

**Minutes of Conference Call (Final)**  
**Partnership for Safer Buildings**  
**August 19, 2002**

**Participants:**

Donald P. Bliss	Vice 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.
Howard Hopper	Manager, Corporate Regulatory Services, Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
Melissa Klein	NASFM Government Relations
Carole Milazzo	NASFM Government Relations
Joseph M. Perry	Past President, California Fire Chiefs Association; and Fire Chief, City of Napa, California
Walter Smittle III	Chairman, Partnership for Safer Buildings; NASFM Special Representative; and retired West Virginia State Fire Marshal
Karen F. Suhr	NASFM Government Relations
Amal Tamim	NASFM Science Advisory Committee; and Manager of Approvals and Standards, W.R. Grace & Co.

The agenda of the meeting is attached to these minutes.

**1. Review of Minutes**

Mr. Smittle asked the group to review the minutes of the July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting in New York. Mr. Smittle asked that page 2 of the minutes be changed to read that the NFPA Building Code “*would not be finalized/available for review until October 2002.*” The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

**Action: NASFM staff will amend the minutes and record them as final.**

**2. New Partnership Members**

Mr. Smittle announced that Mr. Steve Weinryb, developer and architect with Clarett Group in New York City, accepted the Partnership’s invitation to join the Committee. Mr. Weinryb has the dual qualification of architect and building manager. Due to Mr. Weinryb’s schedule he will participate in most Partnership meetings via conference call. Mr. Weinryb will serve on the Codes Assessment Subcommittee.

**Action: Ms. Milazzo will add Mr. Weinryb to the Partnership distribution and distribute Mr. Weinryb’s CV to the Partnership members prior to the September 26 meeting.**

### 3. Draft Action Plan

Mr. Smittle asked for comment on the deliverables outlined in the Draft Partnership Action Plan 2002. The action plan was distributed along with the CD *America Burning* and *America Burning Revisited* prior to the call.

The Committee concurred that the plan seemed feasible and recommended that Mr. Smittle submit it to James Burns, Chair of the Catastrophic Fire Safety Task Force, for approval. While no substantive change was made to the document, Mr. Hopper noted that the group might want to factor into their action plan the fact that the International Building Code (IBC) will be moving to an 18-month cycle. Mr. Hopper also provided the group with the deadlines for the IBC submissions - March 3, 2003 and August 20, 2004.

**Action: Mr. Smittle will submit the Action Plan to James Burns for approval.**

Ms. Tamim noted that she did not have a copy of the CD *America Burning* and *America Burning Revisited*. It was noted that since Mr. Hopper would be working as a technical advisor to Mr. Chapin on all Partnership issues, he should receive all Partnership materials.

**Action: Ms. Milazzo will re-distribute the *America Burning* and *America Burning Revisited* CD to Ms. Tamim and Mr. Hopper.**

**Action: Mr. Hopper will be added to the Partnership distribution list.**

### 4. Subcommittees Committee Reports

#### A. Approval of Subcommittee Assignments

Mr. Smittle thanked the members for providing their subcommittee preferences and announced who would serve on the various subcommittees.

Codes Assessment Subcommittee: Walter Smittle, J. Thomas Chapin, Robert Polk, and Stephen Weinryb (with Karen Suhr providing staff support).

On-Site Inspections Subcommittee: Joseph Perry, Amal Tamim, and Paul Croce (with Melissa Klein providing staff support)

Liaison Subcommittee. Donald Bliss, Peter Sparber, Paul Croce, Robert Polk and Martin Durbin (with Carole Milazzo providing staff support).

**Action: Ms. Klein will distribute the final subcommittee assignments to the Partnership members via email.**

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

Mr. Smittle suggested that the subcommittee initially compile a list of “the low hanging fruit,” i.e. the most obvious fire safety concerns in the building code. Since the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) code (known as NFPA 5000™, Building Construction and Safety Code™) is not due out until October 1, 2002, Mr. Smittle clarified that this first examination would focus on the IBC. Ms. Suhr offered

to distribute the most recent copy of the IBC to the subcommittee members in order to help with their assessment.

Mr. Smittle noted that the final report of the Partnership would consist of the Partnership's own reading of the code as well as of legitimate concerns expressed by the fire code enforcement community, standards and testing organizations, consumer and industry groups.

**Action: Ms. Suhr will distribute a draft of Initial Recommendations on Building Code Fire Safety Concerns for review by the CAS prior to the September 26 meeting.**

**Action: Ms. Milazzo will contact the subcommittee members and determine whether they would like their own copy of the IBC.**

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

Mr. Bliss noted that a preliminary list of other groups' activities on building code issues was distributed to Partnership members prior to the call. Mr. Bliss asked for input from the members of his Subcommittee on this document, such as suggestions for groups not on this list that should be.

Mr. Durbin pointed out that the Liaison Subcommittee should not only focus on potential allies but also identify groups that might in fact be opposed to the Partnership's efforts. Mr. Durbin suggested that part Liaison Subcommittee's function should be to try to communicate and negotiate with groups that could potentially threaten the Partnership from completing its mission.

Mr. Bliss noted that the other questions that still need to be addressed by the subcommittee are:

1. Do you have any personal contact with any of the groups on the preliminary list? If so, would you be willing to take lead on initiating discussion?
2. What will be the best way to communicate with those groups you best know? Will a letter be sufficient, or should we plan conference calls or face-to-face meetings?

**Action: Ms. Milazzo will email the Liaison Subcommittee members the preliminary list along with these questions.**

Mr. Smittle reported that the Partnership had been contacted by Richard Licht, the Technical Director of the Alliance for Fire and Smoke Control and Containment (AFSCC), a non-profit organization concerned with the development and changes in the U.S. fire and building codes. The organization is concerned with a "balanced approach" between both active and passive systems used in the construction of buildings and how the new code language being developed employs these concepts. It is also concerned with the lack of language in the codes with regard to smoke

control and containment, as it is the leading cause of death in fires. The AFSCC would like to participate in the task force either with membership or technical input through its technical director. Mr. Licht also submitted a discussion paper entitled, *Balancing Active and Passive Fire Protection Systems in the Building Codes*.  
<http://www.afscconline.org/press.htm>

**Action: Ms. Klein will distribute a copy of the white paper *Balancing Active and Passive Fire Protection Systems in the Building Codes* to Partnership members.**

Ms. Suhr reported that the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries (AWCI) also contacted the Partnership.

Mr. Durbin suggested that the Liaison Subcommittee discuss criteria for prioritizing which groups to meet with. Mr. Bliss agreed that the Partnership has to be selective of which groups it works with because they will likely receive several inquiries from groups with purely commercial interests.

Mr. Bliss reported that he, along with James Burns, was in the process of setting up a meeting with the World Trade Center Building Code Task Force, a special unit within the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB). The Task Force will gather information and solicit input from other public and private committees and task forces related to the collapse. Based on this information it will review current building laws and construction requirements and make recommendations for changes, if necessary, to the Commissioner of DOB.

In addition, Mr. Bliss said that letters had been sent to James Shannon, President of the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) and Rodney Blane, Chairman of the International Codes Council (ICC) informing each group of the Partnership's mission. Mr. Smittle reported that as a follow up, he and Ms. Suhr were scheduled to meet with Sara Yerkes, vice president of public policy for the ICC, on August 23.

Mr. Durbin noted that he would be visiting the ABC Broadcasting building on August 21.

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

Chief Perry reported that at the September 26 meeting his Subcommittee would present a document outlining the various categories of buildings to be inspected. Ms. Tamim noted that at the last Partnership meeting, the members established a rather comprehensive list of categories and suggested that that list serve as the OSIS report.

**Action: Ms. Klein agreed to assemble the list into a formal report and distribute to the On-Site Inspection Subcommittee for final approval.**

Mr. Smittle noted that once his Subcommittee's report was presented to the members at the September 26 meeting the OSIS would begin scheduling visits to various buildings. Mr. Bliss suggested the Sears Tower in Chicago.

## **5. Media for Partnership**

Ms. Klein reported that W.R. Grace offered to donate the use of its public relations firm, Manning, Selvage and Lee, New York, to assist the Partnership with media outreach. Both Mr. Bliss and Mr. Polk received a daylong media training session where they simulated discussing the Partnership's goals and objectives with the press. Mr. Bliss said that the training was quite useful and that he had already been in contact with reporters. Mr. Bliss reported that he and Mr. Polk attended a meeting with reporters Jim Glanz and Eric Liptz of the *New York Times*. Mr. Hopper mentioned that Glanz had written an unfavorable article about UL. Mr. Bliss acknowledged the warning, but felt that the meeting had gone well and that both reporters were receptive to their message.

Ms. Klein mentioned that in the coming weeks, a press release outlining the Partnership's goals would be distributed on the general news wire. Ms. Klein asked that all members review the draft release and provide comments and approval.

**Action: Ms. Klein will distribute a draft of the Partnership press release for final approval by the members via email.**

**Action: Ms. Klein will distribute any new materials that are to be included in the press packet for final approval via email.**

## **6. Next meeting**

Next meeting of the Partnership Committee will be on Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to 3:30pm at the DoubleTree Hotel in Ontario, California.

**Action: Ms. Milazzo will contact the members with travel information.**

**Action: Ms. Klein will distribute minutes from this conference call and an agenda for the September 26 meeting.**

Attachment: Meeting agenda

**AGENDA**  
**Conference Call**  
*Partnership for Safer Buildings*  
*Monday, August 19, 2002*  
*2 pm – 3 pm*

- I. Acceptance of minutes from July 11 meeting
- II. New Partnership members
- III. Initial discussion of concerns
- IV. Subcommittee Reports
  - a. Approval of Subcommittee Assignments
  - b. Codes Assessment Subcommittee
  - c. Liaison Subcommittee
  - d. On-Site Inspections Subcommittee
- V. Media for Partnership
- VI. Next meeting: September 26, Ontario, California