



President's Corner



Mac Martin, AICP
City Planner
City of Hoover

THE PRACTICAL PLANNER

Hello fellow ALAPA members!

I hope this communication finds you all well.

You'll notice that the timing of the conference is a little different this year. That is due to our partnering with the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) to make the event a joint production. Many members of the AARC are planning professionals with the regional planning commissions and councils of government across the state. Joining forces with the AARC allows the ALAPA to 1) ensure a sizeable number of planning practitioners can participate in the programming of both organizations' conferences, 2) facilitate enhanced networking opportunities, and 3) enjoy economies of scale in hosting the event. Such teamwork and collaboration is essential to successfully overcoming the challenges present in 2022 – and happens to inform our theme for the conference: **The Practical Planner: Planning for Achievable Results.**

On the national scale, I get the sense that the planning profession is going through a bit of an identity crisis. Students of planning history know that this is not a new phenomenon. At various times, planners have grappled with defining the proper role of our profession in the development of communities. While some in our ranks are trained and credentialed in other fields, a good many of us are not landscape architects, engineers, lawyers, elected officials, real estate developers, etc. Yet... cont. on pg. 2

Summer/Fall 2022 Newsletter

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Alabama and Mississippi Chapters
of the American Planning Association
2022 Fall Conference
Orange Beach, Alabama
October 23-26



The Practical Planner Planning for Achievable Results

Featured Speaker

"Practical Guide to Climate Change in Alabama"

Dr. John R. Christy

- Distinguished Professor, Atmospheric and Earth Sciences;
Interim VP of Research and Economic Development;
Director, Earth System Science Center
The University of Alabama in Huntsville
- Alabama State Climatologist



Registration begins August 24

Where: Perdido Beach Resort

Registration Fees***:

	Early Registration	On-site Registration	
General	\$250	\$300	***A \$5 + 3% fee will be added to all registrations for processing.
Speaker	\$200	\$250	
Retired	\$100	\$150	
Student	\$25	\$75	
Guest—Awards Luncheon	\$50	\$50	

Registration forms will be sent out via email and available online on August 24.

Please visit our website at www.alabamaplanning.org for more details.

Hotel Accommodations: 30 rooms have been reserved at the Island House Hotel, 1/2 mile west of the Perdido Beach Resort on AL 182. Go to <https://group.doubletree.com/pk4qmg> or call 251-981-6100 and use the 3-letter code APA to make your reservation today! All other hotel accommodations are on your own.



Remembering Bill McAlister



Back in April 2021, we lost a great member of the Alabama planning community in Bill McAlister. Bill was a city planner in Sumter, South Carolina and Pasco County, Florida prior to being a professor of Community and Regional Planning for 25 years at Alabama A&M University, Huntsville, Alabama. He earned a bachelor's degree from Clark University, a master's degree from the University of Rhode Island and his PhD from Tennessee State University. He was awarded Alabama Planner of the Year in 2001 and became a Fellow in the College of Fellows of American Institute of Certified Planners. Bill worked at NASA for three summers and also for the U.S. Forest Service in Washington, D.C. and northwestern states for five summers. Bill was a lifelong birder and nature enthusiast and often led bird walks and worked on perfecting his bird photography. He was a featured photographer recently for the Alabama Ornithological Society and was a participant in the Guntersville Art Show in 2018. In retirement Bill enjoyed contra dance weekends with wife, Linda, as well as extensive traveling. He was a lifelong learner and participated or taught numerous courses at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. While serving on the Board of OLLI he lead many local field trips and reignited the travel program. Involvement in his professional organizations and serving his family and community was an important part of his life. He was on the Monte Sano Civic Association Board and OLLI Board, and was a member of the Alabama Academy of Science, American and Alabama Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners, the Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society and the Alabama Ornithological Society.

President's Corner *Continued*

...our profession touches these and other fields related to community development. As I embarked on the journey into the planning profession through education and practice, I came to view planning as a unique discipline that served as a conduit through which observed facts/data, expertise in interpreting and responding to these facts, and the will of the people are synthesized into 1) achievable plans, followed by 2) implementation tools, adopted by elected representatives of the community, aimed at bringing specific goals of the plan to fruition. This is very much a rational approach to planning that has been impressed upon me since my formal education. Such an approach has served me well in working with two wonderful cities here in Alabama and has led to tangible results.

In his new book "John Nolen: Landscape Architect and City Planner," R. Bruce Stephenson highlights the career of a planner who sought a practical approach to planning. Mr. Nolen didn't ignore the various problems/concerns faced by inhabitants of our cities in the early 1900s in favor of purely aesthetic physical planning, but he understood that venturing off fully into the realm of advocacy of "reformers" of the age or pie-in-the-sky efforts to completely redefine cities would likely result in plans not being adopted or implemented. With a pragmatic approach and penchant for ideological moderation, Mr. Nolan successfully navigated the physical, fiscal, and political realities surrounding many of his commissions. His practical approach to planning resulted in many communities and amenities that are still enjoyed a century later. Mr. Nolan was a planner that made a tangible, positive impact on the communities he served.

I believe making a positive, lasting impact in the lives of people is the motivating factor for many who pursue a career in planning. I am not convinced that the latest ideological trends being advocated in the profession are going to lead to adopted, actionable plans and policies with lasting, positive impacts on communities. My hope is that those in the profession who are voices of reason and moderation will become more engaged and help redirect the profession back to a place of building consensus amongst the citizenry and honing our skills as practical, rational leaders in developing achievable visions for our communities. The programming of this year's conference is geared towards equipping attendees to do just that.