

## OAA AGM 2022: President's Address

*On Thursday, May 12, OAA President **Susan Speigel** hosted the Association's Annual General Meeting of Members (AGM) at the Beanfield Centre in Toronto as part of the 2022 OAA Conference . The speaking notes for the President's Address, which closed the AGM, are below.*

While we're still processing the impact of the pandemic, I have been so looking forward to this year's conference. The health of our planet is our galvanizing cause. I hope you've been finding the programming inspiring and totally energizing.

As you now know, Council and staff have been engaged in a five-year Strategic Plan envisioning process. The first phase of that planning process is in action as we dive into the hard work of turning our words into action.

The Strategic Plan forms the final cornerstone of our big-picture OAA Refresh Plan, which started with our building renovations, a new visual identity and new website, and an operational review—all meant to update and engage in the new future of constant change.

We need to ensure we continue to be well-equipped to serve the public interest in a constantly changing world.

As the regulator for architecture in Ontario, and collaborators with other regulators across Canada, we oversee the landscape of architecture and architects across the province of Ontario.

It is our duty to be monitoring and attentive to the broader regulatory terrain and respond to ongoing and critical scrutiny.

All of these recent activities are under the leadership of Council and Executive Director Kristi Doyle, and ensure that we are proactive in keeping our house in order by staying in our lane.

The strategic plan is built on a foundation of present urgent lenses. They frame what we look through to shape and give meaning to our actions.

Again, these important lenses are EDI—equity, diversity, and inclusion—and the Climate Emergency. These have been and will continue to be priorities for the OAA as co-drivers moving forward.

The planet's degradation as a result of human activity is a now indisputable fact. The timing and severity and necessary action to mitigate are often in debate.

We heard from our members during our Fall dialogue with our 14 Local Architectural Societies. They were overwhelmed not knowing how and what to do to become meaningfully involved in helpful actions at whatever level of understanding and interest they are at.

Our response is a 180-degree turn to focus our webinars, and of course our Conference, on *Inspiring Climate Action*. From an overall perspective and history, to changing perspectives, to technical actions, to tool development, to finding our way to lead through this crisis as the challenge of our time. And since the built environment has a substantial impact on greenhouse gas emissions, having an educated, skilled architecture profession is paramount for serving and protecting the public interest.

The architecture profession is poised to offer and enact solutions. As the provincial regulator, the OAA provides oversight and programming in a framework to ensure its members have the education and resources they need to ensure we are designing climate-stable solutions into new construction and renovation.

We are partnering with industry stakeholders to strengthen code requirements, and to raise public awareness about architecture's environmental impacts and responsibility to participate in a profound and unequivocal way.

Our commitment to this imperative was hitting our net-zero targets at the OAA Headquarters at 111 Moatfield Drive in 2020—a decade earlier than the 2030 requirement. I hope many of you were able to see first-hand our revitalized building during our Launch party last night or by participating in one of our onsite Continuing Education case studies during this Conference.

Originally designed by Ruth Cawker, the extensive, visionary, and urgent renovation/retrofit project was led by David Fujiwara Architect under the direction of OAA Council and the OAA Building Committee. Thank you to those members and all those involved in the project who had the foresight to start this journey seven years ago. We're so thrilled to finally reopen our doors!

Our staff are again working in the building. We are actively collecting metrics at the OAA, and we imagine the building as a model of net-zero design for both the profession and the public alike. This year, our electrical bill was \$59.00

We approached our head office project the way you would with an ideal client—with a thorough cost-benefit analysis that looked closely at both the short- and long-term gains. The benefits were clear: we could still have our bespoke, award-winning beautiful building, we could save money over time, and get an updated interior design and a better functioning building. This project models to clients to do the right thing.

Of course, the OAA has continued to pressure government to also do the right thing and use their regulatory authority to usher in systemic changes in climate-responsible building. For now, though, the onus remains on us as professional individuals to do the right thing.

We call on all of you to be engaged in this topic, to learn and to apply what you learn in studying, in classes, and in your practices, to lead the way for those who inherit the legacies we leave behind.

The OAA is committed to climate stability, and we are taking further steps to entrench it into the way we work. ConEd hours will be required in the content area of climate stability in our next cycle.

Our Local Society members expressed a huge interest to learn, but also a feeling of being overwhelmed with the vastness of the topic. To that, I encourage you to simply start. *Anywhere*.

The Climate Stability section of our website continues to provide and update resources and tools for members, including our Total Energy Use Intensity Calculator, and this Conference offers many launch points as well. Worried that you are not an expert? Almost no one is one.

We received great feedback on our Keynote address with Katharine Hayhoe in March and it demonstrates the wealth of existing knowledge and passion about the climate among members. It is clear to me our profession cares and is ready to take action. I have seen that firsthand over my last year and a half as president that we have the commitment and momentum to keep moving forward.

I end with a quote from whom I think of as being the father of the climate movement, Paul Hawken, author of *REGENERATION: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*:

“This is a watershed moment in history.

The heating planet is our commons. It holds us all.

To address and reverse the climate crisis requires connection and reciprocity. It calls for moving out of our comfort zones to find a depth of courage we may never have known. It doesn't mean being right in a way that makes others wrong; it means listening intently and respectfully, stitching together the broken strands that separate us from life and one another. It means neither hope nor despair; it is action that is courageous and fearless. We have created an astonishing moment of truth. The climate crisis is not a science problem. It is a human problem. The ultimate power to change the world does not reside in technologies. It relies on reverence, respect, and compassion--for ourselves, for all people, and for all life.

This is regeneration.”

Thank you.