

President's Message

November 27th, 2017

Fellow MEA Members,

It is indeed an honour to have been recently elected as your President of our Municipal Engineers Association for 2017/2018. A positive year is anticipated for the MEA as we advance on several major issues. Our 58th Annual Workshop held November 22nd through 24th, 2017 in Brampton was, again, an outstanding success. Many thanks to the local Brampton organizing committee. Presentations from the workshop will soon be available on the MEA web site – www.municipalengineers.on.ca. Check them out, they are great references.

While you are on the web site, you should also check out our discussion forum. This forum is available to provide an exchange of ideas and discuss issues related to Municipal Engineering. It is also available to receive feedback and comments from MEA members. There are two main sections; one to discuss the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process and the other to discuss all things related to Development Engineering. We will be focused on ensuring this discussion forum includes topical and relevant information for Municipal Engineers. Website feedback is genuinely valued.

Key challenges for your Board this coming year include;

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) – For several years, MEA has been pushing the Ministry to deal with two major issues; the time delays waiting for the Minister to rule on a Part II Order Request (PIIOR) and the new legal interpretation that allows for a PIIOR on Schedule A and A+ projects. The Auditor General's December 2016 report highlighted these problems and a number of other provincial organizations have joined MEA in calling for EA reform. Also, the Ministry is anxious to incorporate specific climate change provisions into the EA process so we hope 2018 will be the year we finally see provincial action.

Ontario Provincial Standards (OPS) – The MEA is co-Owner of the OPS along with the MTO. This cornerstone program serves a continuing critical role in municipal infrastructure projects. This coming year, with help from our recently hired Infrastructure

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Services Manager, Hilda Esedebe, the MEA will again be working to improve and promote the OPS throughout the province.

Public Perception of Professional Engineers – it is, of course, the responsibility of every member of the Professional Engineers of Ontario to conduct ourselves with integrity and professionalism that communicates a positive perception and high level of trust among Ontario citizens for our proud profession. I believe it is particularly our responsibility as trusted employees within our respective Municipalities, due to the prominent and highly visible public positions we hold, to accept an even greater than average level of accountability to promote a high regard for our public value. I seek your collective assistance in advancing this responsibility and look for specific action we can all take to do so. Let's collectively work to raise our positive profile.

Organizational Sustainability – MEA has a great core of hard working volunteers and currently has substantial financial reserves thanks to prudent budgeting and expenditures. However, the cost of operations has been increasing and each year we all age (whether we admit it or not). The Board recognizes this issue and has formed a Young Professional's Committee tasked with ensuring the MEA remains relevant and provides value to younger Municipal Engineers – after all, our future will be in the hands of these younger professionals. Also, the Board continues to develop plans to ensure long term financial sustainability of our organization.

The Board encourages member's participation and feedback. Please make contact through our Executive Director, Alan Korell at alan.korell@municipalengineers.on.ca with any questions or feedback. Also, mark your calendars early for the Annual Workshop in Thunder Bay in November 2018 (details to follow). I'm sure Thunder Bay will excel and deliver another outstanding workshop.

To close, on behalf of the 2017 – 2018 MEA Board; Paul Knowles (Past President), Steve Lund (Vice-President), Salim Alibhai (Treasurer) and our Directors; Roslyn Lusk, Gary Moore, Matthew Miedema, Christine Adams, Jason Cole and Enrico Scalera; thank you all for your ongoing support.

John F. Thompson, P.Eng.
MEA President
(Director of Environmental Services, City of Barrie)