



ASTTBC Property Inspection Program Review

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Introduction

ASTTBC members in House and Property Inspection have engaged with ASTTBC staff for the purpose of seeking clarification on a few outstanding issues and to help set the stage for future growth and development. Given the significant changes with the overall program, change to ASTTBC-PI from BCIPI, and need to formulate a clear direction for continued enhancement of the professional regulatory framework, ASTTBC staff created a process to engage members and assist in formulating a new direction for the program.

This review comprises,

1. Member Webinar #1 – March 28 - outline issues & define review process
2. Member Survey - following the webinar – March / April
3. Member Feedback – members to send in comments & pose questions (March / April)
4. Report to Members – July – ASTTBC response re issues / questions
5. Member Webinar #2 – August - to review the Report
6. Member Meetings – September - Metro Vancouver, Okanagan and Vancouver Island

A. Professional Regulation & Licensing

1. Licensing of House Inspectors

The current licensing model with four separate and distinct associations / organizations recognized by Consumer Protection BC (CPBC) to offer certification leading to a CPBC license to practice is of great concern to respondents. The general comment was that one standard is needed to best serve the public.

ASTTBC Response:

ASTTBC is very concerned that there are four separate and distinct standards and four separate certifying bodies. This model brings into play four different standards and policies administered by organizations that have significantly different legislative foundations, varied experiences as a regulatory body, considerably different financial, volunteer and staff resources available to handle all elements of professional regulation, and with home offices in BC and Ontario.

ASTTBC is actively engaging the CPBC and the BC Government seeking changes to the Regulation to better serve consumers. In June 2013 Premier Clark asked Minister Rich Coleman, through her mandate letter, to look at house inspector licensing. ASTTBC has met with the BC Government and will soon meet the new CPBC CEO to consider options going forward. As well, ASTTBC has connected directly with CAHPI(BC) to seek a meeting. CAHPI(BC) has agreed to meet ASTTBC during the summer to talk about the licensing model.

2. ASTTBC Standards

A few respondents indicated that they chose ASTTBC for their certification because of the high standards, professional foundation and depth of experience of the Association.

ASTTBC Response:

ASTTBC's standards, policies, procedures for professional certification and accountability are ever-changing, with enhancements designed to better serve the public interest. Consideration is now being given to a program for auditing CPD and practice and enhanced awareness and understanding of risk management. ASTTBC is satisfied that the Association has a solid foundation for professional certification and accountability and is always looking for ways to improve. The newly formed Property Inspection Certification Board will now guide policy development, assessment of applications and generally keep an eye on matters pertaining to the professional regulation of house and property inspectors.

3. Mentors and Assessors

A common question asked as part of the inputs with this survey, as well as from pass communications, related to the process for selecting and training Mentors and Assessors. There was little concern about the quality of the services provided but some Inspectors wanting to know how they might be considered / selected as a mentor or assessor.

ASTTBC Response:

ASTTBC has drafted guidelines for Mentors and Assessors and defined the process for selection, training and auditing of Mentors and Assessors. These standards will be completed and likely approved before the end of 2013.

4. Realtors Recommending an Inspector

A common refrain from Inspectors was that realtors should NOT be recommending an inspector(s). This is viewed by some Inspectors as a conflict of interest. Others saw it as part of the business environment.

ASTTBC Response:

ASTTBC agrees this is an issue warranting attention. I met this spring with the CEO and Chief Compliance Officer for the Real Estate Council of BC, the licensing body for realtors. The Council reps reviewed the current policy / standard for Realtors when they are asked to recommend a House Inspector. RECBC is interested in assuring that licensed Realtors abide by guidelines set by the Council when realtors are asked to recommend an Inspector. ASTTBC has also discussed this issue with the CPBD and the BC Government, indicating this is a matter being monitored by ASTTBC.

5. ASTTBC List of Inspectors - Limit Areas for Services

Several respondents commented that the ASTTBC web site should not allow CHIs and CPIs to indicate they are available to offer professional services in areas of the province that are at great distance from their home office.

ASTTBC Response:

ASTTBC will consult all Inspectors in the Fall of 2013 to get feedback and suggestions on this issue and will, with a clear outline of Inspector interests, appropriately adjust the Inspector listing on the ASTTBC web site.

B. Organization - The Change to ASTTBC-PI from BCIPI

1. Governance Model and Loss of Democratic Rights

There was no other subject that attracted such 'passionate' comments, particularly from respondents who were, it appeared from the commentary, directly connected with the issue of BCIPI governance and were actively involved with BCIPI at the time the change was made from BCIPI to ASTTBC-PI. These respondents were quite upset with the ultimate decision by ASTTBC Council to change direction and make a direct link with ASTTBC vs continuing with what was perceived by some as a totally independent organization from which they derived their certification and to whom they paid annual fees.

The concerns were sometimes expressed in very strong terms, including that they believed / felt that BCIPI was 'high-jacked' and that they lost their democratic rights when BCIPI was disbanded and ASTTBC-PI was created in its stead.

A few respondents indicated that BCIPI had ended up in a confrontational mode with ASTTBC with a stated intent by a few within BCIPI that BCIPI should remove itself from ASTTBC and become an independent enterprise including offering certification separate from ASTTBC. Some indicated that the change to ASTTBC-PI made a lot of good sense and represented a new day and opportunity to grow and enhance awareness, resulting in an improved business environment.

ASTTBC Response:

ASTTBC wishes to address this issue to the extent we can, although we note that we cannot turn the clock back on the decision to move to ASTTBC-PI. ASTTBC wishes to invest our energies in the future opportunities and work needed to further develop and enhance the ASTTBC CHI and CPI professional registrations and awareness.

ASTTBC offers the following:

- . BCIPI was seen by many / most as a body independent from ASTTBC*
- . BCIPI was viewed as offering certification, which is not the case as this was provided by ASTTBC*
- . Some members believed annual fees were paid to BCIPI, which is not true as fees were paid to ASTTBC*
- . Some BCIPI leaders wanted to 'divorce' from ASTTBC, an outcome that not acceptable to ASTTBC*
- . BCIPI meetings spent a lot of time in a stressful dialogue with members based on the desire to take the organization in a different direction. Many Inspectors expressed concern about this and wanted CPD without all the organizational wrangling*
- . ASTTBC provided a lot of opportunity for those who wanted to move in a different direction to articulate their views and get them heard. The ASTTBC Council decided it did not agree with taking the certification program in another direction and made the decision to re-vamp the governance model*
- . ASTTBC Council decided that a Property Inspection Certification Board would be set up, separate from the ASTTBC Board of Examiners, which is the usual approach for other Technical Specialist programs.*
- . The PICB was also charged with the responsibility of providing oversight of program services, marketing and similar elements of the program.*
- . The PICB is appointed by ASTTBC Council with those appointed serving a two year term*

2. Special Marketing Levy

The extra 'marketing levy' drew comment as well, mostly that the decision to continue the fee in 2012 – 2013 was made by ASTTBC staff / Council without a 'vote' of the registrants.

The Special Levy was introduced several years ago at the request and with the approval of the majority of ASTTBC Inspectors. Set at \$95 a year and collected at the time and as part of the annual renewal fee, the fund was to be directed to enhanced marketing initiatives.

ASTTBC Response:

The ASTTBC Council decided that the fee would continue in 2012 - 2013 given it had been in place for many years and to change direction might cause issues in terms of visibility and general public relations. Council agreed that the matter would be reviewed with Inspectors before setting annual fees for 2014-2015.

The annual special levy for marketing has been applied according to the wishes of the members with the possible exception of this past year, but even then the funds were expended based on a program set up in consultation with the PI leaders. The statement of Revenue and Expenses is on the following page.

Marketing Strategies : the challenge was to reach out in the most effective way possible to potential consumers / clients. The members making the decisions struggled to determine the best approach given the varied experiences among those making the decision. Yellow Page advertising and SuperPages was, at one time, determined to be an effective means to draw attention to the ASTTBC CHP and CPI. Ultimately with the greater use of the internet it was decided that we should cease using this medium and look for alternate approaches. Various approaches have been used over the years, some with greater success than others.

A few NOTES on the statement of Revenue & Expenses:

- 1. The ASTTBC web site costs and maintenance and promotional advertisements and information articles in ASTT NEWS and ASTT eNEWS is not included in the Special Levy. ASTTBC covers this expense.*
- 2. From time to time when ASTTBC is advertising in a journal we will also add in a banner ad focusing on CHI / CPI, eg BC Business Technology issue.*
- 3. Revenue is the Special Marketing Levy charged to all Inspectors at \$95.*
- 4. Revenue for 2013 is expected to reach about \$17,000.*
- 5. The decision to discontinue SuperPages was made in 2010 but with contracts in place it took a little time to cease this advertising.*
- 6. Canadian Home Builders 2010 – (One time) promo to CHBA-BC Members*
- 7. Notaries Public – promo to this key group involved in the sale of a house*
- 8. Trade Shows – included Vancouver Real Estate; CHBC-BC*
- 9. Volunteer travel in 2012 and 2013 was absorbed by ASTTBC*
- 10. Printing – included BCPIPI brochure and ASTTBC-PI brochure*
- 11. Legal costs was for development of the client engagement contract*
- 12. RJ & Associates was for courses at ASTTBC webinar and seminars*
- 13. Realtor Mailers / Awareness Program – targeted info directly to Realtors*
- 14. ASTTBC absorbed the cost of AGMs in 2010 and 2011. A special program was arranged in 2012.*

ACTIVITY:	2010	2011	2012	2013
REVENUE(1) (2)	13,263.25	16,111.39	17,279.00	12,185.94
<u>EXPENSES</u>				
Advertising:				
SuperPages	3,302.07	2,032.70	1,747.38	Nil
TELUS – PI phone	720.00	720.00	720.00	240.00
CivicInfo BC	399.00	399.00	399.00	399.00
CHBA-BC	700.00	Nil	Nil	Nil to date
Notaries	Nil	3,047.25	3,047.25	Nil to date
Marketing:				
Trade shows	1,900.00	5,860.00	1,050.00	Nil to date
Volunteer travel	1,474.36	300.00	Nil	Nil to date
Graphics (decals)	1,575.04	Nil	Nil	Nil to date
Printing	1,663.85	1,610.00	Nil	2,180.00
Display Booth	2,434.71	Nil	Nil	Nil to date
Legal	Nil	2,137.50	984.56	Nil to date
RJ & Associates	450.00	Nil	675.00	Nil to date
Display Banner	Nil	Nil	Nil	1,200.55
Realtor Advocacy	Nil	Nil	3,278.25	Program continues
Meetings:				
Members	1,643.99	803.55	Nil	525.20
AGM	Nil	Nil	2,646.68	Nil to date
TOTAL	16,263.02	16,910.00	14,548.12	5,544.04
Revenue / Expense	(2,999.77)	(798.61)	2,730.88	6,641.90

During the three years of 2010, 2011 and 2012 the expenses exceeded revenue by a total of \$1,067.50.

For 2013 it is anticipated that expenses will also exceed revenue.

Marketing strategies going forward:

1. Feedback from Inspectors will help guide the decisions made by the PICB and ASTTBC staff as to the best manner in which to expend the Special Levy.
2. The Internet, ASTTBC e-resources including the web site, eNEWS, ASTT NEWS and social media will be increasingly utilized to extend information on ASTTBC-registered inspectors. For the most part these expenses will be absorbed by ASTTBC.
3. ASTTBC will continue to look for ways to draw attention to ASTTBC Inspectors, for example, an insert is planned for the Fall 2013 issue of ASTT NEWS and a story will appear regularly in ASTT eNEWS about Inspectors. These initiatives will not apply to the Special Levy.
4. ASTTBC staff time required to implement all elements of the Special Levy will be absorbed by ASTTBC.

C. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The webinar on March 28 was generally well received with many positive comments about greater opportunity for CPD. Comments included:

- . Enabled participation by those who are outside of Metro Vancouver
- . Members should be encouraged to submit topics
- . Hold regular webinars
- . Allow more time for Inspectors' questions during webinar
- . Invite guest specialists to deliver webinar
- . Provide more direct responses / more detail to questions
- . Questions posed by members in earlier communications were not addressed in detail during the webinar

The survey conducted after the webinar provided much useful information in terms of frequency and approach to webinars and meetings. See Section 'E' of this Report dealing with the Survey.

ASTTBC Response

ASTTBC will consider the feedback from all sources and adapt programming in keeping with the wishes of the Inspectors.

D. Marketing and Public Relations

There was not a lot of commentary about the marketing effort, with the exception of (a) is the special fee still valued and wanted by the members?; (b) the members should get a chance to have a say as to the continuance of the Special Levy and the amount of the Levy; and, (c) how was the Levy spent in the past and what are the plans for the future?

ASTTBC Response:

ASTTBC agrees that a more formal 'plan' for marketing and PR is warranted and will work with the PICB and Inspectors generally to craft a multi-year plan. ASTTBC anticipates a plan will be in place for 2014 – 2015.

E. Webinar Survey May 2013 - Summary

Following the webinar, ASTTBC sent out a Survey asking questions about the webinar and seeking input from members generally on subjects such as CPD and general meetings.

A Summary of the results of the Survey follows:

- . The webinar was appreciated by respondents
- . Respondents were generally satisfied that the webinar covered the subjects of interest, issues were understood, and speakers were reasonably succinct
- . Respondents agreed to submit topics for future webinars
- . Most respondents would attend another update webinar and would invite other inspectors to attend a future webinar
- . Most respondents suggested a quarterly update webinar
- . Respondents would appreciate a general update face-to-face meeting of inspectors once a quarter

Full [SURVEY](#) results.

F. Summary Comment

It is hoped that this review will provide useful information to ASTTBC-registered Inspectors and that through regular consultation with Inspectors ASTTBC will deliver effective programs and services to Inspectors. This has been a learning process and will most certainly lead to better understanding and a more collaborative process into the future. The use of Inspector surveys, webinars and general meetings will provide a means for Inspectors to bring their views to the attention of the PICB, ASTTBC staff and Council.