

STATE OF OREGON
Department of Consumer and Business Services
Building Codes Division

CODE CONSISTENCY TASK FORCE

Tri-County Service Center
123 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 440
Portland, OR 97232-2901
Phone: (503) 872-6731

Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2001

Meeting Location: National Electrical Contractors Association
601 NE Everett Street
Portland, OR 97232

Time: 11:10 a.m.

Members Present: Sue Blatner
Mike Cliburn
Jim Chapman
David Davies
Ray Kerridge
John Lape
Ron Murray

Guests: Clint Hilman, City of Gresham
Dennis Carney, City of Forest Grove
Brad Roast, City of Beaverton
Jeff Eldridge, City of Portland

Staff: Mark Long
Peggy Collins
Tom Phillips
Terry Swisher
Joanie Steven-Schwenger
Marion Peterson

Chairman Ron Murray called the meeting to order. The January 18, 2001 minutes were approved as submitted.

Joan Stevens-Schwenger distributed a concept draft of the Tri-County Code Consistency Model Process and Bob Turpin's summary of the Electrical Code forum presented by the States Chief Electrical Inspector, Gary Wilson and the City of Portland's 1&2 family section.

Joan reviewed the task force's January 18th discussion about establishing regional forums and/or a board standing committee. Joan observed that the task force needs to find a process that is binding. Referring to the draft model process she handed out, Joan noted that she had attempted to incorporate committee suggestions made at the last meeting. At the earlier meeting, the task force rejected the concept of using a statewide standing committee with board authority that

would provide interpretations in code matters for Tri-County. The task force said that they would leave interpretations up to the state boards, and were interested in a local process.

Today's draft follows the notion of the already agreed-upon regional forums (Structural/Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing) to which both contractors and inspectors would be invited. The purpose of these forums is clarification and education. It is estimated that the experts in the groups will effectively deal with 97 percent of the questions. For thornier questions or pro-active definitions of installations, for example, a standing committee of recognized experts from the region and the state code chief would discuss the matter. The product of these meetings would be in the form of a Technical Advisory, written by the code chief. Because the advisories would apply to the entire state, it is likely that the code chief will also consult with representatives from around the state.

Sue Blatner observed that the reason for the code consistency process is to get the contractors and inspectors together, discuss the issues openly dealing with the common sense of the code and where possible, resolve the issues. It is necessary to be careful not to have a group that just puts together a "code opinion." A "Tri-County code" is not needed, what is needed is consistency, not a new code interpretation.

Joanie noted that in the presented model, the state code chief is involved and responsible for writing the advisories. This ensures that the advisories apply statewide and are not special to Tri-County. This process provides for the inclusion of all players in the process—contractors (in the regional forums) and building departments—and because the standing committees include representation known and respected in the region, the credibility of the Technical Advisories should be higher. The important part of this process, for it to be binding, is that all Tri-County building officials agree to follow the Technical Advisories. Another important aspect of this process is communication. It will be the Tri-County office's responsibility to record forum and committee notes (much like Bob Turpin's memo) and distribute to building departments and contractors.

Ron presented a model that incorporated the forum and committee in one group, with the committee part of the group answering the questions. The task force discussed this model. Some were concerned that the set up of such meetings would not lend itself to issues requiring debate and research, and that it seemed too formal. Mike Cliburn said that he would regret losing the educational component that the more informal forums usually provided. He noted that most issues could actually be dealt with at this level with consensus among participants about common practices. When interpretations or defining issues proactively is the task, then the discussion should take place among experts and the chief. Mike observed that because a level of interpretation that is binding is needed, possibly the first model presented should be pursued.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20pm

NEXT MEETING: March 8th @ 9:30 a.m.
United Association of Plumbing & Steamfitters, Local 290
20210 SW Teton Avenue
Tualatin, OR 97062