

Minutes (FINAL)
Partnership for Safer Buildings
Dulles Airport Marriott, Virginia
9am – 3pm EST
February 21, 2003

Participants:

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
Joseph Perry	Past President, California Fire Chiefs Association; and Fire Chief, City of Napa, California
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.

Absent:

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
Stephen Weinryb	Architect, Clarett Group

The agenda of the meeting is attached to these minutes.

1. Review of Minutes

Chairman Smittle asked the group to review the minutes of January 16, 2003 conference call. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Action: NASFM staff will record the minutes as final.

2. Subcommittee Progress Reports

A. On-Site Inspections Subcommittee (OSIS)

Mr. Smittle presented the “Initial Report of On-Site Inspection Subcommittee” for final review and approval. The group approved the report with the following changes. It was suggested that the report contain a separate recommendation highlighting problems with

the implementation of performance-based design (PBD). It was also suggested that the report highlight the fact that most of the inspections took place in facilities (such as hospitals) that tend to be highly attentive to maintenance and code compliance, and still problems were found – raising the question of what problems exist in buildings that are not as well regulated.

Action: Ms. Klein will incorporate the suggestions and re-issue the report to the Partnership, the NASFM Catastrophic Fire Safety Task Force and the NASFM Board of Directors.

Mr. Smittle informed the group that the next wave of on-site inspections would take place in Louisiana at the invitation of Board member and Louisiana State Fire Marshal, VJ Bella.

Action: Mr. Smittle and Ms. Klein will contact Mr. Bella to schedule and will coordinate dates with members of the OSIS.

Action: Dr. Croce will talk with George Capko to determine his availability.

The group also discussed asking the International Fire Marshals Association (IFMA) to involve its members in conducting inspections and reporting the results to the Partnership.

Action: Mr. Smittle and Mr. Bliss will contact IFMA President Ron Farr of Michigan on this issue in March.

Mr. Smittle reported that NASFM was in the process of receiving federal funding for a project to determine low-cost ways of making schools safer from fire. Ms. Tamim pointed out that schools often do not fall under the jurisdiction of any code.

Mr. Polk suggested sharing the protocol for inspections developed by the OSIS with members of IFMA. Mr. Hopper agreed and added that it might be useful to publicize not only the protocol but also the OSIS findings to the fire service. Mr. Chapin noted that at the upcoming UL Fire Council meeting in March, the Council would be revisiting UL's field reporting criteria and asked if he may share the OSIS protocol with this group.

Action: NASFM staff will contact Steve Sawyer of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to publish an article in *Fire Marshals Quarterly*.

Action: Mr. Hopper and Dr. Chapin will prepare an article for publication in UL's newsletter.

B. Codes Assessment Subcommittee (CAS)

Mr. Smittle presented the group with the second report of the CAS, entitled, "Building Code Fire Safety Concerns: NFPA 5000™, Building Construction and Safety Code." The group discussed problems with performance-based design (PBD). Mr. Hopper explained

that the process, if used properly, can work. Dr. Croce pointed out that the near unanimous opinion of the international fire research community is that the models available for PBD are not ready, and the data does not exist to back up the models on issues such as the flammability characteristics of building contents. Additionally, the group agreed that practitioners of PBD are widely inconsistent in their skills and that code enforcement officials are not adequately trained on how to interpret PBD proposals. The Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) has a number of task groups that are working on problems related to PBD. The US Fire Administration, meanwhile, offers training for fire marshals on performance-based design.

Action: Mr. Smittle will contact the United States Fire Administration (USFA) to find out why the federal government is supporting PBD.

Action: Mr. Hopper and Ms. Tamim will determine the status of SFPE's work on PBD problems.

The group decided that rather than focus on individual issues related to PBD, to recommend to NASFM that it submit to the applicable codes a proposal to withdraw PBD as an option until the problems with its implementation are adequately addressed. Not only would this apply to the International Code Committee's (ICC) International Building Code (IBC)TM and NFPA 5000TM, but also to NFPA 1TM (the Fire Prevention Code) and NFPA 101TM (the Life Safety Code).

Action: Dr. Croce, Mr. Chapin and Ms. Tamim will collaborate on language addressing PBD and submit it to the Partnership by March 14.

Action: NASFM staff will survey NASFM members to determine whether and how they consider the use of PBD to be a problem.

The group discussed submission of code proposals suggesting requirements for the ongoing maintenance of passive fire protection systems, including fire barriers, fire-resistive coatings, fire retardants, etc. It was suggested that criteria that are used to obtain listings or certifications when the materials are originally installed or applied could also be used as inspection criteria. Mr. Chapin pointed out the importance of understanding the root cause for 'materials' failures. He noted that there are in fact two problems. It could be a situation where the material is durable but was installed/applied improperly. Or, it may be that the material simply does not hold up over time. The issue of aging materials is largely ignored by the codes. The Partnership will propose that building owners provide proof of annual visual inspections of passive fire protection components (just as they do for active fire protection components such as sprinklers). If the visual inspections turn up significant concerns, that will trigger a more extensive procedure, including correction of the problems and a follow-up special inspection by a certified inspector.

The group agreed that in conjunction with code change proposals, the Partnership/NASFM should provide guidance on these issues to local Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs). This might be done in cooperation with IFMA.

Since the ICC is on an 18-month cycle, the group decided to focus on making two general submissions to the ICC this March.. The Partnership will submit proposals involving individual issues related to specific provisions of the code during the second cycle. Mr. Hopper confirmed that the deadline for code proposals to the NFPA is October 2003. The group agreed that its priority would be submissions to the ICC and would focus on the NFPA submissions afterwards.

Action: Mr. Hopper and Ms. Tamim will work together to craft this language and submit it for the Partnership's consideration by March 14. They also will research and make a recommendation as to which chapter of which code(s) would be most appropriate to propose the change.

Action: Ms. Tamim will share an article from *Fire Engineering* that provides statistics on fire losses by types of construction.

Action: The group will submit any suggestions to the CAS draft review of NFPA 5000 to Ms. Suhr by email no later than April 1.

C. Liaison Subcommittee (LS)

Due to the events in Rhode Island, Mr. Bliss was not able to participate in the meeting. He will provide the Partnership with an update on the Liaison's activities during the next conference call.

3. Preparation for the first official report generated by the Partnership.

The group reviewed and made revisions to the draft Executive Summary of the Partnership's first formal report to the NASFM Board.

Action: NASFM staff will send out a revised Executive Summary to the Partnership for review no later than March 7.

Action: Mr. Hopper will send Ms. Klein a copy of his bio for inclusion in Appendix B of the Partnership report.

Action: Dr. Croce will provide Ms. Klein with a copy of George Capko's bio for inclusion in Appendix B of the Partnership report.

4. Next meeting

The next conference call will be scheduled for the week of March 17.

Action: NASFM staff will be in touch to schedule the call.

Attachment: Meeting agenda



AGENDA

Partnership for Safer Buildings

9am – 3pm EST

February 21, 2003

- I. Discussion and acceptance of minutes from January 16 Conference Call
- II. Subcommittee Progress Reports
 - a. On-Site Inspections Subcommittee (OSIS)
 - i. Approval of first OSIS report
 - ii. Discussion of next round of inspections
 1. Joint project with the International Fire Marshals Association
 - b. Codes Assessment Subcommittee (CAS)
 - i. Group discussion on the CAS review of NFPA 5000
 - ii. Discussion of which provisions will be submitted for consideration for modification to the IBC in March
 - c. Liaison Subcommittee (LS)
 - i. Discussion of “most likely” architects and building owners to align with the Partnership
- III. Discussion of the first official report generated by the Partnership for Safer Buildings
 - a. Contents
 - i. Review and approval of Executive Summary (distributed via email for comment 2-7-03)
 - ii. Discussion of Appendices/Supporting Materials
 - b. Distribution
 - i. Initiation of discussion with key players on amending the codes
 1. Normal codes modification process
 2. Emergency provisions
- IV. Details of next meeting(s)
- V. Adjournment