

A subcommittee of the Joint Committee for the Rhode Island Rehabilitation Building and Fire Code met in Conference Room “A”, William Powers Administration Building at One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI on Wednesday September 8, 2004. The meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m. by Chairman George Farrell.

Present at the meeting were Chairman George Farrell, Vice Chairman J. Robert Wahlberg, Commissioners Stephen Turner, Gordon Preiss, Stuart Pearson and Donald Gagnon. Also present were State Fire Marshal Irving J. Owens, Chief Deputy Michael Dimascolo, RI State Building Commissioner Daniel DeDentro, Lt. Timothy Hawthorne of the Cranston Fire Marshal’s office and Thomas Coffey Esq., Executive Director of the RI Fire Safety Code.

To open the meeting Chairman Farrell briefly turned the floor over to Daniel DeDentro, RI Building Commissioner, who advised the group that the Connecticut State Building Inspector along with the Connecticut Fire Marshal would be addressing the group on September 22, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.

Chairman Farrell advised the group that in addressing “conflicts between codes” we may not be simply identifying the “most stringent” or simply be assigning a specific section to be enforced by a Building Official, Fire Official or other official.

Commissioner DeDentro agreed, and further advised that this is the

same problem that is occurring in every other state. After citing several examples the Building Commissioner provided the group with several suggestions. Primarily, the Building Commissioner advised that there were manpower, funding and educational issues.

Chief Deputy DiMascolo advised the group that if his office was allowed to obtain the plan review fee, he could significantly increase his plan review staff, and thereby reduce the time required for approval of plans. The Chairman agreed and suggested increasing standards for plan review.

Vice Chairman Wahlberg noted that the Building Official serves at the pleasure of the high elected municipal official. Vice Chairman Wahlberg further noted that this could lead to a mayor actually interpreting the Building Code. He urged the group to promote legislation that would insulate the Building Official.

Commissioner Daniel DeDentro noted that there are areas of concern that he would like to see addressed: (hiring process, training and education that must be ongoing, enforcement of codes, and the manpower).

Commissioner Donald Gagnon agreed with Commissioner DeDentro and added that the inexperienced officer needs guidance and should seek approval at the state level for requested modifications.

Commissioner James Carlson advised he would like to see changes in the turn around time regarding variances and modifications given by the boards. He would also like to see a standardizing of forms.

RI State Fire Marshal Irving Owens overviewed how his office establishes the list of assistant deputy state fire marshals. The chief from each town or city will choose the individual from his or her department. The Marshal's office will then train and certify that individual through the fire academy. He also explained how his office is facing funding issues and how he's trying to get the funding through House and Senate.

Commissioner Stephen Turner noted a very big concern he has is with how the system is set up. He would like to see a single repository with all possible codes that are needed to be referenced for any particular project.

Commissioner Gordon Preiss agreed fully with Commissioner Turner in setting up a system that will provide guidance and would like to see more preliminary meetings to help cut down on unnecessary hearings.

Cranston Firefighter Timothy Hawthorne would like to see a state-wide user guide setup to walk the user through the code made available by web-site or paper booklet.

This meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Desiree Campanini
Administrative Aide**