



State Of California

ALFRED E. ALQUIST
SEISMIC SAFETY COMMISSION

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission
Minutes of Teleconference Meeting
August 14, 2008
1755 Creekside Oaks Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, California

Members Participating

Don Parker, Chair
Mark Church, Vice Chair
Andrew Adelman
Kandiah (Arul) Arulmoli
William Chubb
Ken Cooley
Christina Curry
Lucy Jones
John Littrell (joined at 11:37 a.m.)
Gary McGavin
Brad Mitzelfelt
Ali Sadre
James Schwab
Michael Stevens
David Thorman
David Walls

Members Absent

Jonathan Changus
Sharron Leao
Elizabeth Mathieson

Staff Participating

Richard McCarthy, Executive Director
Karen Cogan, Executive Assistant
Norma Romero, Staff Legislative Intern
Fred Turner, Senior Structural Engineer

Others Participating

Ed Harrington, SFPUC
Julie Labonte, SFPUC
Nicole Sandkulla, BAWSCA

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commission Chairman Don Parker called the meeting of the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission to order at 11:33 a.m. Executive Assistant Karen Cogan called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

II. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman Parker thanked commissioners for their willingness to conduct the meeting by teleconference, noting that this arrangement saves money for the Commission.

Chairman Parker congratulated Commissioner Betsy Mathieson and her committee for completing the report on the proposed changes to the San Francisco Public Utility Commission (SFPUC) water system improvement on time.

Chairman Parker appointed Commissioners Gary McGavin, David Walls, and Bill Chubb to join him on a Nominating Committee to recommend a new slate of officers. Ms. Cogan said she would provide committee members with information on the Commission's nominating procedures.

III. APPROVAL OF JUNE 11-12, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

ACTION: Commissioner Andrew Adelman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ken Cooley, that:

The Commission approve the minutes of the June 11 workshop and June 12 Commission meeting as presented.

* Motion carried, 17 - 0.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Budget

Executive Director Richard McCarthy informed the Commission that a check for \$70,000 had been forwarded to FEMA at the end of the last fiscal year. He said the staff felt it was prudent to maintain a small reserve until the state budget was approved, so the remaining balance of \$3,800 will be paid once the governor signs the 2008/2009 budget.

Governor's Executive Order

Mr. McCarthy drew attention to the Governor's Executive Order requiring state agencies to suspend services of retired annuitants and interns. He said Senior Structural Engineer Henry Reyes, a retired annuitant, was laid off as a result. He remarked that the State and Consumer Services Agency has laid off more employees than any other state agency. Mr. McCarthy noted that Governor Schwarzenegger recently instructed the state controller to start paying state employees at the federal minimum wage rate of \$6.55 per hour, with some exceptions, but the controller has refused to implement that order.

Mr. McCarthy indicated that the Department of General Services has determined that the Executive Order does not apply to the Commission's research contracts, so those projects are moving forward. He said the Commission is trying to maintain a conservative spending program until the budget is signed. He commented that the mandated cutbacks are having major impacts on the Office of Emergency Services, the California Building Standards Commission, and the Division of the State Architect.

V. COMMISSION LETTER TO JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE REGARDING SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION'S WATER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. McCarthy noted the Commission's letter to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC's) response were provided in the meeting packet. He suggested taking one item out of order before coming back to this topic.

VI. REQUEST FROM APPLIED TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL FOR COMMISSION TO BE A CONFERENCE CO-SPONSOR (Out of Order)

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Commission had received a request to co-sponsor the Applied Technology Council's (ATC) December 2009 conference in San Francisco. He explained that no financial contribution was involved. He recommended accepting ATC's partnership offer and including a link to the conference on the Commission's Website.

ACTION: Commissioner Cooley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mark Church, that:

The Commission approve co-sponsorship of the ATC conference as proposed.

Commissioner John Littrell requested some background information on ATC. Senior Structural Engineer Fred Turner said ATC is a nonprofit organization of practicing engineers founded in the early 1970's that develops engineering guidelines and precode documents on buildings, bridges, and nonstructural components. Commissioner Kandiah Arulmoli commented that ATC developed the seismic design ground motion parameters used by Caltrans. Mr. Turner observed that ATC has a more practical than theoretical focus, and the organization has a strong earthquake research component. He said the title of this year's conference is "Improving Seismic Performance of Existing Buildings and Structures."

Commissioner Cooley referred to the letter from the ATC in the meeting packet and noted that ATC is very active in California. He said ATC conducted studies after the Loma Prieta earthquake under a federal contract. He commented that ATC helps California better manage its earthquake risk and exposure.

Commissioner Dennis Mileti stated that ATC was well-known among social scientists. He noted that ATC produced an important cost-benefit assessment of multi-hazard mitigation.

Chairman Parker remarked that ATC reviewed code provisions regarding gas shut-off valves in Italy, and as part of that effort, ATC used the Seismic Safety Commission's report and consulted with fire practitioners.

Commissioner Littrell recommended clarifying that the motion includes explicit approval for posting a link on the Commission's Website.

Commissioner Church proposed amending the motion to include putting a link on the Commission's Website, and this amendment was accepted by Commissioner Cooley.

* Motion carried, 17 - 0.

V. COMMISSION LETTER TO JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE REGARDING SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION'S WATER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (Continued)

Mr. McCarthy asked Mr. Turner to review highlights of the Commission's letter to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee regarding the impacts of the proposed changes in the SFPUC's water system improvement program.

Mr. Turner reported that Chairman Parker and Vice-Chairman Church submitted the Commission's letter on August 1. He said the Commission's review committee determined that the scheduling delays proposed for some of the major seismic projects increase the incremental risk to the system. He noted that the committee expressed concern about changes in project scope, and identified certain complex technical issues that need additional review beyond the expertise of the Seismic Safety Commission. Mr. Turner reviewed the committee's recommendations regarding public outreach, potential delays due to environmental impact studies, and strong motion instrumentation.

Chairman Parker welcomed Ed Harrington and Julie Labonte, SFPUC, and invited them to address the Commission.

Ms. Labonte assured the Commission that the SFPUC will carefully consider all of the recommendations in the Commission's letter. She drew attention to the SFPUC's written response and highlighted some of the key points. With respect to the Commission's concerns about the applicable codes, Ms. Labonte stated that the SFPUC was using the 2007 California Building Code, adopted in January of 2008, rather than the 2001 CBC, which was used before then. She added that none of the differences in the two codes apply to the water system improvement program.

In terms of seismic design requirements, Ms. Labonte clarified that the SFPUC was using the same return periods as BART and other Bay Area infrastructure facilities. She noted that the higher return period in the ALA guidelines would result in an over-design, so those values were adjusted to reflect a deterministic cap for high seismicity areas, consistent with the 2007 California Building Code. She indicated that this approach was approved by all the task force members.

Ms. Labonte acknowledged the Commission's concerns about independent review and oversight, and indicated that the SFPUC fully embraces this concept. She described the SFPUC's quality management program, established to provide autonomous and objective reviews of each project.

She said the SFPUC makes use of technical advisory panels, third-party consultants, and a seismic task force with four external members. She expressed concern that creating a new, independent panel at this late stage would delay the program. Ms. Labonte said the SFPUC will consider modifying the seismic task force to address the points raised by the Commission.

Ms. Labonte thanked the Seismic Safety Commission for its thoughtful and thorough review and said the SFPUC looks forward to the successful delivery of all its proposed water system improvement projects.

Mr. McCarthy noted that a representative of the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) had requested an opportunity to speak on this matter.

Ms. Nicole Sandkulla, BAWSCA, said she was pleased that the SFPUC had provided a written draft response to the Commission's letter. She emphasized the importance of independent review and oversight as part of the planning process.

Chairman Parker expressed his appreciation to the members of the Commission's review committee for their hard work.

Commissioner Church recommended a follow-up meeting with SFPUC representatives to further discuss some of the issues identified in the letter. Mr. Harrington said the SFPUC would be happy to continue the discussions.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to address the Commission.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS & GOOD OF MEETING

Chairman Parker asked the staff to contact the members of the Nominating Committee soon to get that process underway.

Ms. Cogan reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings. She said the staff was working with Commissioner Tina Curry to arrange a tour of the OES facility the day before the Commission's September 11 meeting in Sacramento. She noted the Commission will meet again in Los Angeles on November 14 at the Omni Hotel, the site of the ShakeOut mega-conference.

IX. ADJOURN

There being no further business, Commissioner Adelman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cooley, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Sue Celli
Office Manager

Approved by:

Richard McCarthy
Executive Director