The Council of the Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association met on March 9, 2017. Here is a summary of Council’s discussions.

All of the candidates for Council were in attendance.

As President Fred Cheng was representing the ALSA at the Land Surveyors Association of Washington AGM, Vice-President Mike Fretwell chaired the meeting.

From the Registrar
Council approved applications from Doug MacAulay, Frank Meashaw, Mike SexSmith and Allan Theriault to be placed on the register of retired members.

Council approved an application from Robert Gliddon to be reinstated as a retired member.

Council approved, with regret, applications to cancel the memberships of Ron Karpel (retired member) and Steve Vickers (associate membership).

Council approved an application from Sovereign Geomatics Inc. to be registered as a surveyor’s corporation under the supervision, direction and control of Ashley Robertson, ALS.

Council received a third application for a surveyor’s corporation but tabled the motion to approve it pending a report from the registrar that the Alberta Land Surveyor will be able to exercise the necessary supervision, direction and control within the practice.

Council approved an application for a branch office for Challenger Geomatics Ltd. in Grande Prairie under the supervision direction and control of John Haggerty, ALS.

Alternate Funding Model
Council welcomed Todd Nash and Stephen Rogers of the consulting firm MNP to discuss their findings for an alternate funding model for the ALSA.

Council started with twenty different alternate funding models based on feedback from the membership and the former Association Finances Ad Hoc Committee and whittled the ideas down to ten back in June.

In November, Council took the ten ideas, did some preliminary research and investigation, and selected the top three that appeared to be the most viable in the short-term. Potential longer-term funding models were forwarded to the Future Committee for investigation.

Council then selected MNP to prepare a business plan for the ALSA.

The three options that MNP was asked to investigate were:

1. Digital Signature
   When an Alberta Land Surveyor affixes their electronic signature to a product, a fee is paid to ALSA.
who, through the digital signature technology in place, verifies that the surveyor is a member in good standing. The product is finalized and “digitally signed” then filed or registered at the appropriate location. This would be similar to the process being piloted by Land Titles specifically for registered documents.

2. Digital Permit Stamp
A digital permit stamp with a unique ID is issued by ALSA for each stamped final plan. When a surveyor’s corporation affixes its permit stamp to a product, a fee is assessed. The product is finalized and “digitally stamped” then filed or registered at the appropriate location.

3. Professional Product Fee
A unique product code is issued by ALSA for each final plan. For each product code, ALSA assesses the surveyor’s corporation or individual land surveyor a fee. The product is finalized and “digitally sealed” then filed or registered at the appropriate location.

Council and MNP identified that Option 1 would be difficult to implement for all types of survey plans and documents without the support of the approving authority (such as Land Titles, AER or a municipality). Therefore, Council will take options 2 and 3 to the next stage for investigation. This will mean:

- Review business plan and make recommendations.
- Recalculate the volumes of different types of products based on a most robust/detailed questionnaire to the membership.
- Engage ALSA internal committee(s) to review governing documents vis-à-vis the option(s) under consideration; obtain legal opinion as required.
- Engage existing membership database provider to provide more robust proposal for design of digital permit stamp option.
- Finalize which option will be implemented based on business plan and additional research/feedback.
- Undertake member engagement/awareness campaign in respect to the selected option.
- Make any necessary changes to bylaws.

MNP will be attending the upcoming annual general meeting to present their findings to the membership.

Dues Abatement
Council gave second and final reading to a dues abatement policy which was informally adopted last year.

The intent of the policy is to make it easier for Alberta Land Surveyors to pay their professional dues at a time when they have no income. The dues reduction will be offset through a dues abatement levy.

Council made amendments to the policy after first reading thanks to members input.

The final policy reads:

1. The Registrar may, upon application, permit an Alberta Land Surveyor to ...
   a) Pay 33% of their annual dues plus GST
   b) Pay 100% of their Convention & Social levy plus GST
   c) Pay 100% of their CBEPS levy plus GST
   d) Pay 100% of their Dues Abatement levy plus GST
   e) Pay 0% of their Professional Surveyors Canada levy plus GST
   f) Pay 100% of other fees as established by the ALSA Bylaws or Council from time to time

   ... if the Alberta Land Surveyor is exempted from the provisions of the professional liability
insurance bylaw on April 30 because of unemployment. The Alberta Land Surveyor still retains all of their rights and responsibilities as a practitioner (i.e.: can vote on all matters; subject to continuing competency reviews; responsible for any plan corrections/judge's orders). The reduction does not apply to Alberta Land Surveyors who are exempt from the professional liability insurance bylaw but are employed outside of Alberta.

2. Council establishes a “Dues Abatement Reserve Fund,” to be funded by an additional levy under Section 52(2) of the Bylaws. Each member shall, on an annual basis, pay $10 or some lesser amount established by Council into the reserve fund until it reaches the upper limit established by council. This fund shall be used to offset the lost revenue to the Association by any reduction in dues and PSC levy plus GST.

3. If an Alberta Land Surveyor pays the reduced annual fee and subsequently gains employment, an Alberta Land Surveyor must pay back into the reserve fund the balance of their annual dues and the PSC levy plus GST for the current year before being eligible to practice. The amount is not pro-rated.

4. An unemployed articling pupil who is eligible to be registered as an Alberta Land Surveyor, qualifies for dues abatement.

5. An Alberta Land Surveyor may only apply for dues reduction twice in a five-year period starting in 2016-2017.

6. Council may review extending dues reduction to current benefitting Alberta Land Surveyors on an annual basis.

**Good Character Questionnaire**

Council approved a good character questionnaire for articling pupils to complete when they commence articles.

The genesis for this recommendation arose from the Articling Pupil Process Ad Hoc Committee report that was approved by Council on November 7, 2013.

Section 24 of the Examination & Training Regulation requires states “In addition to the other requirements of the Act or this Regulation for registration as an Alberta land surveyor, an applicant must... satisfy the Registration Committee that the applicant is of good character.”

**Credit for Unemployed Articling Pupils**

Council directed the Registration Committee to investigate the possibility of articling students receiving credit towards their articling time while unemployed, based on proper notification to the professional association.

The Registration Committee completed a comprehensive review of the Land Surveyors Act, Examination & Training Regulation, Council Policy and past Council decisions with regards to the five year time frame and unemployment. The Registration Committee finds that there is no provision in the Examination & Training Regulation to allow for a pause or leave from articles due to unemployment.

While a pupil is unemployed, field and office time can still be submitted and the pupil is allowed to complete all examination and project reports. Once the Registration Committee is aware that a pupil is unemployed, it requires that the pupil and principal provide an action plan to ensure that the pupil...
can complete their articles within the five-year time frame. This action plan is reviewed and discussed during a face-to-face interview with the pupil, principal and Registration Committee.

**Working on a Project Before Your Date of Commission**

Council approved a “Commission Date and Plan Signing Guideline” for distribution to the membership.

The guideline is on the ALSA website at [http://www.alsa.ab.ca/MemberResources/ReferenceMaterial.aspx](http://www.alsa.ab.ca/MemberResources/ReferenceMaterial.aspx)

The Registrar noted that a situation may arise where an Alberta Land Surveyor assigned to a project may not have had their commission when the project began. Council assigned this situation to the Standards Committee for review as a term of reference.

This recommendation clarifies the responsibility of an Alberta Land Surveyor assigned to work on a project that began prior to the surveyor’s date of commission.

It also outlines considerations that should be addressed by a corporation and employed surveyors when projects are assigned to a second Alberta Land Surveyor.

The intent is to provide this to the membership as information and it is not to be included in the Manual of Standard Practice.

**Encroachments**

The Standards Committee had been directed by Council to consider adding a definition of encroachment to the Manual of Standard Practice. The term of reference arose from articles that were published in ALS News and letters to the editor in response to those articles.

The Standards Committee contacted numerous sources and found that there were considerable variations between municipalities as to how encroachments are defined and shown. There was also considerable variation amongst Alberta Land Surveyors who prepare real property reports.

Council directed that an RPR Ad Hoc Working Group be established to define “encroachment” and make recommendations to Council.

**New Terms of Reference for Committees for 2017-2018**

Council directed the Standards Committee to “investigate adding a requirement to label a monument plan as “unregistered plan by (ALS, or Survey company)” to the Manual of Standard Practice and make recommendation to Council” for 2017-2018.

Council directed the Legislation Ad Hoc Committee to “review the Association’s bylaws and make recommendations for additions, amendments and deletions” for 2017-2018. The intent is to perform a wholesale review to “modernize” the Association’s entire bylaws.

**Co-Funding Opportunity**

GeoAlliance Canada was working on a project to raise the profile of the geo sector in Canada. The purpose was to address the challenge, documented in many studies over the years and highlighted in the Pan-Canadian Geomatics Strategy, of increasing awareness of the sector’s contributions and value to the Canadian economy and society.
As a first step, GeoAlliance Canada approached its members, such as the ALSA, to contribute to this project. Depending on the level of interest, they expected the per organization contribution to be $5,000 to $25,000.

Council decided to not commit any funds to this initiative. At this time in Alberta, with the current state of the economy, the ALSA has had to watch every dollar and put its focus on its core regulatory responsibilities.

GeoAlliance Canada was unable to raise the amount of co-funding support required for this initiative so the decision was made to not pursue it further.

**Canadian Geodetic Reference System Committee Meeting**

President Fred Cheng has been invited to make a presentation at the 2017 annual meeting of the Canadian Geodetic Reference System Committee (CGRSC, a subcommittee of the CCOG). The committee involves federal government representatives (NRCan, DFO) and provincial governments and representation from the USA.

President Fred Cheng, along with Geoff Banham of the Director of Surveys office, have proposed to make a presentation to address issues and gaps in geospatial positioning and the challenges, opportunities, and future endeavours of geospatial initiatives in terms of geodetic augmentation as well as geo-referencing of cadastral surveys to CSRS within Alberta.

The meeting is scheduled for early May in Ottawa.

Council passed a motion to authorize President Fred Cheng to make a presentation on behalf of the ALSA at the Canadian Geodetic Reference System Committee meeting and that any travel expenses not covered by Natural Resources Canada be topped up out of the ALSA’s Ambassadors Reserve Fund.

As this motion did not pass unanimously, it will come back to the next meeting of Council for second reading.

**Trade Mission to Dallas**

Alberta Economic Development & Trade is organizing a Trade and Investment Attraction Mission to AUVSI’s Xponential in Dallas on May 8-11 and asked the Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association to participate.

Council decided that it is more appropriate for private practice land surveyors to attend such trade missions rather than the ALSA as the professional regulatory organization.

**Government Liaison Regulation Changes**

The Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association has responded to questions from the minister’s office about the proposed changes to the regulations under the *Land Surveyors Act*, approved by the membership in 2013 and 2014. This gives the Association hope that the regulations will soon be presented to cabinet for approval.

**Public Members**

The Government of Alberta is currently receiving applications from interested Albertans who wish to serve as public members on professional regulatory organizations’ councils and committees.

Presently, the public member position on the Practice Review Board is vacant.

The Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association hopes to hear
more information about the appointment process soon.

**Ministerial Order**
The Director of Surveys had six questions about the Association’s report to the Minister of Environment & Parks concerning how ministerial order funds were used in 2014-2016. The Executive Director met with the Director of Surveys to discuss his questions and different options for moving forward. The ALSA is now doing some research and preparing a formal response to the Director of Surveys.

**Water Boundaries Applications**
The Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association was asked to comment on an updated version of the Provincial Wetlands and Water Boundaries Unit requirements regarding plans which show a change in natural boundaries that require a consent from the Crown under Section 89 of the *Land Titles Act* before being registered at the Land Titles Office.

The document is a follow-up on a meeting the government had with several Alberta Land Surveyors in early January to discuss a better process that will help streamline water boundary applications.

Council was happy with the document and suggested only one change that would give discretion to the Alberta Land Surveyor as to when a professional biologist assessment report would be required.

**Disposition Renewal**
AER Disposition Renewal
The Government of Alberta had discussed some different short and long-term options for disposition renewals and the requirement for surveys. The ALSA is putting together a white paper outlining different options and their pros and cons. Vice-President Mike Fretwell and Councillor Sandy Davies have prepared and are reviewing a first draft right now and are working on refining it.

A government legislative committee unanimously sent a recommendation to the government to eliminate adverse possession in Alberta.

**Edmonton ASCM Working Group**
The Edmonton ASCM Working Group asked for direction from Council as to how to proceed. There have been a number of discussions internally within the ALSA and externally with municipal, provincial and federal government representatives.

While there are a number of options and ideas, none of them are able to gain any traction unless there is funding in place to support them.

Council directed the Edmonton ASCM Working Group to reconvene in the 2017-2018 term to prepare formal recommendations for Council's consideration.

**A Model for a Statutory Boundary Tribunal**
Before leaving for the Land Surveyors’ Association of Washington AGM, President Fred Cheng asked Council to consider making a request to government to create the necessary legislation to institute a boundary adjudication panel that is modelled after the Ontario *Boundaries Act*.

Council agreed to ask President Fred Cheng for more information and details about Ontario’s process upon his return from Washington State.

Honorary Member Brian Ballantyne will speak to the membership on this subject at the AGM.
Digital Submissions of Documents at Land Titles

Council welcomed Richard Schlachter, Curtis Woollard and Jack Bowering of Land Titles and Marc St. Jean of Notarius to the meeting.

They provided a high-level overview of Land Titles' initiative to accept documents digitally from Alberta Land Surveyors and lawyers and retire their old mainframe systems. A pilot project is expected to begin this spring and, depending on the results of the pilot project, full implementation sometime this fall. Notarius provides the service to authenticate digital signatures for documents submitted to Land Titles. The Alberta Land Surveyors' Association will confirm whether a person is a land surveyor authorized to submit documents to Land Titles.

Land Titles and Notarius will make a presentation to the membership at the AGM on this subject.

towards approving its next budget in January 2018.

Council reviewed the 2017 AGM reports and recommendations document prior to distribution to the membership for the upcoming annual general meeting and regional meetings.

Connie Petersen continues to represent the ALSA in discussions with the real estate industry as they try to prepare standards for measuring areas for duplexes, townhouses and apartments.

Short Cuts

Council reviewed a very preliminary and rough draft of a 2018-2019 ALSA budget. The document will be reviewed and refined more carefully as the ALSA heads