

Washington State Board of Licensure for Landscape Architects meeting transcript

February 6, 2025

Lindsey Solorio (00:04):

We are good.

Curtis LaPierre (00:06):

Let's have our call to order. Good morning. I'm Curtis LaPierre, chair of the Washington State Board of Licensure for Landscape Architects. It's now 10:01 a.m. on Thursday, February 6, 2025, and I'm calling this board meeting to order. This meeting is open to the public and we will provide an opportunity for public comment later in the meeting. To reduce background noise, please mute yourself when you are not speaking, and for board members, help us capture information correctly by please stating your name when you make comments. Thank you. I'd like to ask Alyssa to please do the roll call.

Alyssa Woods (00:54):

I'll start with you, Chair LaPierre.

Curtis LaPierre (00:54):

Present.

Alyssa Woods (00:55):

Vice Chair Carbill.

Daren Crabill (00:55):

Here.

Alyssa Woods (01:03):

Board member Solorio.

Lindsey Solorio (01:05):

Present.

Alyssa Woods (01:06):

Board Member Anderson.

Jason Anderson (01:12):

Here.

Alyssa Woods (01:15):

Board member Robinson-Losey.

Sharon Robinson-Losey (01:17):

Here.

Alyssa Woods (01:18):

All right. Back to you chair.

Curtis LaPierre (01:24):

All right, thanks. Item three, we'll need approval of the agenda, which requires a motion for approval please.

Daren Crabill (01:33):

This is Darren. I so move to accept the agenda as written.

Jason Anderson (01:39):

Second, board member Anderson.

Curtis LaPierre (01:42):

Thank you. All those in favor, Aye?

Jason Anderson (01:46):

Aye.

Curtis LaPierre (01:47):

Aye.

Lindsey Solorio (01:47):

Aye.

Curtis LaPierre (01:49):

Okay. Item four, approval of the minutes. I also need a motion and second for this, please.

Jason Anderson (01:57):

Board member Anderson, I move to approve the minutes from November 7, 2024.

Lindsey Solorio (02:04):

This is board member Solorio. I second the motion.

Curtis LaPierre (02:07):

Thank to you. All those in favor?

Sharon Robinson-Losey (02:09):

Aye.

Curtis LaPierre (02:10):

Aye. Let's move on to item five then, old business. Our outreach update, that's for our board members to please report in on any outreach activities. I can start on that. I recently helped a coworker who's working with the ACE Mentor program, which is high school students interested in design professions, engineering, construction that are exposed to what exactly is going on in those professions, and they had a meeting last week. So, we prepared a PowerPoint presentation on landscape architecture.

(03:06):

Just to note that, if you're doing something like that, there is a PowerPoint on the ASLA national website that covers STEM education and landscape architecture, but beyond that, there is really not what I would call a middle school, high school introduction to the profession available for our youth. So, I am going to follow up with ASLA National and see if they don't have something, if they would consider please doing that. It seems like it would be valuable.

(03:48):

Any other outreach activities going on?

Jason Anderson (03:53):

Board Member Anderson? Oh-

Sharon Robinson-Losey (03:55):

Oh, go ahead Jason. I'll follow after you.

Jason Anderson (03:59):

Board member Anderson. I'm heading to Pullman in March and then I've also reached out to WSLA to get a young professionals day where I can go attend and speak with young professionals in landscape architecture.

Curtis LaPierre (04:19):

Good.

Sharon Robinson-Losey (04:22):

On Tuesday, I am going to be doing a landscape architecture licensure presentation at UW. That was scheduled for a couple of weeks ago, but I was sick and had to reschedule. So, I will report back as to how that goes.

Curtis LaPierre (04:40):

Okay. Yes, if you could please ask the students, I guess, how comfortable, how knowledgeable they feel about the process, if they've been to the DOL website and to Clark's website and do they feel like they have adequate information about ... do they think they have everything they need to proceed? I'd be really curious to know that.

Sharon Robinson-Losey (05:07):

Yeah.

Curtis LaPierre (05:09):

All right. Any other reports on outreach?

Alyssa Woods (05:13):

Mr. Chair, I was going to say on the resource ask that you were looking at for ASLA, I believe Clark was working on putting together some resources for younger demographics as well. So, we can reach out to them and see if that ever materialized.

Curtis LaPierre (05:30):

Okay, great. Thank you. There's nothing else then under this item. We'll move on to new business. Looks like there is no new business slated in the-

Alyssa Woods (05:47):

Mr. Chair, we missed one under old business. Item five-

Curtis LaPierre (05:53):

Okay. Oh, sorry. Discussion of updated 2025 board goals and priorities. Sydney, if you could open the discussion on that please.

Speaker 7 (06:04):

Absolutely. So, thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the board. This is a holdover from the meeting in November, which the board discussed updates to their goals and priorities. Alyssa, did we have another slide for this one that had the update? Go to the next one. There we go. So, we did make those updates to the board's goals and priorities for 2025. The only one that we noted was to expand outreach and education to include prioritization of reaching out to different educational and age demographics, including school enrichment programs like horticulture and 4H. So, those have been added to the goals and priorities. So, this is just a formal adoption of those for the year.

Curtis LaPierre (07:02):

Right. So, we need a motion for approval.

Jason Anderson (07:12):

Board member Anderson, I'll make a motion to approve the 2025 board goals and priorities.

Sharon Robinson-Losey (07:17):

This is Sharon. I'll second.

Curtis LaPierre (07:19):

Thank you. Is there any further discussion on 2025 goals?

Lindsey Solorio (07:29):

This is board member Solorio. I was not present for the November meeting. Is there any interest in still continuing to discuss the actual licensure costs and some of that information that we discussed in 2024 or is that moved on?

Curtis LaPierre (07:50):

Sydney, can we possibly add that we'll need to review that in 2025?

Speaker 7 (08:01):

We can add that the board has interest in it. However, the authority for those are statutorily given to the director of licensing, and as we'll be talking about here in a little bit with the program being part of a dedicated account, statutorily, the Department of Licensing is required to have fees that cover the costs of the program. So, we can add a discussion about what level of impact that may have, but really it is outside of the board's authority to do too much with it.

Lindsey Solorio (08:42):

Okay.

Sharon Robinson-Losey (08:44):

Thank you, Sydney.

Curtis LaPierre (08:46):

Thanks. I would note here on this slide I notice it still says 2024 goals to meet those-

Speaker 7 (08:53):

Yes. I caught that. I apologize. They are for 2025.

Curtis LaPierre (08:58):

If we can update that. Any other discussion on the 2025 goals? If not, let's go ahead and vote then. All those in favor please say aye.

Daren Crabill (09:11):

Aye.

Jason Anderson (09:12):

Aye.

Sharon Robinson-Losey (09:12):

Aye.

Lindsey Solorio (09:12):

Aye.

Curtis LaPierre (09:15):

Thank you. That motion passes. Item six is new business, which there is none. So, we'll move on to item seven, reports. Under committee task force reports, we have our Washington Administrative Code review committee, and Sydney's going to provide the long-awaited update.

Speaker 7 (09:42):

The long-awaited update that I wish it was a little further along. I apologize. I had personal delays this quarter, but the update is finally ready to go out to the committee. So, that is Chair LaPierre and Vice Chair Crabill. That will go out to them for one final review. I'll be sending that out to them either later today or tomorrow, just for that last quarter to look at that, and we will be presenting it at the next meeting for the board to look at moving it into the rulemaking process. So, the board will be approving what is presented and requesting that it move forward for rulemaking, and then it will move into the agency's rulemaking process from there.

Curtis LaPierre (10:34):

Okay, great. If there's nothing else then, we'll just go ahead and move ... oh, go ahead Darren.

Daren Crabill (10:45):

Sydney, since it's been a while, I know that there was some items that the attorney general, where we wanted the attorney general to look at language wise. When you send it back to us, can you just highlight those areas if there are any ... or any of the changes that were considered or just a memory I suspect will not.

Speaker 7 (11:09):

Yes, absolutely. So, you guys will be getting the red line version with all of the changes as well as the notes on what I reviewed with our assistant attorney general and then a clean version as well because the red line version is quite a bit to look at.

Daren Crabill (11:25):

Yeah, it's pretty bad, yeah.

Speaker 7 (11:27):

It is quite a bit. So, yes, as well as the notes on the changes that we had recommended to us by the Department of Licensing, the legislative and policy office for inclusive language. That was something they went through all of our wax and made recommendations to. So, it was a couple minor changes.

Daren Crabill (11:49):

Okay, great. Thank you.

Curtis LaPierre (11:53):

Okay. Thank you. If there's nothing further, move on to item 7.2, centralized investigation and audits unit reports, complaint status report.

Speaker 7 (12:08):

All right. So, as of January 6, we have one case that is in management review, seven that have been closed, this is going back into 2024, for a grand total of eight.

Curtis LaPierre (12:23):

Okay. So, there's one case still open?

Speaker 7 (12:28):

There is one case still open, and it's in a management review.

Curtis LaPierre (12:31):

Okay. So, that doesn't necessarily come before the board or any members assigned to that?

Speaker 7 (12:39):

It will in one form or another, unless it's simply closed for no jurisdiction. Every once in a while, that happens, but no, it'll come forward with a case manager recommendation, and then if it is to close with no further action or a letter of education, that will come before the board for adoption of the case manager's recommendation. If the recommendation is to move forward for a statement of charges, for fines, action against the license, anything like that, it would go through our compliance team, and there's a whole other process that they work through there and then it will work through its process to come back to the board in the form of a formal statement of charges.

Jason Anderson (13:25):

Sydney?

Speaker 7 (13:26):

Yes.

Jason Anderson (13:27):

This is Jason. Can I say anything?

Speaker 7 (13:30):

Yeah.

Jason Anderson (13:31):

So, the case was assigned to me, and I had my first meeting about it last week and it should be ... I wrote up my synopsis, submitted it, and so it should be becoming in front of the board for the May 8 meeting.

Speaker 7 (13:48):

Perfect.

Curtis LaPierre (13:54):

Good. All right. Any further questions or comments on that item? If not, let's move to item 7.3, licensing and customer support services reports. The licensee count report.

Speaker 7 (14:13):

Yeah, and this is going to be me again and, board members, I apologize. I am fighting a cold or the flu or something, but I am trying hard to get over it. So, as of right now, we have 892 active licenses, three that are in expired status and one that is in inactive status for a grand total of 896 licensees. Melissa, if you want to go to the next one.

(14:45):

This is just an overall look month over month, how those numbers can fluctuate depending on renewals and when new licenses are issued. So, the reason we provide this is just to show how there can be a little bit of that variability in the overall licensee count from quarter to quarter. It just depends on where in that cycle we're pulling the report. If we can go to the next one.

(15:13):

But this is the one that I really like to see. It's the five-year overview and, thankfully, through COVID, even though you guys are a smaller licensee base, you are small but mighty. Where a lot of our licensee bases did see a dip during the COVID years, especially '21-'22, both through COVID and then especially for our design professions ... with the educational changes that came at the university level and the challenges that they saw through COVID, we did see the dip in those '22-'23 post-COVID years, when it was catching up on our side of things. Thankfully, you guys did not experience that. So, you guys can see, this has been a very positive trend growing by about 80 licensees. So, again, small but mighty. So, we like seeing that you guys are still trending in a positive direction.

Curtis LaPierre (16:11):

Right.

Speaker 7 (16:12):

Are there any questions on the licensee account report?

Curtis LaPierre (16:14):

Hearing none, looks like we can move on to, let's see, 7.4.

Speaker 7 (16:32):

Mr. Chair-

Curtis LaPierre (16:32):

Go ahead.

Speaker 7 (16:32):

I apologize. We did have a request at the last board meeting to add a data pool on licensees qualified by exam versus reciprocity, and so this will show you that overview. Of our active licensees, we've had just shy of 400 who have qualified by exam, 292 by reciprocity. The none and the blank are unfortunately holdovers from the old system that get corrected as we come across them, but that's where that none and blank is, is that something that just did not transfer from the old system to the new one.

Curtis LaPierre (17:17):

Right. Yeah, the other thing that, of course, that shows is quite a large percentage of our licensees are in retirement age, 65 and above. So, that's a concern, wanting to see us replace ourselves or getting replaced and continue to grow.

Speaker 7 (17:53):

Yes, and you are not the only design profession that is facing that. The architects and geologists are also in very similar boats. That's something we're watching very closely for all of your professions. The architects actually just discussed theirs last week. So, they've decided just to monitor it on an annual basis and see how much that changes, but we were able to pinpoint on their side that it wasn't for a lack of new people coming in, but that there may not just not be as many ... again, specific to their side, there may not be as many jobs at the moment. Construction is slowing down. Economy is slowing down. All of those other factors that can play in.

(18:37):

Another thing they noted was that a lot of their licensees like to hold on to their license because of the professional pride. They've worked very hard for that, and they'd like to maintain that even into their retirement. I don't know if that translates over for your profession as well, but just because of those variety of factors, and we weren't really able to pinpoint a specific reason for seeing that high number, they decided just to monitor. So, it is something that we as staff are continuing to monitor, especially with you guys being one of our smaller professions, definitely not our smallest but one of our smaller, so we do monitor that for your licensee base health.

Curtis LaPierre (19:28):

Right, right. Thank you. Any further discussion on this item?

Sharon Robinson-Losey (19:38):

I do.

Curtis LaPierre (19:38):

Oh, go ahead.

Sharon Robinson-Losey (19:41):

Given that we are a smaller profession, and I recognize this is out of the domain of this board, but it may make sense at some point to look at how professions are grouped together as far as in industries to change that dynamic rather ... yeah.

Lindsey Solorio (20:07):

Absolutely.

Curtis LaPierre (20:12):

Yeah. Thank you. Let's go ahead then. Sydney on the item 7.4, boards commissions and outreach reports. Sydney, if you could report out please.

Speaker 7 (20:27):

Absolutely. So, we do have a couple of legislative updates to tell you about, none necessarily directly impacting the landscape architect profession, but ones that we definitely wanted the board to be aware of. So, one that was mentioned at the last board meeting and has had some changes since then, we did notify the board that there is a proposal to regulate the interior design profession in the state and specifically that group has requested to look at adding a

couple of members to the architects board and joining them under an umbrella with the architects.

(21:09):

So, as of right now, that proposal has been halted for 2025. They are not looking at putting it forward in the 2025 legislative session. The proposal does still need some work on the language that has been proposed. So, as of right now, it has halted. You may see something about it during the rest of the legislative session. They've indicated they would like to request a courtesy hearing before one of the legislative committees, just to start getting the legislature aware of the proposal, getting them familiar with it, but it would just be as a preliminary, "This is what we're looking at." It wouldn't be for any vote or action at that point. It just gives them a good ... it lays the groundwork for them to look for a sponsor for next year.

(21:57):

So, as of right now, it is on hold, but we will keep you all posted and think ... especially for our newer board members, one of the reasons we want to make sure you guys are keyed into that is because there is a lot of ... or there have been a lot of movements in recent years to combining design professions onto a single board. So, because of that, because of the discussions that that can take on, we like making sure that you are all aware of these discussions happening and that we're keeping you guys informed and being as transparent as possible. So, as of right now, nothing is looking to impact the interior design profession as it stands in Washington state, and we will keep you apprised if anything changes that would cause this to impact you.

(22:50):

The next one that does impact this board is our program fund designation change. This came before the board last summer. This is the change to move the business or the landscape architect program under the umbrella of the business and professions account, our internal designation of an O6L account. So, I am happy to provide an overview, brief overview if anybody would like it, but that proposal, our agency requests legislation for that has moved forward and it's making its way through the legislative process. We have had one amendment so far, and that is it would require annual reporting of all expenditures and revenues for each of the programs underneath that account.

(23:40):

Again, you will remain a dedicated account. It would just put you under this O6L umbrella that will lessen the impact and the need for rapid fee changes, anything like that. So, the example I like to use is if we had a case that moved forward for statement of charges, ended up getting appealed up into the court system, something like that, those legal fees can add up very quickly. We had a geologist case that moved forward. Again, another very small program moved forward and was appealed up into the court system, ended up making its way to the Washington Supreme Court, and they very quickly had accumulated a quarter million dollars in legal fees just like that. So, that would be a major program impact in a very short period of time, led to a rapid fee increase for them to cover those costs. This O6L designation allows us to not have to implement that quite so quickly and to rebuild it in time. So, that's the reasoning for that, just as a reminder. So, it is moving forward and we'll keep you posted as that changes.

(24:57):

The final piece is, again, not directly impacting all of you, but I think a lot of feedback from all of you last year with the Professional License Review Act, our household 1301 report that goes to the legislature each year. You guys were the lucky or the unlucky depending on how you look at it, the profession that was tapped for the report ... one of the professions tapped for the report last year. The legislature did receive feedback on the report and has added a couple of additional data sets that they would like us to include on all future reports. So, just wanted to include that for you guys, even though it won't be impacting you in the immediate future, letting you know that the legislature is viewing that report in looking at all of the details and wanting more.

(25:48):

So, that report is working and doing really well. So, we really appreciate everybody's involvement in that last year, especially for the landscape architects. You guys turned out in force to make sure that your voices were heard with this report, and it showed because the legislature heard, and they're wanting more. So, are there any questions on any of that?

Curtis LaPierre (26:17):

Yes. On the last one, on the licensing review, does the legislature actually have to accept or approve the report at some point?

Speaker 7 (26:28):

Oh, I am going to defer to the team who handles that. Lauren, if you could help me out or Austin?

Speaker 8 (26:39):

Yeah, I can speak to that. This is Austin. They don't have to approve it, but they can request further information or ask questions, follow-up questions and request more information on it.

Curtis LaPierre (27:01):

Okay, thank you. Any other questions on any of those three items? If not, we can go ahead and move on to agenda item eight. Is that right?

Speaker 7 (27:18):

No. We have a couple more, Mr. Chair.

Curtis LaPierre (27:19):

Oh, okay.

Speaker 7 (27:19):

A couple more reports.

Curtis LaPierre (27:22):

Oh, that's right. Okay.

Speaker 7 (27:25):

So, this was also a request, and I apologize that I was not able to be present at the last meeting to give you this overview. This was a request from last summer for just a general overview of the program funding structure. So, this is going to be very high level, but because we do have a couple of new board members, we wanted to give you an overview about how your licensing dollars are more or less broken out. So, Alyssa, if you want to go to the next one please. Okay.

(27:58):

So, I am happy to send this to all of you, but this is a representation. This is not super fine detailed. I did not go through line by line on how everything is broken out. But, essentially, when your licensing fees are paid, they're paid into what's called a dedicated account. So, that means the program has to pay for itself. So, it has to be completely self-funded and be able to sustain itself. So, it goes into that dedicated account and essentially is broken up into, more or less, three buckets. We have our direct program support. So, our licensing and customer support services team, they're the ones who answer the phones, who review the license applications, who interface with Clark, make sure that all of our licensees have met their requirements, they process the license and then they issue it. They also process all of our renewals. So, they are really the nuts and bolts that keep us all together.

(29:04):

Then, our centralized investigation and audits unit team, they're the group that will perform our investigations when we get complaints. They also have auditing functions as a part of that. Our regulatory compliance, UCC and firearms team, the reason I underline the regulatory compliance is that is the piece of that team that applies to you. They are a small but mighty team, and they do have additional functions that are added to them, but the piece that impacts our program is regulatory compliance. Then, our operational support services team, specifically the board's team, so myself and Alyssa.

(29:44):

So, I want to point out with that, that with that direct program support, that represents approximately 15 people across those four units, 15, 17 people, I can't remember the exact count off the top of my head, but about 15 people. The program pays for about 2.7 of those. So, it's a portion of my time, a portion of Alyssa's time, a portion of Anissa's time with licensing and her support team there, a portion of the investigators. It is all broken out, and that allows us to be dedicated to your team, but the program is only charged for about 2.7 of those. So, big bang for the buck in that regard.

(30:37):

Another pot that it goes into is technology. That's really, the biggest piece of that is going to be the Polaris licensing system, but that also includes all of the support from WaTech, our technical arm for the state, computers, phones, all of those pieces get put into that technology bucket. Then, our agency, indirect costs are the third main bucket. So, that includes support from the department of licensing, which is our legislative and policy team. They're the ones who actually go across the street and meet with the legislature and work on bills, they do the in-depth deep dives on bill analyses and interface with all of us to make sure that they are getting information back to the legislature that they need for it.

(31:35):

Our public disclosure office, human resources, financial services and budget, agency leadership, all of those little pieces that help make a program function. It provides additional divisional support. So, that's our data management team, our internal legislative support, our division leadership, all of those things. I hate to put it as other, but our Clarb membership, our assistant attorney general's fees, all of that all goes into that agency indirect. So, I know that's a really high-level overview, but are there any questions, anything else I can provide? Hopefully, this was what you guys were looking for.

Curtis LaPierre (32:28):

Yeah, it's very helpful. We only, I think, typically think of the first bucket and forget about everything else that needs to happen. So, it's very informative. Thanks for that. Any questions, comments on any of this? If not, we'll move on to the review of our master action item list.

Speaker 7 (32:56):

This one should be nice and quick. We've already covered a lot of it. So, I'm going to skip the WAC update and the outreach discussion. We had put in a data request last year to Clarb for some age demographic data, and we were never able to get that back. So, I think we are going to look at moving that off of the master action item list. I just don't think that the demographics data we were looking for was something that they happen to have. Our board recruitments are an ongoing priority. Thankfully, you guys are a full board. You are an ongoing.