

**Minutes of Conference Call (Final)**  
**Partnership for Safer Buildings**  
**January 16, 2003**  
**2pm EST**

**Participants:**

Donald P. Bliss	President, NASFM; and New Hampshire State Fire Marshal and Director of Fire Safety and Emergency Management
Martin Durbin	Director, Federal Relations, American Chemistry Council/ American Plastics Council
Tom Chapin	General Manager, Fire Protection Division, Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
Paul Croce	Vice President and Manager of Research, Factory Mutual Global Research Corporation
Howard Hopper	Manager, Corporate Regulatory Services, Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
Melissa Klein	NASFM Government Relations
Carole Milazzo	NASFM Government Relations
Robert Polk	Chairman, Consumer Product Safety Task Force, NASFM and South Carolina State Fire Marshal
Walter Smittle III	Chairman, Partnership for Safer Buildings; NASFM Special Representative; and retired West Virginia State Fire Marshal
Karen Suhr	NASFM Government Relations
Amal Tamim	NASFM Science Advisory Committee; and Manager of Approvals and Standards, W.R. Grace & Co.
Stephen Weinryb	Architect, Clarett Group

The agenda of the meeting is attached to these minutes.

**1. Review of Minutes**

The group reviewed the minutes of the September 26, 2003, meeting in Ontario, California. Mr. Weinryb asked that page 2 be changed to reflect that he has withdrawn his nomination of a potential candidate for the Partnership.

Mr. Weinryb also indicated that paragraph five of the Codes Assessment Subcommittee (CAS) report regarding the number of states without building codes is not accurate. For example, Hawaii does in fact have Uniform Building Code (UBC) promulgation. (Information obtained from the National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards, 2002 edition does not include UBC requirements for building codes.)

The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

**Action: NASFM staff will amend the meeting minutes and record them as final and will amend the CAS Report so that the number of states cited as being without building codes is accurate.**

**2. Subcommittee Progress Reports**

## **A. On-Site Inspections Subcommittee (OSIS)**

Mr. Smittle asked the group to comment on the report entitled, “Initial Findings of the On-Site Inspection Subcommittee, 29 December 2002.”

Under “Part A: Inspections” Mr. Weinryb drew attention to “Site Inspection 1,” page 3, third bullet of the report, which stated that a fiber based fire-proofing material crumbled when touched. Mr. Weinryb pointed out that certain types of fireproofing materials available for use in buildings are better than others. Mr. Weinryb stated that “mineral fiber” fire proofing material should not be allowed in buildings. Cementitious fire proofing material, on the other hand, is quite different and appears far more durable. Mr. Smittle noted that this was consistent with what the OSIS encountered on its visits.

Mr. Polk agreed with the observation in the report that it is difficult to enforce performance-based codes when the original usage of the building frequently changes, i.e., boat and home shows with increased fuel loads. He stated that fire protection officials are often viewed as “the bad guys” in the enforcement of building codes. Dr. Croce felt that the issues of “changing fuel-load” and compliance with performance-based design should be reemphasized in “Part B: Summary and Observations.”

Mr. Polk said that, often, the plans that are approved by the fire marshal are not what end up being constructed. Mr. Weinryb offered that in his own experience, he was held responsible and had to “sign off” that the building was in compliance with the final documents and added that new buildings designed in New York implemented controlled inspections. Mr. Polk said that performance-based design puts the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) between a rock and a hard place. Mr. Smittle suggested that language be added to the codes that would require the building owner to meet the criteria for the new building occupancy, should the use of the building change.

In terms of next steps, the OSIS will be approaching NASFM board members to see if they would be willing to conduct similar inspections in their states. The OSIS will also be working in concert with the Liaison Subcommittee to reach out to the International Fire Marshals Association to garner their help in conducting inspections.

**Action: Mr. Weinryb will send the form used by architects and designers to NASFM staff for distribution to the Partnership.**

**Action: The OSIS Report will be revised to include changes recommended by the group and distributed.**

## **B. Codes Assessment Subcommittee (CAS)**

The group decided that publication of the third CAS Review of the codes, which identifies less obvious, yet equally problematic, safety hazards will be put on hold pending the results of the first submission of code changes to the IBC in March. In addition, the group made suggestions for follow-up questions to the survey to NASFM members on areas of their states that are not covered by building and fire codes.

**Action: Ms. Suhr will get additional survey information from NASFM members.**

### **C. Liaison Subcommittee (LS)**

Mr. Bliss reported on his meeting with members of the newly developed Office of Homeland Security and discussed ways in which NASFM (and the Partnership) can help with their efforts to harden structures.

Mr. Bliss also reported that he plans to follow up with the Society of Fire Protection Engineers and ensure that an outreach letter is sent to the contacts identified at the September meeting. Mr. Weinryb noted that the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) might be interested in the Partnership. Mr. Bliss mentioned that Dr. William Grosshandler, Chief, Fire Science Division, NIST, serves on the NASFM Science Advisory Committee and has been kept apprised of the Partnership's work.

**Action: Ms. Milazzo will send out the outreach letters by January 24<sup>th</sup>.**

### **D. Preparation for the first official report generated by the Partnership.**

The group discussed what should be included in the first report of the Partnership. Mr. Smittle suggested that the report be a compilation of the findings of the Codes Assessment and On-Site Subcommittees and have other supporting documents in appendices. Mr. Smittle offered to draft an executive summary for the report for review by the Partnership.

The group also discussed submission of proposals for changes to the IBC. The deadline for submission is March 24. Ms. Tamim noted that the amount and type of substantiation required for a given proposal depends on the change requested. Mr. Hopper pointed out that the IBC board often rejects repetitive code changes. Ms. Tamim noted that some of the anecdotal evidence cited in the OSIS might be useful for substantiation.

**Action: The Codes Assessment Subcommittee will review the final OSIS report and will recommend a list of proposals for the IBC.**

**Action: Ms Klein will contact the managers of buildings visited by the OSIS and obtain square footage and number of stories for inclusion in the OSIS report.**

**Action: Ms. Klein will provide the Partnership members with a cd-rom of photos from the inspections at the next meeting.**

### **3. Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Partnership will take place on Friday, February 21, 2003, from 9:00am to 3:00pm at the Dulles Airport Marriott.

**Action: NASFM staff will be in touch with details of the February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.**

Attachment: Meeting agenda

## **AGENDA**

*Partnership for Safer Buildings  
Conference Call  
2pm – 4pm EST  
January 16, 2003*

- I. Discussion and acceptance of minutes from September 26 meeting in California (attached)
- II. Subcommittee Progress Reports
  - a. On-Site Inspections Subcommittee (OSIS)
    - i. Group discussion on content of first OSIS report (attached)
    - ii. Next steps
  - b. Codes Assessment Subcommittee (CAS)
    - i. Group discussion on the CAS review of NFPA 5000<sup>1</sup> (attached).
    - ii. Progress on Deliverables
      1. Second CAS report identifying less obvious, yet equally problematic safety hazards supported by the IBC and NFPA codes
  - c. Liaison Subcommittee (LS)
    - i. Discussion of meetings with the newly created Office Of Homeland Security
    - ii. Next Steps on communicating CAS and OSIS findings with other interested parties
- III. Preparation for the first official report generated by the Partnership for Safer Buildings
  - a. Contents
    - i. Executive Summary
    - ii. Appendices/Supporting Materials
  - b. Distribution
    - i. Initiate discussion with key players on amending the code
      1. Emergency Provisions
    - ii. Publicize Partnership's initial findings in news and trade media
- IV. Details of the February 21 meeting
- V. Adjournment

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<sup>1</sup> Note: the CAS review of NFPA 5000 is similar to the review previously conducted of the IBC 2000 and focuses on easily identifiable, problematic provisions within the NFPA code.