold public meetings, conduct interviews and collect stories and anecdotes from people who live, work and plan in these places. Traveling to the small towns and rural areas represent a crucial element in this process because people often forget these places or undermine their importance to the state. Along the New Mexico-Mexico border, small towns lack adequate drinking water and are preparing for the construction of a wall. Native American pueblos and reservations throughout New Mexico grapple with economic development and agriculture preservation. Villages deal with maintaining an identity as bigger cities creep into their space and the bigger cities tackle issues such as increased population, transportation and connectivity to these smaller places. The grant states, "this project represents a multi-layered approach to discuss community-based planning and design in the state of New Mexico."

Updates on the progress and stories from this project will appear on the NMAPA website (www.nmapa.org) throughout the year. The NMAPA board hopes that this project and the booklet will help show the diversity of people, stories and planning that happens daily in the state and can serve as a model for other organizations.



Rio Grande near Taos, New Mexico

2008 STaR AWARDS WINNERS

Presented at the 2008 APA Conference in Las Vegas

Congratulations to our 2008 Small Town and Rural Planning Division Award winners. Here is a summary of the awards ceremony held in Las Vegas. Thanks also to our Awards Committee, consisting of Dave Gattis (Benbrook, Texas), Paul Bednar (Paul Bednar Planning & Design, Illinois), Leanne Harter (Story County, Iowa), and Jon Sevald (Sherburne County, Minnesota.)

Vernon Deines Award for an Outstanding Small Town or Rural Plan

Town of Avon, Colorado for their Avon Comprehensive Plan

Avon is a town of 8,000 (many of which worked in Vail), faced with maintaining and creating a distinctive character in the face of growth stimulated by the Beaver Creek Ski resort and a major regional retail center on the outskirts of town. The Town, in association with Design Workshop as a consultant, worked with various stakeholders in developing a vision for the community, a detailed set of goals and policies, and a set of building design standards for a community oriented around a vibrant town center. The awards committee was impressed by the quality of the work and the plan presentation.



Accepting the award Rebecca Leonard of Design Workshop, Aspen, Colorado (rleonard@designworkshop.com), with Dave Gattis, FAICP, STaR Executive Committee Chair.

John Keller Award for Outstanding Planning Initiative for a Small Town or Rural Area:

Community Outreach efforts by the Town of Moreland, Georgia for its 2006-2026 Comprehensive Plan

Moreland is a town of less than 500 people with limited financial resources. In association with Hall Consulting, the town undertook an extensive public participation program that far exceeded the minimum required by the State. The activities included an educational program to the residents and stakeholders on the comprehensive planning process, a questionnaire and comment form, a visual preference survey, creation of a stakeholder committee, a cognitive mapping exercise and numerous public meetings. The town also conducted a “conversation on annexation” to educate the citizens and elected officials on the pros and cons of annexation as a growth strategy. As an outcome of

the planning process, Moreland adopted a tree protection ordinance and a conservation subdivision ordinance. The Awards committee was impressed by the public participation efforts conducted on a limited budget.



Accepting the award from John Keller, FAICP is Marilyn Hall of Hall Consulting of Watkinsville, GA (left) (mhall@hallplanning.com)

John Segedy Award for an Outstanding Student Project:

Ohio State University CRP 852 (Joshua Anderson, Ian Beniston, Ma'ayan Citron, Nathan Leppo, Bridget Troy, Erica Wicks, and Rickie Yeager) for their Community Plan for Eastern Harrison County, Mississippi.

Under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Evans-Cowley, the class developed a community plan for Eastern Harrison County, an area affected by Hurricane Katrina. The students engaged citizens as part of the planning process through interviews, a series of Town Hall meetings, newsletters, 1-800 telephone line, a citizen's steering committee and a web-base project management system. The students also used GIS to evaluate development suitability, including using the Land Use Conflict Identification System (LUCIS) system. The resulting plan report was professionally prepared and presented with high-quality graphics and page design. The plan, itself, stressed the themes of connectivity, preservation and place-making.



Accepting the award are OSU students Rickie Yeager and Ma'ayan Citron, with Dave Gattis, FAICP, STaR Executive Committee Chair.

Request for Conference Session Proposals for the 2009 National Planning Conference Due by August 15th

The STaR Division is looking for some innovative programs to showcase at the 2009 National Planning Conference in Minneapolis on April 25-29, 2009. The division will select two sessions to sponsor at the conference and is looking for programs that update current topics or topics that go beyond the introductory stage and are eligible for CM credits. Proposals submitted for consideration by the STaR Division should be of a topic that reaches out to the needs of the small town and rural planner.

Some session ideas might include:

Economic Development in small town and rural communities:

With today's economic conditions, how are small towns and rural communities surviving?

What are some of the positive impacts of current conditions on small towns and rural communities?

Are there any?

Why do our communities grow and/or what are the challenges of growth in this market.

From a planner's point of view, what are the challenges of moving from a rural to an urban community?

From a planner's point of view, how has planning helped to contain and preserve our rural culture and economic base?

These are just a few ideas to consider and, of course, the committee would enjoy a wide variety of subject matter.

Deadline for submittals is **AUGUST 15, 2008** and can be submitted through APA's Division session proposal site, www.planning.org/2009conference/sessionproposal/division.htm. Be sure to indicate Small Town and Rural Planning as the division you are submitting to. Questions about the submittal process can be sent to Mickey Rhoades at mrhoades@warrentonva.gov. You can call Mickey Rhoades at 540-347-6267 with any questions you may have.

STaR Member Seeks Assistance on Minimalist Land Use Ordinances

David Edgell is working with Leipsic, a small (population +/- 200) historic waterfront town in rural Delaware. The town just prepared and adopted their first ever comprehensive plan two years ago. They currently have no zoning or land use regulations, and have asked for his help in preparing an ordinance.

The town planning commission has asked for a very simple, bare bones, basic land use ordinance -- one page if possible! This may be impossible given the legal requirements in their State-enabling statutes. Then he started thinking about Seaside and the beginnings of the "new urbanists", back when they called themselves "neo-traditionalists." DPZ and others criticized euclidean zoning as the root of all of our problems, and threw out zoning as we know it in favor of simple, graphic, one-page town codes. Perhaps there is some way to prepare a simple ordinance for a small town?

Does anyone have an example of short, simple, bare-bones town zoning ordinance or land development code that they would be willing to share? All examples and suggestions will be greatly appreciated, as will any details about the pros, cons and/or effectiveness of using such a basic ordinance in a small town. Anyone who submits an ordinance that we can ultimately adapt or gain inspiration from will win a t-shirt from Sambo's Tavern, one of the few commercial businesses in town and a locally famous watering hole and crab house.

For those who are interested, a link to Leipsic's comprehensive plan is here: http://stateplanning.delaware.gov/comp_plans/leipsic_comp_plan_2006.pdf. For more info, contact:

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- * The Town sponsored a visual preference survey;
- * A Stakeholder Committee was formed and engaged;
- * A Cognitive Mapping Exercise was sponsored; and
- * The Town encouraged additional public input on the final plan.

In addition to a high-quality public participation program, the Town incorporated innovative planning ideas into its Comprehensive Plan. Character Areas were developed by residents through the Cognitive Mapping Exercise. A unique and pioneering Character Area for future annexation areas was also developed in response to development pressure and a future bypass. A vision for each character area was described and a toolkit of implementation measures was provided with links to State resources.

After adoption of the Comprehensive Plan the Town chose to engage in several follow-up studies and education initiatives. These include:

- * A Conversation on Annexation – An educational program created by Hall Consulting, Inc. to inform residents and elected officials about the pros and cons of annexation and whether it could be a good strategy for Moreland.
- * Ordinance Review – The first step in an expected overhaul of the Town’s development regulations. The review resulted in the Conservation Subdivision Initiative and consideration of a Tree Protection Ordinance.
- * Conservation Subdivision Initiative – The consultant presented an educational program that resulted in the adoption of the Town’s first Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Moreland overcame obstacles such as limited resources and minimal staff through an aggressive public education and participation program in order to develop a progressive and widely supported Comprehensive Plan. As a result, residents and town leadership championed and then implemented many of the smart growth principles and strategies expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.



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Dale R. Powers, AICP
Principal

STaR is one of 21 Divisions within APA. To better serve our STaR members and to share information with the other Divisions, STaR has recruited liaisons from most Divisions. These liaisons will act as our conduit to share information with and about STaR members and activities. Our thanks to the following APA members for their willingness to act as our Division liaisons. Please feel free to contact them on issues related to the STaR Division and planning issues.

APA DIVISION	LIAISON	E-MAIL
CITY PLANNING & MANAGEMENT	Thomas Dabereiner, AICP, Village of Downers Grove, IL	tdabereiner@downers.us
COUNTY PLANNING	Nicki VanVonno, Martin County, Florida	nikkiv@martinfl.us
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ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES & ENERGY	Rita Shade, Town of Newport, DE	rshade@snip.net
FEDERAL PLANNING	Jane Brattain, URS-Norfolk, VA	Jane_brattain@urscorp.com
GAYS & LESBIANS IN PLANNING (GALIP)	Steve Johnson, HUD, Washington, DC	Steve_johnson@hud.gov
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Open	
INDIGENOUS PLANNING	William Mrdeza, Saginaw Chippewa Tribe Mt. Pleasant, MI	bmrdeza@sagchip.org
INTERNATIONAL	Bill Steiner, Playce Consulting, Columbia, SC	Bsteiner@playce.biz
LATINOS & PLANNING	Kent Anderson, AICP City of Ridgefield, WA	Kent.anderson@ci.ridgefield.wa.us
NEW URBANISM	Paul Bednar, Paul Bednar Planning & Design, Elgin, IL	paul@paulbednar.com
PLANNING AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY	Open	
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PLANNING & WOMEN	Leanne Harter, AICP, Story County, Iowa	lharter@storycounty.com
PRIVATE PRACTICE	Joanne Garnett, FAICP, Worthington, Lenhart, Carpenter, Pinedale, WY	joanneg@wlcwyo.com
REGIONAL AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL PLANNING	Open	
RESORT & TOURISM	Anne Krieg, Town of Bar Harbor, ME	planner@barharbormaine.gov
TECHNOLOGY	Jennifer Evans-Cowley, Ph.D., AICP Ohio State University	Cowley.11@osu.edu
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING	Jennifer Carver, FL Dept. of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, FL	Jennifer.carver@dca.state.fl.us
URBAN DESIGN & PRESERVATION	Mary Ann Holton, AICP, City of Trinidad, CO	mholton@historictinidad.com