



SCHOOL SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: [6/25/2013](#)

Meeting Location: [Legislative Office Building](#)

Approval: [7/15/2013](#)

Recorded By: [Jason Crisco](#)

1 ATTENDANCE

| Name | Title | Department/Location | Present |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Donald J. DeFronzo | Commissioner | DAS | Y |
| Stefan Pryor | Commissioner | SDE | Y |
| Pasquale J. Salemi | Deputy Commissioner | DCS | N |
| William Shea | Deputy Commissioner | DESPP | Y |
| John Woodmansee | Education Consultant | | Y |
| Richard E. Morris | Dir. Public Safety & Emergency | | Y |
| Frank J. Costello | Structural Engineer | | Y |
| Ronald Jakubowski | Former Asst. Superintendent of Schools for Operations and Facilities | | Y |
| Steven Waznia | Firefighter | | Y |
| Adam Byington | Police Officer | | Y |
| Irene Roman | Public School teacher | | Y |

2 MEETING LOCATION

Building: Legislative Office Building, Hartford CT

Room: 1A

3 MEETING START

Meeting Schedule Start: 12:00pm

Meeting Actual Start: 12:01pm

4 AGENDA

- Opening Remarks by Chair
 - Chairman DeFronzo welcomed everyone to the second SSIC meeting and advised the council that CTN would be filming the event. He then asked each council member to re-introduce themselves for the record.
 - A motion by Commissioner Shea was made to approve the minutes from May 25th and then seconded by Commissioner Pryor. The minutes were approved with one minor correction. Chairman DeFronzo then gave a brief overview of the agenda and introduced Joseph Cassidy as the first presenter.
- First Presentation
 - Joseph Cassidy, Acting State Building Inspector for the Connecticut Department of Construction Services was the first to present. He introduced himself and Thomas DiBlasi from the Board of Codes and Standards, a licensed professional engineer, who would be joining him. Mr. Cassidy mentioned that Mr. DiBlasi routinely works on building code

and would be a great resource for the council. Mr. Cassidy's goal this afternoon is to give a brief overview of current building codes and then foster a discussion with the council. The state currently uses the 2003 ICC code. Mr. Cassidy mentioned that DCS is currently in the process of adopting the 2012 ICC code. The code adoption process is very thorough. The process begins with DCS's Codes and Standards Committee and ends with adoption by the Regulation Review Committee of the General Assembly. Mr. Cassidy also mentioned that schools are required to meet higher standards than other structures.

- Mr. Cassidy then turned the presentation over to Mr. DiBlasi. Mr. DiBlasi gave a brief overview of current load requirements for snow, hurricanes and earthquakes. The 2012 International Building Codes incorporate new ICC 500 standards, which increase load requirements. New to the ICC 500 codes is the inclusion of requirements for the construction of storm shelters. A portion of a new structure can be designated as a shelter, and the higher loads required for shelters need only be applied to that portion of the structure used as a shelter. Using the new ICC 500 storm shelter requirements could be used for new structures, but applying these higher standards to existing structures would be very difficult because existing structures are generally not structurally peer reviewed. There currently is no real track record for these standards, since they are so new.
- Chairman DeFronzo asked Mr. Cassidy to walk the council through the process of when a school construction design application comes in and what the Department of Construction Services reviews during the process. Mr. Cassidy mentioned that DCS does more of a grant review process. He mentioned that there is no peer review of the design of "non threshold" projects. Chairman DeFronzo asked for an explanation of a "threshold" project. (A disaster in the 1980s prompted the adoption of new standards to protect how we do construction. A "threshold" structure is defined in law, and typically involves a larger building that is over four stories high, over 60 feet in height, has an occupancy rate of 1000 or more, include dormitories, etc..) Mr. Cassidy mentioned that these "threshold" buildings go through a more thorough review process. Chairman DeFronzo then asked if new school construction projects would fall under "threshold" structure standards. Mr. Cassidy said most new schools are "threshold" projects, while renovations are generally not. Chairman DeFronzo then mentioned it's important to clarify that most school construction projects are funded by the state, but contracted by municipalities. It's typically up to local building officials to inspect, review and implement plans. Chairman DeFronzo then asked Mr. DiBlasi if the new storm shelter standards found in the ICC 500 were a result of the disaster in Oklahoma and if it's now envisioned that every school will have one. Mr. DiBlasi responded that he thought that may be the intention, but is something that'll need to be looked at more closely.
- Deputy Commissioner Shea asked that when the new ICC code is adopted, how long until current schools will have to comply. Mr. Cassidy mentioned that schools that were constructed under the previous codes

fall under those standards and not the new standards. Only renovations or additions regarding projects beginning after the new standards are adopted would fall under the new standards.

- Richard Morris asked if these renovations would be eligible for funding by the state. Mr. Cassidy replied that if it's part of a new renovation project, it would be considered.
- Deputy Commissioner Shea asked for the definition of a storm shelter. Mr. DiBlasi wasn't able to provide an answer, but would follow up with the council once he did.
- **Second Presentation**
 - Robert Duval, New England Regional Director and James Dolan, Director of the NFPA Fire Code Field Office were next to present. Both are from the National Fire Prevention Association.
 - Mr. Duval introduced himself and James Dolin. He gave an overview of NFPA and how they develop fire and life safety codes.
 - Mr. Dolin gave a brief overview on how fire codes become fire codes. He explained that there are prescriptive requirements, but they do not pertain to lock downs. Fire codes have changed drastically since a disaster that took place in the 1950s.
 - Ron Jakubowski asked for an example of something that has significantly changed over the years. Mr. Dolan mentioned that the inclusion of sprinklers has been a big change. Sprinklers became much more prevalent in the 80s and 90s. He also mentioned the removal of alcohol cleaners in schools and the reduction of artwork on walls. Mr. Duval also added that technology has been a significant change. Most systems are run by computers now, which allows for more flexibility.
 - Adam Byington asked if there is a technology that allows for different color strobes to indicate different warnings. Mr. Duval mentioned that there is and that there are also audible alarms that do the same thing.
 - Commissioner Shea asked if the NFPA has anything in writing that the council could use for the planning of technical procedures. Mr. Duval said that they'd be happy to provide the information.
 - Adam Byington asked if a fire alarm system provides the location of the fire to a first responder unit. Mr. Dolan mentioned that there are indicator lights on the panel, which will tell you what detector is going off and where it's located. Mr. Duval also mentioned that if the alarm system is monitored by a third party or off site location, they too will have information indicating which alarm was triggered and what location it is in.
 - Chairman DeFronzo asked how technologies vary between schools. Mr. Dolan mentioned that technologies are all over the spectrum. Chairman DeFronzo then asked if there are significant differences based on economics. Mr. Dolan replied that there is, especially among inner city and parochial schools.
 - Richard Morris asked if the NFPA is looking at any guides or standards for active shooters. Mr. Dolan replied that they don't produce a standalone active shooter document, but rather integrate those recommendations into NFPA's existing guidelines. Currently, the International Association of Fire Chiefs is in the process of releasing a document on active shooters.
 - Ron Jakubowski asked if the regulations requiring kindergarten through second grade classrooms to be located on the first floor should be changed. Mr. Dolan

replied that he is not a believer in hardened rules, especially if a sprinkler system is in place on a second floor.

- Third Presentation
 - William Hackett, DESPP State Director of Emergency Management was next to present on DESPP's "All Hazards" Planning Group. The PowerPoint for this presentation is available online; it can be found here [SSIC Website](#).
 - Chairman DeFronzo asked if "all hazards plans" are promulgated for municipalities or does each community identify their own participants. Mr. Hackett said that municipalities create their own plans, but we do suggest that they have people in room that can handle the incident.

- Forth Presentation
 - Sgt Ken Rigney and Detective Mike Grieder of the Office of Counter Terrorism at DESPP gave the fourth presentation. Both then gave a presentation on the Office of Counter Terrorism's Critical Infrastructure Protection Unit and how it functions. Det. Grieder stated after the tragic events in December, they stress that schools adhere to command and control procedures. He mentioned it's important for schools to be aware of their surroundings and that we can't solely rely on cameras, but need to ensure that staff pay attention to their work environment. Overgrown vegetation can block views of parking lots and approaching people. They strongly recommend cones be placed after buses drop off students so that people do not park too close to a school. This also allows for better visibility. Det. Grieder mentioned that signage can be very helpful in directing visitors and allows for staff to recognize if visitors deviate from normal routes. Clutter in school hallways is also a concern and can create safety issues. Det. Grieder also mentioned that propped doors can be a serious issue. A few schools that they have visited used cones or bricks to prop open doors.
 - Chairman DeFronzo asked if their assessments are based on the school safety check list or based on something different. Sergeant Rigney replied that their check list is not based off of the school safety check list. They view checklists as one dimensional. They find it more helpful to sit down with staff and create a dialogue. In their view, each school must be evaluated as a free standing structure.
 - Chairman DeFronzo asked if there are many companies out there that do the same assessments. Sergeant Rigney replied that there are a few out there and pricing for their services has sky rocketed. This can be a very costly process. Detective Grieder mentioned that they've been encouraging communities to reach out to their local law enforcement and first responders to see how they can help with free assessments.
 - Chairman DeFronzo asked how prescriptive the SSIC standards for new school construction should be. Sergeant Rigney suggested that all recommendations include the all hazards approach. He cautioned the council on being too specific in some areas, as it could lead to oversight of others.

- Commissioner Shea asked that they go back to the slide concerning visitor/faculty parking and give more detail about that issue. He asked that they elaborate on best practices and other things the council should take into consideration. Detective Grieder mentioned that we stress upon schools to not allow vehicle access to every area of the school. Faculty need to pay attention to where vehicles are allowed access and to enforce parking policies.
- Commissioner Shea asked that they elaborate on other hazards that may exist based on a school's location. Detective Grieder mentioned some of the schools they've done assessments at are in close proximity to major highways, which can present a few challenges. We ask our schools to not just think of an active shooter, but also other hazards. He gave an example of a fuel tanker explosion and to ensure that the appropriate staff knows how to shut off a ventilation system if needed.
- Review of First Informational Session
 - Chairman DeFronzo had asked council members to recommend participants for the upcoming Informational Session. A total of nine were recommended from various members. The council would like to conduct this meeting some time during the third week in July. Chairman DeFronzo proposed that we form two panels of four people each to present. Each panel would come in at separate times to present and then allow Q&A. Each panel would be allowed approximately 45 minutes. The council voiced approval of this idea.
- Time and Date of Next Meeting
 - Chairman DeFronzo has asked staff to provide each member with the current school construction guidelines used in Connecticut.
 - Chairman DeFronzo then entertained a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Shea. A voice vote was taken and approved.
 - Staff will notify members of the date, time and location of the next meeting.

5 MEETING END

Meeting Schedule End: 2:00pm

Meeting Actual End: 1:57pm

6 NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting: To be determined.