

Alberta Professional Planners Institute

Scott Pragnell has a long-standing history of participating and volunteering in planning, both in Alberta and Canada, beginning in the early 1980s when he joined the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), right up to present – as the Deputy Chair of the Professional Standards Council.



Scott Pragnell RPP, MCIP

At that time CIP was a national organization that was mainly focused on conferences, much different from what both it and the Provincial Institute and Territorial Associations (PITA's) have now become. However, Scott's first informal role was helping to organize conferences in the 1990s when the Alberta Association of the Canada Institute of Planners (AACIP), the precursor to the Alberta Professional Planners Institute (APPI), represented planners in Alberta. Later, in the 2000s, Scott participated in the Planning for the Future discussions and the ideas for provincial accreditation of planners, later volunteering on the Registration Committee, leading to a formal role from 2013 to 2014 when he served on APPI Council. After serving on Council, Scott continued to volunteer as an Alberta representative on the CIP Professional Standards Committee, leading to a position of Chair of the committee during 2018 and 2019.

Some of Scott's strongest memories of volunteering are the important early discussions about what the planning profession would look like in Planning for the Future discussions—for example, the core competencies of a planner, later leading to the discussions on getting the right to practice.

For the future, Scott thinks that the current pandemic will only accelerate changes in the way we work—whether people need to be in an office daily, as well as with increases in online shopping and perhaps reduced demand for retail stores and demand

for public transit. Who better to help manage future changes in our cities, towns and rural areas than planners?

What has Scott enjoyed the most about volunteering? The opportunity to meet, share, learn, and enjoy good times with other professionals from across Canada. One of his most memorable meetings was a Council meeting held in Yellowknife, where many people accessed the meeting remotely, which is when Scott realized the importance of the remote learning professional development put in place by APPI. Travel has demonstrated to Scott that although an individual planner might focus on immediate geographic area, altogether Canada's planners have shaped the entire country. Volunteering certainly helps you attain new perspectives!

Many people have had an influence on Scott's career, too many to name, but they do include Mary-Jane Alanko, the Executive Director of APPI, and Eleanor Mohammed, now President of CIP.

Undoubtedly collegial, collaborative, Scott advises that people thinking of volunteering will get much more out of it than they might think, including an improved perspective on what they are doing professionally, making new friends, obtaining new ideas and meeting new challenges.

When he is not chairing meetings, Scott enjoys outdoor sports—biking, running, skiing and sometimes sailing in the Gulf Islands!