

2019 APA-AL/MS
Conference, Huntsville, AL
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Feng Shui for Planning Departments

- Carol Rhea, FAICP
 - Orion Planning + Design
- Kurt Christiansen, FAICP
 - APA President
- Judy Daniel, AICP
 - City of Oxford, MS
- Michael Blue, FAICP
 - Teska Associates, Inc.

Session Objectives

Feng Shui for Planning Departments



Carol Rhea

The ins and outs of
Department
Reorganization



A Tale of Two Departments

City/County

- Small staff/large staff
- Fast-growing
- Complex programs
- Evolving issues
- Good 'ole boy network
- Customer service complaints
- Board/political
- Inefficiencies
- Interdepartmental issues



The City Story

Key Stats

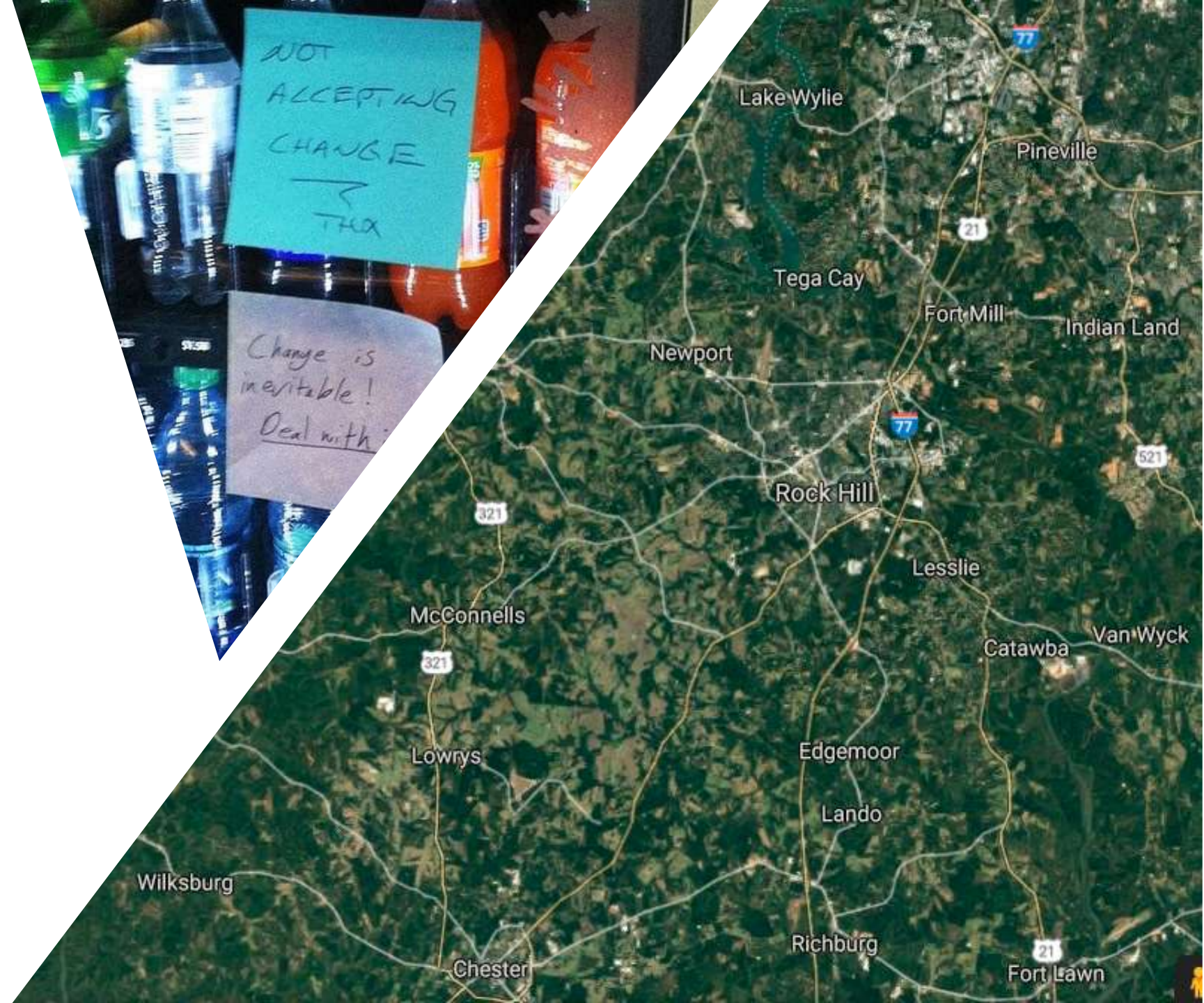
- 6-24 staff
- 6-7 programs
- Seasoned manager
- Well-established TRC



The County Story

Key Stats

- 44 staff
- 5 programs
- Out-of-state manager
- No TRC





CHANGING
PROCESSES
AND
PROGRAMS

Kurt Christiansen

THE
SAME
OLD
THINKING

THE
SAME
OLD
RESULTS

WHAT IS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME?

UGH, CHANGE



Humans are allergic to change. They love to say, 'We've always done it this way.' I try to fight that. That's why I have a clock on my wall that runs counter-clockwise.

— *Grace Hopper* —

AZ QUOTES

WHY CHANGE?



Times and conditions change so rapidly that we must keep our aim constantly focused on the future.

Walt Disney

WORK IS NOT ALL
BLACK & WHITE

It's time to embrace the grey!



EMBRACE
CHANGE

Adapt to Grow
Embrace change
to get ahead



WORDS TO
LIVE BY!

OLD
WAYS **DON'T**

OPEN

NEW

DOORS

HOW DO WE CHANGE?



SOME GOOD
ADVICE!



TAKE SMALL STEPS



BE WILLING TO GO BACK TO MOVE
FORWARD



CHECK YOUR EGO



FAIL CORRECTLY

A Career in Planning is All About Change

A career is a series of job changes

What if you get to the point where you strongly do not enjoy your job, or you are being forced out of a job?



Judy Daniel



Planning for Career Changes

Although the profession of urban planning is all about preparation for change, planners can get stuck in a rut because they fear personal change. What are your options for job changes and what are the implications of those options? You have three basic choices:

- You can start looking for a different job.
- You can ask for changes in your current job.
- You can walk out the door and slam it as you leave. (Not a good idea.)

Be prepared for the
changes that will come

**Rule #1 – Always have a
contingency plan. You will face
changes and you will have
competition.**



A Career in Planning is All About Change

Thinking about your skill sets and working on your marketing tools (resume, etc.) when you are under duress is very difficult. So:

- Always have a plan for moving to a different job and/or a different employer. You just never know when change may be forced on you.
- Update your basic resume at least once a year. Delete skills too old to be useful, add new skill sets, have all the basics ready to adjust to the particulars of a new job application.
- Build adjunct elements on your resume - speaking engagements, attending conferences, keeping your professional credential up to day, and being in a professional organization, especially in a leadership role.



A Career in Planning is All About Change

Rule #2 – Changing in place can be just fine.
If you want changes to your current job,
work with your supervisor and the Human
Resources Director.



A Career in Planning is All About Change

Sometimes you can evolve in your current position.

- Ask your supervisor if there are some new skills you would like to learn, and take them on in addition to your existing work.
- If you have ideas about more efficient ways to do some aspects of your job, talk to your supervisor about them.
- Ask your supervisor and HR if there are programs for you to get advanced training or education to expand your job role.



A Career in Planning is All About Change

Rule #3 – Climbing the ladder is often (but not always) realistic. You must build relationships and enhance your skillsets.



A Career in Planning is All About Change

To Evolve in Place:

- In larger organizations it is plausible to “move up” the ladder.
- Build relationships with those doing the type of work you want to do.
- Ask for help in building new skillsets through education or training.
- Keep an ear open to talk about new positions opening up or people leaving – new jobs, retirement, etc.



Rule #4 – Moving to a new job can be lucrative, but start preparing well in advance of high frustration.

A Career in Planning is All About Change



A Career in Planning is All About Change

Tasks When You Want to Leave:

- Sometimes you are ready to leave. This is when having that resume up to date will be the most useful.
- Start looking around when you start getting restless, not the day you cannot take it anymore.
- Decide if you must stay in the same city or if you can move. It is often easier to find a new job if you can move.



A Career in Planning is All About Change
Dealing with change due to loss of a job

Rule #5 – If you are laid off from your job due to budget cuts, use all help offered.

A Career in Planning is All About Change

Tasks:

- Once again, having an up to date resume will be essential.
- Ask what assistance (pay, counseling, job placement) will be offered. And use it.
- Be honest about the situation in applications and interviews. If you have otherwise a good job record, it will not count against you.
- Once again, it will likely be easier if you are willing to move.

A Career in Planning is All About Change

Rule #6 – There will be unpleasant consequences if you leave a job abruptly or unprofessionally.





A Career in Planning is All About Change

Consequences of Walking Out:

- Burning bridges feels good for about 15 minutes, and you will not get a decent reference.
- Your former fellow employees will feel awkward around you and probably not want to tell you about job openings elsewhere they have heard about.
- Even if you have a financial safety net, and a new employer waiting for you, that emotional residue will follow you around.



A Career in Planning is All
About Change

**Rule #7 – Leave
Gracefully and Professionally**

A Career in Planning is All About Change

How to Leave Gracefully and Professionally:

- Be as pleasant and honest with your supervisor as you can when you give your notice. Let him/her know why you are leaving.
- Give a decent amount of notice (2-4 weeks) if you can, unless their policy is different.
- If your supervisor was the problem, have an honest conversation with the Human Resources Director about why you are leaving.
- Don't start criticizing your prior employer at your new job. Let it go and move on.

A Career in Planning is All About Change

Very few people these days plan to go to work somewhere and stay for most of their working life.



Planning for Career Changes

- Our profession is changing and the expectations of our employers are changing. Be prepared to follow trends.
- Your career will be more interesting if you follow your passions in seeing jobs, not just look for job security.
- Your career may advance faster if you are willing to move around a bit.





Keys to a Healthy Planning Department

Michael Blue

Symptoms of an ailing department



Poor communication



Missed deadlines



No esprit de corps



Customer service complaints



Flack from above



Not having fun

Understand the Group: Affects of Emotion and Change

Emotions

- Emotions are innate – we are hardwired with them
- Emotions are part of everything we do – don't expect otherwise
- Be self aware about your own emotions
- Emotions to be most aware of in yourself and others
 - Anger
 - Shame

Managing Change

- People don't like change
- People resist change
- Resisting change is a coping mechanism

Take two
aspirin
with...

Context

Structure

Judgement

Context



Share the Big Picture



Allow staff to add value, learn and grow



Get staff out of their cubical



Always address the “why”

Structure



Deadlines



Lists

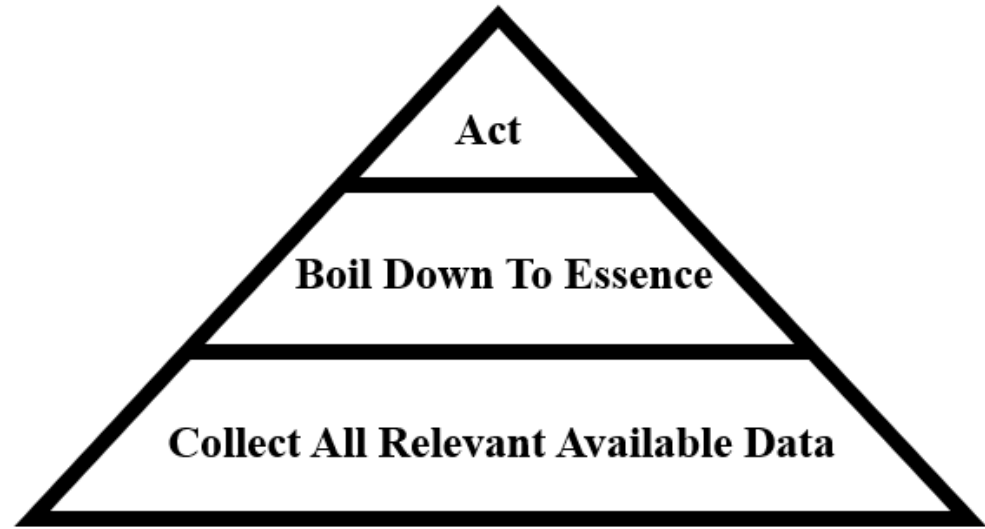


Priorities

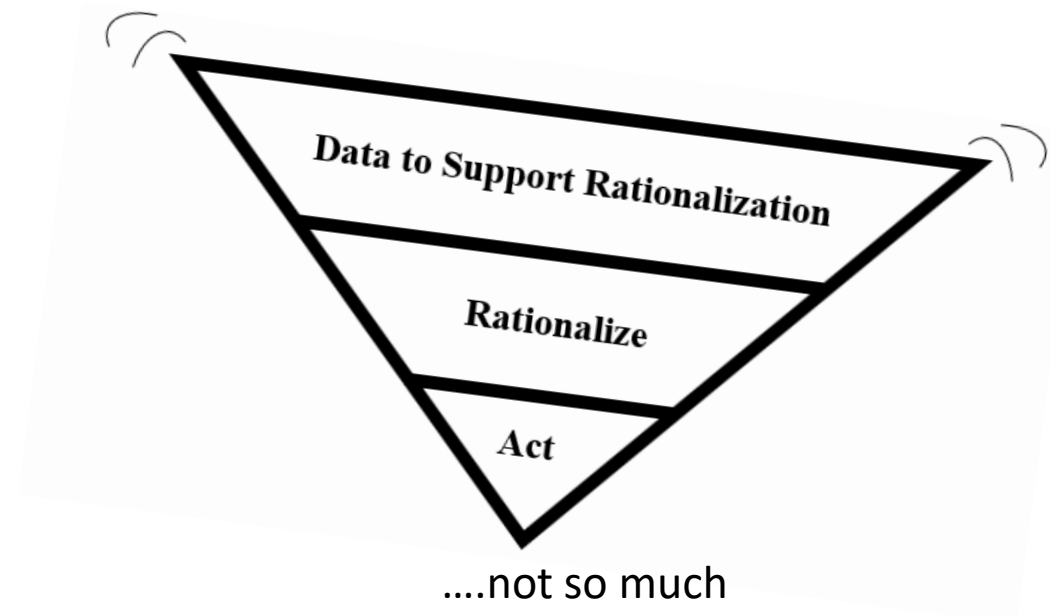


Meetings (yes, meetings)

Judgement



Applying Sound Judgement



...not so much



Questions?

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