The Council of the Alberta Land Surveyors’ Association met on December 8, 2016. Here is a summary of Council’s discussions.

From the Registrar
Council approved applications from Les Frederick and John Haggerty to be exempted from the provisions of the professional liability insurance bylaw as they are not currently practicing surveying in Alberta.

Council approved an application from David McArthur to be placed on the register of retired members effective January 2, 2017.

Council approved an application from Third Rock Geomatics Ltd. under the supervision, direction and control of Mark Sutter, ALS.

Financial Update
For the month of November, iron post sales were 77.9% of budget and marker posts were 58.9% of budget. For the yearto-date, iron posts were 109.1% of budget and marker posts were 71.8% of budget.

As at November 30, 2016, the Association’s investment account is up 4.34% since the start of the fiscal year and up 6.45% over the same time last year.

Other Association revenues and expenses are trending to be on budget.

Council will review the 2017-2018 budget at its February 2nd meeting.

Boundary Panel
Council welcomed Boundary Panel Chair David Marquardt and Boundary Panel Manager Scott Westlund to the meeting for an update on Boundary Panel cases and to discuss ways to make the process more efficient.

The Boundary Panel had also proposed amendments to its terms of reference and its handbook of operating procedures. Council noted some grammatical and formatting issues with both documents and directed that they be corrected before Council approves them.

Alternate Funding Models
Council received six proposals from members and external consultants to prepare a business plan for an alternate funding model for the ALSA. The funding model would be that when an Alberta Land Surveyor (ALS) authors a product, the member would pay a fee to the ALSA.

There are three possibilities.

First, when an Alberta Land Surveyor affixes their electronic signature to a product, the member pays a fee to the ALSA in exchange for the verification that the electronic signature is correct and that the ALS is a member in good standing.
Second, when a surveyor’s corporation affixes its permit stamp to a product, the surveyor’s corporation pays a fee. Under this alternate funding model, a digital permit stamp with a unique ID would be issued by the ALSA for each stamped final plan.

Third, practitioners (either Alberta Land Surveyors or surveyor’s corporations or both) purchase “professional product numbers” which they attach to each product they author.

The three options are not necessarily mutually exclusive and the ALSA may wish to proceed with one or a combination of all three.

MNP was the successful bidder.

Council unanimously approved a budget of $29,800 for the business plan.

Government Relations
Regulation Amendments
The Professional Governance Unit has indicated that it does not have anything substantive to report. They are still waiting for a cabinet date but nothing has been confirmed.

ABC Review
The ALSA attended a Professional Regulatory Organizations (PROs) Forum on December 9 where Alberta Labour provided an update on the new Government of Alberta process for recruiting and appointing public members.

Alberta Labour is going to hold further one-on-one meetings with each PRO (professional regulatory organization) early in January to discuss our legislative specifics for public members (i.e.: the public member on Council is a one-year term) and any specific competency requirements for our public members. The government is going to do a mass advertisement campaign to try to attract public member candidates in order to clear up the ~100 or so Alberta Labour public member appointments that need to be made.

Existing public members are going to be required to re-apply for the public member position. In the absence of any specific legislation, public member appointments will be three-year terms to a maximum of ten years. There is an emphasis on public member appointments being open, transparent and diverse. The government makes the appointment but the PRO will be involved in the screening process.

Land Titles Pilot Project
In order to ensure that the new ALTO system works for land surveyors, Land Titles is going to have the pilot users participate in requirement workshops with their team. This will replace the Release 5 pilot that had been scheduled for February. The results of the workshops will be incorporated into Release 6 and the land surveyors will pilot the complete digital submission process in April.

Environment & Parks
The Director of Surveys was unable to attend the Council meeting.

Council did discuss the status of the water boundaries unit and ensuring that they are invited to the ALSA’s annual liaison meeting with the Director of Surveys, Land
Council also discussed the disposition renewal process and ways to keep costs down for clients while still providing as-built surveys. Council reiterated its desire to be at the table with government and stakeholders to discuss options.

Standards, Easements and Hyperlinks
Council approved sending a recommendation from the Standards Committee to remove all of the hyperlinks in the Manual of Standard Practice to the 2017 AGM for consideration by the membership. This recommendation to remove all hyperlinks arose from a membership vote at the 2016 AGM. The problem that is trying to be solved is that websites are constantly being changed and, as a result, the hyperlinks in the Manual of Standard Practice become broken and useless. Instead of having hyperlinks, the Standards Committee is proposing to have some key words in italics text that could be used as key search words in an internet search.

Council then approved a recommendation from the Standards Committee that “Replace any reference to a Government of Alberta approval agency in the ALSA Manual of Standard Practice to a generic reference to the appropriate approving authority (from 2016 New Business)” be removed from the Standards Committee’s terms of reference. The Standards Committee found that, once the hyperlinks were removed from the Manual, it was exceedingly difficult to also remove the specific approval agency references and still provide clear direction and information.

Finally, Council referred a recommendation to adopt a guideline on “Commission Date and Plan Signing” back to the Standards Committee for further work.

Survey Control
Council directed that the ALSA organize a meeting with interested stakeholders to discuss implementation, uses, values, and benefits of survey control networks.

The meeting will be a high-level round table discussion with stakeholders from across Canada to share their experience and successes.

Representatives from outside of Alberta could attend via gotomeeting so there would be no budget implications.

Mohamed Abdel-Salam was officially appointed to the ALSA’s Edmonton ASCM Network Working Group.

Discipline Decisions on ALSA Website
Council gave second and final reading to a policy for publication of professional discipline matters and complaints.

The policy reads:
1. Any published discipline decision in ALS News in the past five years will also be published on the public side of the ALSA website on a “discipline and complaints” web page.
(Note: Decisions will be published on the website on a go-forward basis when
the policy becomes effective.
2. If a discipline decision is older than five years, then the decision is removed from the website.
3. If there are any restrictions against a practitioner (i.e.: can only practice with a mentor), then this information will be published on a “discipline and complaints” web page.
4. The ALSA will publish a numerical summary on the web page of any complaints being investigated, under mediation or scheduled for a hearing. This would be similar to the Discipline Committee report provided to the membership each year.

The reason for the policy is that the public expects complete transparency and openness from professional regulatory organizations. The public wants to know that professional bodies are effectively regulating its members and not hiding misconduct.

Other professional regulatory organizations in Alberta and other land surveyors associations in Canada publish their discipline decisions on their website or, in some cases, on national legal websites.

Future Committee Terms of Reference
Council approved amended terms of reference for the Future Committee by removing:
• Develop ideas for new sources of survey-related work for Alberta Land Surveyors and the ALSA.
• Review the future of the practice of surveying under both the Land Surveyors Act and EGP Act and make recommendations to Council.

And replacing them with
• Prepare a report outlining
  o Why do land surveyors do what they do?
  o How can collaborative efforts benefit land surveyors?

And retaining
• Investigate a digital cadastre, a buried facilities database and a geographic information repository as long-term funding ideas for the ALSA.

Short Cuts
Council received a draft outline of a course for Alberta Land Surveyors who wish to article a pupil. The course was a recommendation from the Articling Pupil Process Ad Hoc Committee.

Council received the feedback from the members who attended the online regional meeting on November 17. Overall, the feedback was positive but highlighted some areas where the format could have been better to make the event run smoother.

Council noted that IHS Markit has announced that it is transitioning the Plan Distribution Service (PDS) to Abacus Datographics and removing capability to order through PetroSurveys on December 17, 2016.