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Resounding vote for new standards

By Mary Lou Tanner and Charles Lanktree

Ontario Planners: Vision • Leadership • Great Communities

Yes. The votes are counted and professional planners in Ontario have agreed to embrace a new membership and certification process. This follows on the resounding affirmative vote held by the Canadian Institute of Planners earlier this year.

OPPI and its partner affiliates have been working for several years on a new national standards initiative for professional planners—Planning for the Future. The institute celebrated its 25th anniversary this year and what better way to move forward into the future than equipped with renewed ethical, educational and membership standards.

Implementation will not take effect immediately. According to section 4.16 of the new by-law, the changes will not take effect until council has set an “effective date” and given the membership 15 days notice of that date. This will be given by email and on the OPPI website.

Meanwhile new applicants for Provisional Membership will be accepted under the existing rules. Further, anyone who is a Provisional Member on the effective date will continue on towards Full Membership under the existing rules, as set out in section 4.13 of the new by-law.

Several steps need to be taken before council sets an effective date to begin implementation. Affiliates across Canada need to finalize and sign agreement(s) regarding governance and financing of the Professional Standards Board, which will administer the new standards. The board needs to be formally incorporated and have the operational capacity to administer the new standards in an effective and efficient manner. Inter-affiliate task forces have been drafting materials and processes for the Professional Standards Board to consider, revise and adopt quickly once it comes into existence—but this may take some time.

OPPI Council also needs to delete, amend and add certain schedules to its by-laws—for instance a new Schedule AA will govern the non-corporate classes of membership. One of those non-corporate classes will be a Pre-Candidate status for individuals who are interested in pursuing Full Membership, but do not have recognized planning degrees. These individuals will be working on completing five years of planning experience to become Candidates through the new Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process. Changes to by-law schedules can be made by council without membership approval, so there won't be further votes on these matters.

Thousands of hours of volunteer leadership and commitment have led us to this significant achievement. So while there remains much work yet to be done, this is a good opportunity to thank the many people who contributed to this important advance. Thank you to OPPI members and staff, who participated in this process in a myriad of ways and who ultimately voted in favour of Planning for the Future

Also in the future . . .

This was probably the last 'mail ballot' ever conducted by OPPI. One of the amendments approved by the membership was authorization to make future by-law amendment decisions by secure online voting. It is anticipated that this change will increase member participation and decrease costs.

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