

AIA Indianapolis: Annual City Council Reception

Contributed by AIA Indianapolis

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SUMMARY

Not every day do you get to meet one-on-one with your city council representative, but AIA Indianapolis is making sure that architects get that chance at least once a year. AIA Indianapolis hosts an annual City-County Council reception to meet, greet, inform and engage local government leaders. The reception provides a platform for AIA Indianapolis to showcase the important role that architects play in the community, from economic development efforts to leading the way in educating and providing the value of sustainable design.

A FORUM TO SHARE

Initiated in 2009, AIA Indianapolis wanted to provide a forum for its members to be more engaged in the local political process. At the same time, the special event provides a chance for council members to introduce themselves and get to know their constituents.

The annual reception gives architects a forum to share ideas and voice concerns about specific issues impacting the city's built environment ranging from green building efforts to urban planning to proposed city ordinances.

STREAMLINING THE PLAN-AND-REVIEW PROCESS

In 2011 reception, architects talked with council members about the city's plan-and-review process. Architects had voiced concerns earlier in the year that the wait time for a plan review caused project delays, and, in some cases, firms were left with no choice but to pay higher fees to expedite the process to ensure projects stayed on schedule.

Not only did architects point out problems within the current process, but they had suggestions on how to streamline the process to make it more efficient for city-county government, for architecture firms, and for building owners. Thanks to the dialogue started during the City-County Council Reception, AIA Indianapolis now is playing a role in the developing a more streamlined building review process.

STREET CLOSURES

During the 2010 City-County Reception, architects voiced their concerns that the City of Indianapolis was considering closing Monument Circle to vehicular traffic. Monument Circle is an iconic, brick-

paved roundabout surrounding the Sailors and Soldiers Monument and museum and often the site of city celebrations and special events. AIA Indianapolis favored shutting down the street for special events; the chapter did not approve of plans to close it year-round.

AIA Indianapolis took its concerns to the city-county councilors during the 2010 reception, talking not only about how closing the Monument to vehicular traffic would hurt businesses along the circle, but offering suggestions to improve the circle as an even more popular destination. Those discussions along with conversations with other city leaders and media reports helped lead to the City of Indianapolis to withdraw its plans.

ONGOING EFFORT

Regardless of the topic, year-after-year, AIA Indianapolis receives positive feedback from AIA members and government leaders, who appreciate an opportunity to hear directly from architects the critical issues affecting the architecture profession.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 22.03.04 Architects and Legislators
- 21.03.04 Building Relationships with Elected Officials
- 21.03.03 Government Affairs Day: Advancing Vital Interests Person-to-Person

Feedback

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Key Terms

- Leadership
- Associations
- Design associations
- Architectural associations
- The American Institute of Architects
- AIA components