



The American Society of Landscape Architects
President Shawn Kelly
636 Eye Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20001-3736

November 8, 2019

President Kelly,

WxLA is an advocacy initiative created in 2018 to encourage and lead efforts toward equality in our profession. We stand for increased transparency, leadership and representation for women. Our five founders are ASLA members, two of them Fellows, all very active in our profession at state and national levels. At the Conference on Landscape architecture last year, we announced the Women's Landscape Equality (re)Solution on Change.org. Over 3,500 people have signed this petition in just one year. Over 800 people follow WxLA on instagram. At the 2019 ASLA Conference on Landscape Architecture this month, we are convening a gathering of close to 100 men and women leaders from private practice and academia to grow WxLA's influence and impact in our mission to champion women to succeed.

Throughout this year-long outreach, we have learned that the issue of equality is at a critical moment in our profession as it is across many industries in the nation. Women (and many men) are using their voices to demand equal access to opportunity and professional treatment in the workplace. All eyes are watching the actions of firm partners, professional leaders, and leaders in academia.

In the late summer of 2019, WxLA learned through word of mouth that after 19 years, Nancy Somerville was no longer the Chief Executive Officer of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Soon thereafter, we received a phone call from ASLA leadership requesting us not to associate "ASLA" with Ms. Somerville's role on our WxLA Scholarship jury announcement on Instagram. Given that there has been no public communication about her departure and particularly in the context of our purpose and mission, these events are alarming.

Please understand, we are writing this letter in an effort to "seek to understand". We respect that this is a sensitive human resource issue and assume there are legal and confidentiality reasons why this announcement has not been made publicly. However, we later learned that AIA leadership and members of the CEO Roundtable have been notified of the news, yet ASLA members, the ASLA Council of Fellows and various ASLA leadership committees have not been informed.

Because the process has not been transparent and information was shared to certain groups and individuals, it could be construed as an example of where the power dynamic is antithetical to notions of equality and transparency. As leaders in the profession and champions of WxLA, we have a responsibility to our colleagues and those that signed the Women's Landscape Equality (re)Solution to question these circumstances and ask for clarity on this significant change to the senior-most leader and woman in our profession.

By reaching out to you with this correspondence, we are urging ASLA to communicate in a timely way publicly to all ASLA membership, including our organization, about the following:

- the resignation or dismissal of Nancy Somerville as CEO of ASLA;
- the leadership that is serving her role in the interim period until a new CEO is onboarded;
- the next steps and timing to select a new CEO and
- details about the selection process, including the process of determining a selection committee that includes diversity; a process that will ensure representation of female and minority candidates; and a process that will include transparency and clear communication to members.

In addition, we request that ASLA consider publicly recognizing Ms. Somerville's accomplishments, leadership and dedication to the profession of landscape architecture. Unless there are specific reasons that preclude this, we believe acknowledgment of the transition of our senior-most leader and woman, a role model to many, befitting her 19 years of service is an important professional act. WxLA's point of view is that our profession is in a stronger position to influence the challenges of our communities, nation and planet because of Ms. Somerville's efforts.

We look forward to working with you and would be pleased to discuss any of these specific topics with you in greater detail.

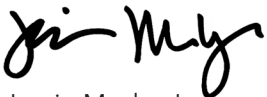
Regards,



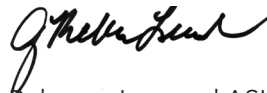
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