



# Arab American Association of Engineers and Architects

Capital Area Chapter (MD, DC and VA)  
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## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 02/04/2010

**Time:** 6:30 pm-9:00 pm

**Location:** Panera Bread-Tyson's Corner Mall

**RE:** Meeting with Board of Trustees

*Attendees:*

| Name             | Telephone    | Email Address                    |
|------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Eissa Hajj-Hamad |              | eissa_a2000@yahoo.com            |
| Bilal Ayyub      | 301-405-1956 | ayyub@bmaengineering.com         |
| Ziad Sabra       | 410-737-6564 | zsabra@sabra-wang.com            |
| Rabih Najib      | 410-977-8529 | Rabih.Najib@alphacorporation.com |
| Mohammad Labban  | 410-782-5603 | MJLabban@co.pg.md.us             |
| Sam Abdelfattah  | 703-981-6502 | sam@mepdesigns.com               |
| Saed Rahwanji    | 410-531-1105 | srahwanji@verizon.net            |
| Mohammad Fridy   | 703-209-5940 | mfridy@gmail.com                 |

**Next meeting:** [Date]: TBD

[time]: TBD

[Location]: TBD

### I. Introduction

The Executive Committee (EC) members invited the Board of Trustees (BT) to a dinner meeting at Tyson's Corner Panera Bread to discuss the Strategic plan of the association and the National Conference/ Annual Dinner. Ziad Sabra , Bilal Ayyub and Eissa Hajj-Hamad from the BT attended the meeting.

### II. Announcements

No new Announcements

### III. Discussion

The following notes identify key points made in the discussion:

#### Strategic Plan

- Rabih welcomed the BT, introduced the association and presented the meeting agenda.
- The association is preparing to go national and our chapter will be hosting the next national conference in October.
- The most successful chapter is the Chicago chapter and we will need to learn from their experience.
- Based on a National Survey of all AAAEA members nationwide, most of the members are looking for Networking & Activities opportunities.
- The EC noted that the Strategic Plan is a long-term plan and is not meant to be implemented as a whole this year.

- The Committees, when formed, will be responsible to develop the “realistic” day-to-day plan of action and implementing it.
- The EC noted that the Strategic Plan sets the guidelines for the committees and gives them some flexibility to improvise & be creative.
- Ziad Sabra noted that the performance measures need to be quantity based & quality based.
- The BT emphasized the importance of sustaining existing members & attracting new members.
- Membership is extremely critical to get credibility.
- Ziad Sabra noted that the one-year term is very challenging & is not enough to accomplish a whole lot.
- The BT advised the EC to pick one major objective and focus on developing it for this year.
- The BT noted that the Vision Statement should be quantitative & more realistic and that the first & fifth bullet points of the vision statement are vague & need to be re-defined.
- The BT noted that we should not limit ourselves & must consider enrolling contractors in the association.
- The EC discussed the location of the monthly executive meeting and the ways to attract more people to attend.
- It was suggested that seminar type meetings can be held in both states, Maryland and Virginia, covering topics of interest to members in each state. It is better to hold these meetings during the week and right after work.
- The BT emphasized the importance of having the website upgraded and improved.
- Ziad Sabra highlighted the experience of similar organizations like the American Indian Forum & noted that we should try to learn from their experience.
- Saed asked how we can engage Arabs of diverse backgrounds to our association knowing that most of our current members are from Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian & Egyptian backgrounds.
- Bilal noted that we should extend ties to other Arab American organizations.
- We have to keep the members interested and engaged by organizing an event every month.
- We should not be labeling people as ex-members or non members. Everybody is a member, but you can be a paid or non-paid member.
- The committees were supposed to be formed this week.
- The volunteer response was very low. Only eight people volunteered for the committees. Most of the work of the committees will end up being done by the EC.
- Bilal asked everybody to identify what he or she wants from the association with one word. Following were the answers:
  - Ziad, Networking
  - Eissa; Help Arab American Community/ socialize.
  - Mohammad Fridy; Networking & professional organization.
  - Rabih; Help Arab American Community & become a resource to those students and engineers coming from our countries to help them in the US.
  - Mohammad Labban; Help Arab American Community
  - Saed; Influence/ Lobbying.
  - Bilal; Help Arab American Community
- Bilal noted that the common goal to all members is that we want to do business together.
- The BT emphasized the importance of getting the people who can benefit the association involved.
- Bilal noted that we cannot compete with other Professional engineering organizations when it comes to professional development but rather our association can act as a resource & facilitator.
- Ziad noted that the association could use the resources available at his office for members seeking PE licensing.
- Eissa submitted his comments on the Strategic Plan to Mohammad Fridy.
- The Association should try to organize more happy hours & social networking events.
- The BT advised the EC to set expectations that are more realistic.
- Mohammad Fridy noted that the connection with the Arab community as important as it is, is not an interest of the younger generation of Arab Americans Engineers and Architects.
- The BT advised that the EC contact Arab Embassies & other Arab American organizations.

## **National Conference & Annual Dinner**

- Saed gave an introduction about the National Conference & Annual Dinner.
- The purpose of the dinner is exposure within our community.
- Saed noted that Ray Lahoud expressed interest in being the Keynote Speaker.
- Bilal noted that it might be better to do the dinner on a weekday instead of weekend because speakers would be more available.
- Bilal noted that two people could reach Ray Lahoud, George Salem & Jim Zoghbi.
- Another Candidate for keynote speaker is Elijah Cummins.
- Ziad noted that he could reach Cummins & invite him to be the Keynote speaker at the dinner if required.
- The BT asked the EC to better define the theme of the Annual dinner & brainstorm what we need from the keynote speaker.
- Bilal suggested targeting the president of one of the big Engineering / Construction companies like Clark & Bechtel.
- The Keynote speaker should be somebody who can contribute to helping our businesses and our community.
- The keynote speaker might be somebody who is from another professional organization and can talk about how we can grow our organization.
- we still need to have another meeting to discuss the Annual Dinner event in more details especially the keynote speaker research.

## **IV. Action Items**

- No action items were generated.

## **V. Attachments**

- Annex 1: Strategic Plan Draft

Mohammad R. Fridy  
Secretary



























