

# COUNCIL APPOINTS NEW TASK FORCE TO GUIDE 40 SHEPPARD RENOVATIONS

471st MEETING, JUNE 2, 3, 2011

*By Nicole Axworthy and Michael Mastromatteo*

IT WAS A CHANGING of the guard for council's 40 Sheppard Task Force, with council retiring former council members Bruce Clarida, P.Eng., FEC; Nick Colucci, P.Eng., FEC; and Catherine Karakatsanis, P.Eng., FEC; from the task force and thanking them for their service in guiding phases 1 and 2 of the development of PEO's offices at 40 Sheppard Avenue West in Toronto, and appointing President-elect Denis Dixon, P.Eng., FEC; President Dave Adams, P.Eng., FEC; Vice President Pat Quinn, P.Eng., FEC; and Councillors Len King, P.Eng.; and Iswhar Bhatia, P.Eng., to the task force. The retirements and appointments were effective June 1.

Council also chose to waive notice of motion to discuss and approve a motion relating to financial controls for the ongoing renovations of the building. The motion directs that the president, PEO's Finance Committee and 40 Sheppard Task Force review details of the proposed balance of expenditures for phase two of construction, approximately \$1.8 million for washrooms and other renovations (e.g. tribunals rooms and rooms for use by the Academic Requirements and Experience Requirements committees) and reconcile the costs of all work done to date against budget; that no further contracts for work on the balance of phase 2 be signed until all information has been "received, analyzed and if necessary modified to the satisfaction of the Finance Committee"; and that expenditures for phase 3 be subject to the "same financial discipline."

Later, in the councillors' items portion of the agenda, Councillor Michael Hogan, PhD, P.Eng., presented his concerns with the expenditures for renovations and suggested council doesn't have all the information it needs to properly assess the long-term value of the building acquisition. He said a "proper accounting summary" is in order. His concern was echoed by several other councillors, some of whom wondered whether renovations to the building's 16 washrooms are necessary and whether the proposed

renovations are at a Cadillac standard when something lesser would suffice. It was noted that the washroom renovations to date were slightly below budget and would save PEO money on its water usage. It was also noted that washrooms are common areas, so that PEO will recoup some of the capital costs from its tenants.

Some councillors also questioned whether if PEO were to sell the building it would get back its purchase price, plus the costs of the renovations.

Other councillors, however, noted that many of the renovations have been to better serve members, councillors and applicants, so that equating the building's value to PEO simply in terms of its resale price might not be a reasonable comparison.

It was later agreed by consensus that work would continue on any purchase orders released to date; no new purchase orders would be issued until the 40 Sheppard Task Force provides direction; no new contracts for purchase price protection would be signed with the construction manager until directed by the task force; and renovations for the eighth floor council chambers, meeting rooms and dining room are to be dependent on the direction of the task force, the members of which are expected to attend the weekly design meetings at the PEO offices.

## PRACTICE STANDARDS PROCEDURES

PEO council has moved to improve the procedures for development of practice standards through the Professional Standards Committee (PSC). Because many volunteers are involved in creating practice standards, when council is not in a position to approve a practice standard presented by PSC, council will henceforth provide specific directions, concerns or guidance to enable PSC or the CEO/registrars to address whatever council's difficulty is with the practice standard.

The need for an improved protocol for how council should deal with a practice standard it cannot support arose from council's April 2011 meeting, where it found itself unable to approve the proposed practice standard for *General Review of Building Projects Lacking Permits*, even though it had authorized PSC to develop the practice standard in the first place.

Making use of the new feedback procedure, Councillor Chris Roney, P.Eng., BDS, FEC, the councillor having the greatest concern with the practice standard in April, will now meet with PSC to clarify the nature of his and council's concerns. The reworked standard is to

be presented to council for consideration at its September 2011 meeting.

### CHANGES TO EXPERIENCE GUIDE

Council approved additions to PEO's *Guide to the Required Experience to be Licensed as a Professional Engineer in Ontario* to include the roles of collaborator and monitor as suitable referees for applicants unable to obtain the 12 months of required Canadian experience under the direct supervision of a professional engineer (see *Engineering Dimensions*, March/April 2011, p. 22). The new sections of the guide had been reviewed by licensing and registration staff and by members of an Experience Requirements subcommittee and their comments incorporated, council was told. The revised guide will be effective once Regulation 941/90 has been amended by the government to reflect the revision.

### REVIEW OF ELECTION PROCEDURES

At its June meeting, council authorized an independent review of the proposed procedures for election to PEO's 2012 council by a task force of three people with experience in election matters. The 2011 PEO returning officers will be asked to serve on the task force, which will report to the Executive Committee at its August 2011 meeting. The Executive Committee will then report on the task force findings to council, so that council can approve procedures for the 2012 elections, likely via a telephone meeting.

In introducing the motions for an independent review, Vice President Quinn noted that there have been allegations of irregularities during the course of PEO's council elections, with the Central Election and Search Committee (CESC) called on to make rulings about them without a process of appeal. At the conclusion of the election cycle, the CESC then reviews all the complaints and provides recommendations to council on the required changes to the election procedures, and proposes the next year's procedures incorporating the changes.

The CESC's review of complaints about the 2011 elections and recommended changes, which council received earlier in the June meeting, will be provided to the inde-

pendent review task force. The task force will also review the CESC's proposed 2012 election procedures.

### MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

At its June meeting, council considered the process for reviewing the submissions made by members and approved at PEO's 2011 annual general meeting. Seven submissions were presented to the AGM, six of which were approved by members in a non-binding vote.

Council referred the first submission, calling for PEO to work toward the adoption of a national licensure model and to take a leading role with the provincial licensing bodies and Engineers Canada in its development, to Engineers Canada's National Framework Task Force, and received the second submission calling for co-operation among council.

Council received an amended version of the third submission, which directs that PEO will recruit a licensed chartered accountant, certified general accountant, or certified management accountant as PEO's treasurer to serve at the pleasure of council, report to council, and act as an advisor on financial matters to the Finance and Audit committees.

Council referred the last three submissions to the Executive Committee to consider. They involve council performing due diligence on any governance issues and obtaining member approval by binding referendum, implementing a specified process for motions brought to council by the membership, and not holding PEO AGMs on the Mother's Day weekend.

### ADDITIONAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

At its June meeting, George Comrie, P.Eng., CMC, FEC, chair, Licensing Process Task Force (LPTF), requested that council reinstate PEO's additional requirements for licensure of applicants already licensed in another Canadian jurisdiction by reversing its November 19 decision, and direct that PEO resist government interference in PEO's legislated mandate (see *Engineering Dimensions*, January/February 2011, p. 63). He said the LPTF, the Academic Requirements Committee (ARC) and a subcommittee of the Experience Requirements Committee (ERC) all concurred with the request.

The LPTF, ARC and ERC believe PEO's additional requirements are fully consistent with the intent and spirit of the *Labour Mobility Act*, since they do not interfere with national mobility of professional engineers or delay or interfere with the licensure of applicants transferring from other provinces, but are necessary to protect the public interest in Ontario.

The majority of council apparently agreed and directed that the president, chair of the LPTF and PEO's CEO/registrar meet with Ontario's attorney general at the earliest opportunity to explain why it's necessary, in the public interest, for PEO to maintain the additional requirements for licensure until such time as all Canadian jurisdictions adopt a common set of licensing criteria and processes that are equivalent to PEO's current requirements.

## ELECTRONIC AGENDAS

At its June meeting, council approved providing council and executive agenda packages, which can be several hundred pages in length, in an electronic format, but made no decision on the technology councillors would use to access the electronic materials. At present, packages are provided to councillors in hard copy and couriered to them about two weeks before each meeting.

With the move to its new offices in late 2009, PEO's information technology infrastructure was upgraded to support wireless access throughout the office, and the council secretariat has installed an application that enables electronic preparation, access and automatic updating of agenda materials should there be changes after the agenda has been distributed.

At its meeting, council discussed a plan that would see councillors who choose not to receive a paper copy of agendas provided an annual technology allowance of \$300 to purchase a laptop, or have PEO provide them with corporate technology in support of electronic documentation. Initially, consideration had been given to incorporating technology to enable councillors to access electronic agenda materials at each seat in the new council chambers, but after some research, it is believed the approach of enabling councillors with laptops will be less costly, as well as provide them the ability to use the technology from home and for committee work in other meeting rooms.

Discussion of the proposal became bogged down, however, on questions of whether the proposed technology allowance would be adequate and how to ensure equity for councillors choosing not to avail themselves of the electronic option and compatibility of selected hardware and software with PEO's systems, if councillors were to make their own purchases. There was also a concern expressed about the security of confidential materials.

Accordingly, further debate of this issue was tabled for a future meeting.

## 2012 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

PEO's 2012 budget is expected to be a balanced budget and all fees are expected to remain unchanged. These are among the assumptions approved by council to begin the 2012 budget cycle. PEO's capital expenditures in 2012 are expected mainly to be for IT for enhancing and extending PEO's existing software systems and completion of the 2011 office upgrade at 40 Sheppard. PEO's staff complement is also expected to be at the current levels. Program spending increases are assumed to be 2 per cent with all programs subject to evaluation; staff salaries are expected to increase 2 per cent based on a newly introduced merit salary administration program.

## ENGINEERS CANADA UPDATE

In the information items portion of the meeting, PEO Engineers Canada Director Councillor Roney updated members on developments with Engineers Canada. Chief among

Roney's update items were progress reports on the national framework for licensing and Synergy Task Force projects. He also reported that former PEO president Catherine Karakatsanis has been chosen as president-elect of Engineers Canada. She will assume the presidency at Engineers Canada's AGM in Niagara Falls in the spring of 2012. PEO now has five directors on the Engineers Canada board of directors, with former councillor Phil Maka, P.Eng., FEC, and Past President Diane Freeman, P.Eng., FEC, joining the board at Engineers Canada's AGM in late May.

Maka has also been appointed by the council of the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists (OACETT) for a two-year term.

## CDPTF CHAIR RESIGNS

In the councillors' items portion of the agenda, Vice President Quinn tendered his resignation as chair of the Complaints and Discipline Process Task Force (CDPTF). Quinn said that in his opinion, the work of the task force is essentially complete, and he regretted that council appeared not to be acting on the task force recommendations. In urging Quinn to reconsider his resignation, Councillor David Euler, P.Eng., FEC, who was elected by council at its May meeting to chair council meetings for the 2011-2012 term, said council simply wants the CDPTF to issue its final report, after which the recommendations can be considered for implementation.

## NEW COUNCIL BRIEFED

The 471st meeting of PEO council opened with a plenary session in which members of PEO's staff corporate leadership team provided council an overview of PEO operations. This included clarifying the roles of the corporate services, licensing and finance, regulatory compliance, and tribunals and regulatory affairs departments—all of which work together to advance the purpose and vision of the association.  $\Sigma$