

# ARKANSAS PLANNER



American Planning Association  
Arkansas Chapter

*Making Great Communities Happen*

A Publication of the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association

## 2020 Annual Report

Dear APA AR Chapter members:

The APA AR Chapter, like everything in 2020, was impacted by COVID-19 and both APA National in-person events and APA AR Chapter in-person events had to move to a virtual format. APA AR Chapter pivoted to a regional virtual Fall Conference, APAC3, led by the APA Texas Chapter along with the Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kansas, and New Mexico Chapters. The conference was a complete success with 57 individuals from Arkansas attending.

APA AR continues to work with the Arkansas Public Administration Consortium on Planning Commissioner training. The APA AR Chapter arranged for the regional 2020 APA virtual Cross-Chapter Collaborative (APAC3) fall conference virtual short course for planning commissioners to provide Planning 101 credit towards our Certified Arkansas Planning Official Program for Planning Commissioners and Building Officials. We had approximately 18 individuals attend the virtual training at this conference. This past year we had four individuals complete the entire certification.

We would like to congratulate:

- Rick Barry, City of Springdale
- Dan Boice, City of Monticello
- David Keck, City of Gravette
- Ron Tilley, City of Mena

Since partnering with APAC, 16 individuals have become Certified Arkansas Planning Officials.

APA National consolidated elections were also held in 2020 and the following officers were elected:

- Arkansas Chapter President-Elect, James Walden, AICP
- Arkansas Chapter Vice President, Juliet Richey, AICP
- Arkansas Chapter Secretary, Julie Luther Kelso, AICP
- Arkansas Chapter Treasurer, Nicole Gibbs, AICP

## PLANNER INSIDE

## Annual Planning Awards

In October 2020, we held our Annual Planning Awards virtual ceremony. APA AR would like to congratulate the following organization and individuals:

### Unique Contribution to Planning

Horizon 2020

*Metroplan*



- Honest measure of progress in Central Arkansas
- Attractive format
- Compelling and informative content

### Citizen Planner

Tom Brown

*Fayetteville Planning Commission*



- Dedicated and passionate member of the Fayetteville Planning Commission
- Actively engaged in work sessions
- Committed to advancing planning interests in the City of Fayetteville

### Achievement in Media or Journalism

Horizon 2020

*Metroplan*

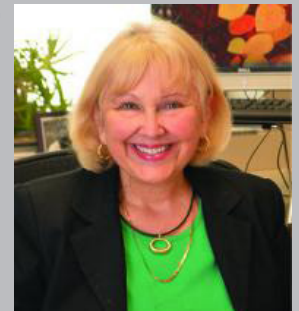


- Thoughtful look into the last 25 years of Planning in Central Arkansas
- Digestible and informative
- Exceptional visual appeal

### Professional Planner

Susan Markman

*Metroplan*



- Retired from Metroplan in 2020 after 28 years of service
- Developed and monitored Transportation Improvement Program, Public Participation Plan, Title VI program
- Sincere advocate for citizen involvement in the Planning Process

### Bill Bonner Award

Dana Carney

*City of Little Rock*



- Retired from City of Little Rock in February 2020 after 37 years of service
- 2018 Planning & Development Employee of the Year and finalist for City Employee of the Year
- Served on Executive Committee of Arkansas Chapter of APA including Nominations/Award Committee Chair, Chapter Secretary, and Chapter President

## AICP

Arkansas had four planners pass the AICP exam in November. Congratulations to:

- Levi Hill, City of Conway
- Ethan Hunter, City of Rogers
- Derrel Smith, City of Jonesboro
- Ryan Umberger, City of Fayetteville

Today, Arkansas has 46 members that are AICP certified planners.

## 2021 – Feels Like Ground Hog Day

The APA Executive Committee met in January and decided to cancel the Spring Chapter Conference. APA National will be holding the APA National Conference virtually and would like to encourage chapter members to attend the May 5 - May 7, 2021 Online 2021 National Planning Conference.

[www.planning.org/conference/registration/](http://www.planning.org/conference/registration/)



APA AR Chapter will be planning for a Fall conference – hopefully in-person. The dates and location will be announced after they are finalized.

The Executive Committee will be looking at arranging small planning education sessions to be held this spring and summer to offer training opportunities along with AICP credits.

If any planners would like to share some of their best practices this spring/summer with the rest of the Chapter members, just let the

AR APA Chapter President, Tim Conklin, AICP, know and we can work on setting up Zoom virtual events with potential AICP credits.

Some ideas that might be of interest – regulating short-term rentals, entertainment districts/sidewalk cafes, slow streets, zoning-medical marijuana facilities, home occupations, small cell towers, streamside protection ordinances, hillside protection ordinances, tree ordinances, and impact fees/park land dedication ordinances.

## Proposed Bylaw Amendment

The AR APA Executive Committee is proposing a bylaw amendment to align the election of officers with the APA election cycle. The draft bylaw amendment is shown below:

### 3.0 ELECTED OFFICERS (BYLAW: **BOLD = ADD, red = remove**).

#### 3.1 OFFICERS: ELECTION AND TERMS.

The Officers of the Chapter shall be a President, a President-Elect, a Vice-President for Programs, Secretary and a Treasurer. The Vice-President for Programs, the Secretary and Treasurer shall serve two (2) year terms, assuming office on January 1st of **ODD** ~~even~~ numbered years. The President-Elect shall serve one (1) year as President-Elect followed by two (2) years as President. All **NEWLY ELECTED** officers shall assume office on January 1st of **ODD** ~~even~~ numbered years, with the President-Elect becoming President on the following **EVEN NUMBERED** ~~odd~~ year.



## The Pandemic and The Desire to be Outside

We have all experienced a desire to be outside and experience great outdoor spaces, outdoor seating/cafes, trails, and parks during this pandemic. These outdoor spaces/ places all have seen a significant increase in popularity and demand as people look for places to be outdoors and socially distance during this pandemic.

As planners, we all have an opportunity to further engage in planning for parks, greenways, open spaces, complete streets and complete networks in all of our communities and to plan for people of all ages and abilities and “creating great communities for all.”

## Article

### Building a Legacy in Our State

Jim von Tungeln, AICP

*Originally published in the September 2020 edition of City and Town*

In the mid-1960s, during the height of the Great Society era, there were six private urban planning firms operating out of the city of Little Rock. By the mid-1970s, due to competition from the newly established planning and development districts, there were two such firms. Although separate, they were intertwined and, together, left a lasting impact on the planning profession in our state.

The planning community remembered this



*View of the Otter Creek development.*

in late July with the death of Tom Hodges, a key player in Arkansas' modern planning history. A brief review of his time in the world of planning may motivate the state's workers and elected officials to recall the lasting effect that good people can have on a profession. During these difficult times, it is good to remember the positive impacts made by dedicated individuals. It is "altogether fitting and proper that we do so."

Prior to Hodges' time, planning in Arkansas depended on a group of dedicated planners working out of the Division of Community Affairs at the University of Arkansas. They travelled from Fayetteville to the far corners of the state forming planning commissions and preparing plans and supporting regulations.

Bill Bonner, known as the "Father of Planning in Arkansas," directed those professionals, who paid out of pocket for meals or overnight lodging. Modern planners who find Zoom meetings tiring perhaps can't imagine driving from Osceola to Fayetteville after a night meeting in the 1960s. These pioneers created a tough act, but a good example for young planners to follow.

Hodges' career started when he, and classmates Jim Vines, Jack Castin, and Richard Massey graduated from the University of Oklahoma, with master's degrees in regional and urban planning. Tom graduated first and joined the consulting firm of Don Manes. He had a graduate degree from Harvard University and would also leave a lasting professional footprint on our state.

The field flourished with the demand for urban plans and the complicated requirements for urban renewal and related programs. Vines, son of legendary Little Rock radio farm reporter Marvin Vines, joined Hodges in 1970 to form a breakaway consulting firm located in downtown Little Rock.

From that beginning, a notable era in the history of planning in central Arkansas grew. A partial list of planners and other professionals who worked for, or were associated with, the firm reads like a who's who among planners and other professionals.

Castin, one of the most talented urban designers ever to grace our state, spent time with the firm. In addition to designing the layout of the Otter Creek development (more on this later), he was the visionary who dreamed of the development of a vast area of vacant forestland west of what was then the far reaches of urban Little Rock. It also lay just beyond the western terminus of newly opened Interstate 630. That caught his attention.

As visionaries often do, Castin filled an office wall with dreams drawn on the thin, colored sketch paper old-timers called simply "yellow flimsy." He would spell out what he had in mind to anyone within earshot. Few were willing to listen at the time. He continued drawing.

It turned out that one company, a subsidiary of Murphy Oil Company in El Dorado, Arkansas, owned most of the land. The company had purchased it years earlier on the cheap to hold for timber. Castin convinced the directors of both companies to "take a flyer" on a small subdivision. It became the seed that grew into what is known today simply as "Chenal Valley." That's not a bad legacy for the son of a stonecutter from Okmulgee, Okla.

Locally renowned architect Charles Witsell worked with the firm while on loan from his parent company and before becoming a legend in his own field. Engineers Joe Fox, Bill Dean, Pat McGetrick, and others passed through after the firm expanded to include engineering services. With them came Bob



Lowe, one of the early licensed professional surveyors in the state.

Chris McGetrick married Pat during her planning career with the firm. She would later become the first Arkansan to be named a fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners after serving on its national board.

One of the most recognizable names to brighten the company's roster was Jimmy Moses, son of a prominent Little Rock family with extensive ties to downtown. He began a planning career with the firm before leaving to become Little Rock's master builder.

A host of other professionals, technicians, and support staff associated with the firm went on to successful careers. The firm flourished, eventually moving into private development. That resulted in the creation of the Otter Creek community in the southwest part of Little Rock. It anticipated such modern trends in urban planning such as internal trail systems, mixed use development, and a system of neighborhood parks connected by the trails. Today, it forms part of the region that houses the Bass Pro Shops, the lone outlet in the state.

The history of the firm did not always feature fair winds and following seas. Jim Vines contracted Multiple Sclerosis in the mid-1970s. Not long afterward, it ended his professional career and, eventually, his life. People came and went. Events at the national level, including the syndrome known as "white flight," bedeviled the best efforts of all involved.

Members of the firm left and became competitors by joining the firm of Don Manes and his brother-in-law Richard Massey. Federal programs that supported planning disappeared. Times were hard.

Saddest of all, progress of the Otter Creek development sagged despite its popularity with residents. One early inhabitant said, "For the first year we lived there, we felt like we were on a long vacation." A love of home couldn't overcome the national trend of population stagnation in many older cities. The remnants of the firm Hodges had founded disappeared. He would spend an interlude in Dallas working for childhood friend Jerry Jones, a name familiar to most Arkansans.

Hodges eventually returned to Little Rock. Through a series of events, he succeeded in resuscitating Otter Creek and bringing a surge of development to the entire area. Among other accomplishments was his selling the aforementioned Bass Pro Shops, along with others, on the area.

The original planned community has expanded and now serves as a popular living site. The group involved in its conception can be proud. The Hodges family can also be proud of what he accomplished, and of the fact that many people lived richer lives because they knew him.

Eventually, members of the Manes firm drifted away as well. In the early 1980s, Arkansas cities were facing bankruptcy, and urban planning became a wasteland for consultants. In the latter part of the decade, however, the local option sales tax provided economic relief and many cities rushed to resume the function of planning, which had been ignored because of scarce resources. Demand for professional planning services still exists. Today, though, no firm in the state offers planning consulting to needy cities as its sole product. Perhaps some young folks are listening.

Maybe another Tom Hodges, with the ability

to motivate young people in a worthwhile career, will appear. Our state is known, after all, for producing and attracting good people.

Oh, and a disclaimer: The urban planning firm started by Hodges and Vines was also the first professional home of a former U.S. Navy bosun's mate, this piece's humble narrator. He spent the first ten years of his career there.

*Jim von Tungeln is staff planning consultant and available for consultation as a service of the Arkansas Municipal League. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.*

*Persons having comments or questions may reach him at (501) 944-3649. His email is uplan@swbell.net.*

## Membership Involvement

We are a small chapter with volunteer leadership and are always looking for interested members to help with Chapter Event Planning, ideas for CEU events, and general chapter communication. If you wish to be more involved with your chapter, we would love to hear from you. Please reach out to any of the following executive committee members:

- Arkansas Chapter President, Tim Conklin, AICP
- Arkansas Chapter President-Elect, James Walden, AICP
- Arkansas Chapter Vice President, Juliet Richey, AICP

## 2021 Leadership

### President

Tim Conklin, AICP  
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### President-Elect

James Walden, AICP  
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### Vice President

Juliet Richey, AICP  
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### Treasurer

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### Secretary

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### Membership Chair

Dianne Morrison Lloyd, AICP  
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### Nominations Chair

Levi Hill  
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### Communications Chair

Amber Berg  
bergamberg@gmail.com

### Legislative Chair

Truett Smith  
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### Professional Development Officer

Walter Malone, AICP  
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### Citizen Planner

Carol Short  
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### Member at Large

Marie Lindquist  
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