

IDIBC Legal Task Force Membership Information Meeting Notes

Held June 10, 2004 – 7:45 a.m.
False Creek Community Centre
1318 Cartwright Street – Granville Street

IDIBC's task force, introduced by Joanne Pocock, RID, VP Legal was represented by Carol Jones BID,RID,CFM,FIIDA,FIDC,FIDIBC, Keath Seeton BID,RID and Jon Sunderland B.a.a.,(ID),RID,IDC. Robert Ledingham BID,RID and Catherine Youngren, RID(Fellow), ISP were unable to attend. Sally Emmerson, BA, RID, IDIBC's President made the opening remarks.

The AIBC task force members are; Grant Longhurst (Chair), Peter Levar MAIBC, Selwyn Dodd MAIBC, Dave Mackey MAIBC (Retired Member) and Peter Salusbury AT.

Keath Seeton began by providing a brief synopsis of events to date,

- The AIBC has been given a mandate from the government to rewrite their practise act as well as direction to encompass a broader group of design professionals. That includes the architectural technologists, interior designers and possibly the landscape architects.
- To date three formal but relatively unstructured meetings have been held between the AIBC task force and the IDIBC task force. Discussions so far have all been preliminary, no decisions have been made. The AIBC has been learning about the IDIBC, how it manages itself, how it establishes its professional business, how it protects the public. It was discovered that, in many instances IDIBC and AIBC are quite like minded in what they want to achieve.
- Future meetings between the AIBC and the IDIBC task forces will be more structured with the first item of business to get a mutually accepted definition of interior design, practise of interior design and scope of interior design. AIBC's negotiations with the architectural technologists are almost complete. Restrictions of the size and type of project are being presented to the technologists. Neither the AIBC nor IDIBC sees designers in that kind of practise area. The AIBC task force's attitude, approach and willingness to cooperate seem to be very strong.

Keath Seeton, Carol Jones and Jon Sunderland discussed the intent of the meetings,

- The task force has been trying to create a written definition of what interior designers do that will be accepted by all. This definition is needed if the practise of interior design is to come under some stronger form of legal control. The task force is trying to broaden all aspects of interior design.
- The task force is trying to 'push the envelope' regarding scope of practise. By definition, interior designers don't do structural work. However as a result of changes within the code, there are some structural issues coming to the fore. Public safety is central to the issue.
- Under current practise interior design firms cannot employ architects. This has proven to be problematic and is deemed to be unfair to AIBC members. An interior designer cannot go into partnership with an architect unless the architect holds the majority control of the corporate structure. The AIBC task force agrees that this particular practise is archaic and should be examined.
- The IDIBC Task Force is trying to establish that Registered Interior Designers are professionals who are fully capable of managing and completing serious projects.

The crisis concerning the ability of the architects to obtain insurance was brought up by an audience member. The task force members responded by saying that it is true that some architects who are just starting out need to go into partnership with someone who already has insurance. In view of Sept. 11th, the leaky condos and the Kelowna fires, the insurance companies are being very cautious as to whom they insure.

Q – Will our possible future association with the architects affect our insurance rates?

A - It may affect the rates. Once we get the authority to sign drawings or issue letters of assurance it is going to be in a relatively low risk area, like replacing grab bars. We are never going to get into the architectural or engineering realm of risk which should help to keep the rates relatively low.

The task force members went on to say that interior designers will benefit from an alliance with the AIBC by being perceived as more accountable for their work. Catherine Youngren had indicated to the AIBC task force members that designers are willing to take on more responsibility and be accountable for it. The IDI task force has been very clear with the AIBC that they are not interested in reducing the current scope of work for interior designers. The task force realizes that in defining that scope, wherever they are able to define it, may mean that fewer interior designers may qualify initially to practise in that area. That is a trade off, part of raising the bar. It is also likely that the educational standards for acceptance as a member will be raised to include a four year degree and a five year accreditation. The IDIBC task force is saying that they want the NCIDQ exam to remain as the minimum standard.

Q – In the long term does it look as if there will be two associations or one?

A – It could be one that is blended with interior design represented on the board of AIBC. The AIBC feels that the most efficient way is to have a single organization with IDIBC representation on council, sub committees, task forces, programs and activities and they are probably right about that.

Q – What about turf wars?

A – There is an overlap area in what an interior designer does and what an architect does. Handling this overlap area is critical to successful negotiations.

The IDI task force members went on to say that discussions concerning the overlap have been held but nothing specific has come about as a result of those discussions. The task force realizes its responsibility in negotiating on behalf of all existing and future IDIBC members. Architects will always practise some areas of interior design and interior designers will always practise some areas of architecture.

The AIBC task force wants to have a Practise Act that is ground breaking. They are being progressive and looking to the future.

An unacceptable result would be an arrangement similar to that of Alberta's interior designers and architects. A better model is the Nevada model, which combines residential and commercial interior designers and architects under one umbrella. This was created when the Nevada government instructed its architects to come to an agreement with its interior designers. The interior designers enjoy a very high status in that organization and the achievement of becoming a registered designer is acknowledged and recognized within the organization. For more information regarding the Nevada model see –

Nevada State Board of Architecture, Interior Design and Residential Design
www.nsbaidrd.state.nv.us/

Nevada Administrative code: Architects, Interior Designers and Residential Designers
www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-623.html

The task force listed some of the benefits of joining with the architects –

- the interior designers would be part of a much larger and stronger association, in terms of numbers of people, in terms of recognition at government level and in terms of the financial structure, all of which are still to be defined.

- the interior designers would have much broader access to education.

- by definition, the interior design profession would move further away from decorating. We would be solidifying or strengthening the profession both internally and externally.

The task force members went on to describe the time frame for discussions with the AIBC. In Fall 2004, the joint task force wants to move forward with a goal toward a new Act by the end of 2005. The IDIBC task force does not want to rush the process. A critical path has been requested. The IDIBC membership will be kept informed as more meetings take place. A report will be sent to the IDIBC membership before the draft act is given to the government for review. The process could be lengthy as marketing campaigns are required from both groups. IDIBC members should keep in mind that the AIBC is going to redefine or rewrite the act, with or without IDIBC approval. It is only sensible, therefore, that IDIBC actively participate in the process.

Q – What are the membership levels of the various associations involved?

A – AIBC	approx. 1,500
Technologists	approx. 3,000
Engineers	approx. 10,000
Interior Designers	250

Q – Negotiations to date have been free to IDI members. However there will come a point at which IDIBC will need to seek legal advice. A special levy from the membership may be required to cover such costs.

A – So far, IDIBC has been acting without legal counsel, whereas AIBC seeks legal advice at each step. As negotiations increase, IDIBC will also need to seek legal counsel.

In an effort to reduce future legal costs, task force members have been completing much of the preparatory work themselves.

Q – Will the new association attract or detract new members?

A – In order to practise, interior designers will have to be members. Most importantly, the public will be able to more easily differentiate between designers and decorators.

Q – Will the title be “designer”?

A – The name is still under discussion.

Q – Will there be grandfathering?

A - We are assuming that at this point there may be some. It will be discussed.

The task force wrapped up the meeting by noting that there are currently designers who should be members, given their level of education and experience. IDIBC should be communicating the future to them, since it would be in their best interests to join now. Furthermore, non-members should be encouraged to complete their NCIDQ certification before any changes are made.

To date nothing has been finalized, nor will it be without IDIBC membership approval. Once the 'proposed definitions' are agreed upon, the task force will update members.

Heidi Matthews applauded the efforts of the task force on the members' behalf.

Recorder: Elaine Friesen.