



# Specification Roundhouse

Volume 1, Issue 6

Tuesday, December 19, 2006

## NEWSLETTER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD CHAPTER OF THE CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS INSTITUTE

[WWW.CSIPRR.ORG](http://WWW.CSIPRR.ORG)

### *January Meeting*

Join us for a presentation covering "as-built" criteria as set forth in project specifications and the use of "as-built" data in post project applications by Mark Saville, P.L.S. of Sweetland Engineering & Associates, Inc.

The meeting will take place at the Bullpen Restaurant in Tyrone, PA at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 2. The cost is \$20 for a buffet dinner preceding the presentation.

RSVP by Wednesday, December 27, to Mike Lechleitner at [mikelechleitner@lrkimball.com](mailto:mikelechleitner@lrkimball.com) or 814-472-7700 ext 252.

### *Institute News*

Some of you may have recently received an email from CSI stating the following:

"On November 18th, CSI's officers and directors voted unanimously to propose to the membership a restructuring of the Institute Board of Directors. Among other points, the recommendation is to reduce the size of the Board of Directors from twenty-nine to twelve members to create a more efficient, streamlined governing body that will be better able to concentrate on leading the Institute. In February, all members will receive a ballot to vote on this recommendation."

Additional thoughts on this subject were provided by Paul Bertram, an Institute Vice President and member of our chapter. Mr. Bertram's thoughts are included in this newsletter for your benefit.

Thank you  
Mike Lechleitner

### *Monthly Meetings*

First Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the Bullpen Restaurant, Tyrone, PA.

### *Directions*

#### **From the North:**

Take the Tyrone exit.

Go to stop sign at the bottom of the exit and turn right.

Go to traffic light and turn left onto Pennsylvania Ave.

Go to traffic light and turn right onto 10th street.

Go under RR bridge and bear to the left onto Washington avenue.

Stay on Washington Ave., turn right into a parking lot between the Kwik Fill gas station and Pizza Hut.

There is a sign for the Bullpen Restaurant and it is located in the middle of the shopping plaza.

Meeting will be on the left side of the restaurant as you enter.

#### **From the South:**

Take the Tipton / Grazierville exit.

Go to end of off ramp and merge right onto old 220.

Stay on old 220, turn left into a parking lot between the Kwik Fill gas station and Pizza Hut.

There is a sign for the Bullpen Restaurant and it is located in the middle of the shopping plaza.

Meeting will be on the left side of the restaurant as you enter.

The Construction Specifications Institute is a nationwide non-profit technical organization dedicated to the improvement of specifications and building practices in the construction industry through service, education and research. Founded in 1948, CSI provides a forum for architects, engineers, specification writers, contractors, suppliers, and others in our industry. Membership is open to all who are involved in the built environment. Please contact Chapter Membership Chairman, Shane Lanzendorfer, 866-460-5610, or any chapter officer listed on the back of the newsletter.

## *List of Officers*

President:	Ron Senior	814-237-6518	rsenior@sweetland-eng.com
Vice President:	Mike Lechleitner	814-472-7700	mikelechleitner@lrkimball.com
Secretary:	Ken Cook	814-695-3216	kcook@keller.nb.net
Treasurer:	Jason Graham	814-695-4448	salesbbcmckee@aol.com
Membership Chair:	Shane Lanzendorfer	866-460-5610	shane_lanzendorfer@mcgraw-hill.com
Education Chair:	<b>(Your Name Here)</b>		
Certification Chair:	<b>(Your Name Here)</b>		
Technical Chair:	Mike Lechleitner	814-472-7700	mikelechleitner@lrkimball.com
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Director:	Toby Roberts	814-472-7700	tobyroberts@lrkimball.com
Director:	Dave Reisinger	814-863-3868	der19@psu.edu
Director:	Greg Gallardy	814-446-5110	g3057@aol.com

To CSI members,

The comments that are coming in on the forum regarding the proposed governance model are for the most part great questions and input for clarification.

I would like to address this proposal from a different perspective. When I was elected to office as Vice President, I quickly realized that this organization was trapped in its past. By that I mean that there is an existing structure for governance that is ineffective at many levels. My greatest concern is that CSI has been doing business the same way for years because that is how CSI is structured to operate. I could cite many examples of the inefficiency of this structure but will use this simple example; there are many CSI programs that exist because CSI does them every year, because that is what CSI does. Few of these programs have a business plan and seldom ever meet fiscal responsible objectives or reflect the real desires of membership. I began asking why from the day I came on board. Why does CSI continue on a path that clearly is not working to its full potential?

It also has been observed that everything the board does is second -guessed by a few vocal members who believe they have the member's best interest more at heart than the board. Some even believe there is motivation at the board level beyond the member's best interest even though the board is made up of elected members. That perception in part is created from the failure of effective Institute communications. So this governance proposal is being introduced through a well-planned and continuing communication plan. Part of that plan is to inform as well as respond to comments of concerns and support.

Before addressing the proposed governance model, I would like to mention that this board has accomplished more in the last 18 months than many previous boards. As examples: The formation of the Sustainable Facilities Task Team and the creation of GreenFormat (introduced at the CSI show last year and again at GreenBuild in November) provides a visible presence for CSI in the green building movement, the updating of UniFormat with industry stakeholders participation including GSA, DOD, NIBS, & ASTM that will represent a structure's life cycle, Page and Section Format updates, MasterFormat.com – an online resource, a grant for CSI to develop a global dictionary lexicon, renewed and new alliances with other industry organizations, participation in creating BIM industry standards utilizing CSI formats and OmniClass, the formation of a committee to explore current and new education forums and events, the introduction of a CSI CEU continuing education provider program, a proposed Product Manufacturing Alliance program, introduction CSI online discussion forums - to name a few. This work is only possible by active committees that are made up of CSI members (and some non-CSI members such as representatives from ASTM, NIBS, EPA etc.). These efforts have helped CSI regain an importance in the industry that is relevant to industry needs of today and tomorrow, It is important to understand that CSI's role in the industry is changing and the organization must respond to that change efficiently because if CSI does not move fast enough others will assume roles that are within CSI's domain expertise. Perhaps this is a view of the board you are not aware.

The research that Greenway Consulting did for CSI clearly showed change was needed in 3 specific areas - CSI governance, CSI branding, and a greater offering for manufacturers to interact with the building team.

Various models of board structure were reviewed and evaluated per CSI's needs. Neither the "corporate model", or "collegiate model" will impact CSI as positively as an "entrepreneurial model". Within this framework, there is a particular emphasis on innovation and often this appears as a focus on efficiency and effectiveness measures which push the organization to achieve a maximum return on its "investments". The entrepreneurial model maintains a constant market orientation to find opportunities and competitive advantages. The positive features of this model when it is working effectively are:

Participants' efforts are clearly focused on the "business" of CSI and produce real results.

The organizational culture explicitly emphasizes efficient and effective work processes.

There is a widespread sensitivity to "business" related changes in the "marketplace"

Leadership and resources are allocated to recognize and readily adopt best practices.

After two years of hard work and much discussion by the board, it unanimously voted to make this recommendation of new governance. This is a significant milestone; it is a clear statement to membership that it is believed change must happen to assure a sustainable CSI. Change has long been a topic of discussion with no effective results stalled by ineffective communication of a clear vision for the future and efforts by those resistant to any change.

If you agree change is required for a sustainable CSI then you understand the motivation behind this recommendation. Many concerns about region representation and committee structure are being expressed and are examples of being trapped in the past. These comments are about the way structure is now and it is apparent that the current structure is not working --- declining membership and the constant struggle to get volunteers to run for office at every level of the organization. The charge the board needs to be given is to deliver improved support programs to regions and chapters to perpetuate those entities. The perception that region representation guarantees anything at the board level is misguided as the responsibilities of the board are to represent all members, chapters and regions. The spirit of that reality is no different in the proposed model. Regions will still have their own governance structure supported by the Institute and can influence the board through a number of proposed avenues. First, there is the proposed Vision Summit. This is a concept that must be developed by a task team made up of a broad representation of membership, regions, chapters, past leaders, future leaders. It is proposed that this summit would be a daylong event (maybe longer) that would provide a new communications avenue directly with the board. Any issues or new ideas that regions, chapters or members have would be brought forward and discussed at this summit. Second communication opportunity is the annual meeting that is proposed to allow any member attending to participate thereby creating another opportunity for addressing issues.

However, no one is talking about the other ways members can influence the board and that is through active committee participation or as volunteers for alliance liaisons. I would also say that if you have an idea or an issue you always have the option to contact a board member. I do not know a board member that would not receive a call and address any ideas or concerns regarding a member's call. I personally have handled many during my term.

Some comments expressed concern about the workload on the board with only 11 (plus the executive director). One specific concern was the office of Secretary/Treasurer – it is not intended for this officer to actually do this work but is to oversee related tasks, required signatures and policies. The board members as committee liaisons will rely even more on committee leadership for results. Attending region conferences and chapters will be more of a challenge but as a VP this year I attended 2 conferences and I am a member of 2 chapters and attended meetings and events as schedule and budget allowed. It can be done over the 3 -year director term that is proposed.

Some have concern that a board doing its own review is not a good policy. That is in fact the recommended policy by many proactive boards. Many corporations have self-evaluation polices. It does not preclude membership from making observations and comments back to the board. Board self-assessment allows board members to better understand their own roles. The self-assessment process can develop the board's team-building skills, provide structure for problem solving, and increase accountability within the organization. The *Self-Assessment of the Board* helps association boards determine how well they are carrying out their responsibilities and identifies areas that need improvement. Currently a process for any review of the board is non-existent.

The issue of the structure of the nominating committee seems to be wrapped around the perception that a board controlled nominating committee is not ideal. In fact, the research Jim Cramer did completely supports this recommendation of the nomination committee structure. "The board is responsible for vision and leadership direction. If the board abdicates its leadership who else can have fiduciary responsibility? The board must not over delegate its responsibilities. The board must recruit and nurture talent to win. Winning cultures are accountable. Thus the board has responsibility to the future of the organization. And the root of this is meritocracy -- not proof of abdication. There is absolutely no reason for the board to abdicate responsibility for the organizations future health. Healthy and alert organizations take responsibility for their future. Governance therefore must lead and nowhere is this more important than makeup of the board."

This responsibility is no less or more effective or responsible with 3 board members and 2 non board members than it is with 3 non board members and 2 board members on the nominating committees. It will make no difference in the end responsibility. It is a perception issue based on the past. The quality of leadership is the key to future progress. Essentially, the nominating committee's purpose is to replenish leadership. What has not been discussed is how names from chapter and regions are proposed to move forward to the nominating committee and specific policy on how additional names may be considered if the slate is challenged. Currently there are no options in the nominating committee's recommendation.

I think the biggest challenge in accepting this proposal is that the vision requires a complete departure from the past. The board recognizes this fact. The vision is new and not bound by the past structure. It is by design that all details are not worked out. The implementation of the proposed board structure requires a transitional process over the next few years.

The vision regarding supporting policy and administrative guidelines has been questioned but is an administration function that will occur after the recommendation is passed. Basic concepts have been posted but it is not accidental or oversight that details have not been worked out. Some of the discussions on the forum need to be considered during revision/restructuring of outdated CSI policies.

This vision is sound. Why does CSI continue to keep on doing business the same old way when it is evident that so much more can be done. As a business owner, I understand that to remain status quo is the death of an organization. Change is not an option. Sometimes when you launch a new strategy adjustments are required and that is an option always available. CSI's governance has been static for too many years and now is the time for change. Your concerns and comments are being received and absorbed by the board so that as many as possible can be addressed.

I urge you to support this recommendation and understand the clear departure from the past that is being recommended and is believed to be in the member's best interest for all CSI members.

Submitted by  
A CSI member  
Paul R Bertram, Jr. FCSI, CDT, LEED AP