

**CODES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
CODES AMENDMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

November 29, 2023

A special meeting of the Codes Amendment Subcommittee of the Codes and Standards Committee was held on-line using Microsoft Teams Meeting platform. The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM.

CAS in Attendance: John J. Butkus, AIA, Architect
Johnny Carrier, Residential Contractor
Anthony Cinicola, Building Official
Paul Costello, Electric Trades
Hank Cullinane, HVAC
Thomas DiBlasi, PE, Structural Engineer
Louis Free, AIA, Architect, CAS Chair
Donald Harwood, Public Member
Timothy Mikloiche, Electrical Contractor
Illona Prosol, PE, Fire Protection Engineer
Eric Shutt, Plumbing Trades Contractor
Fred Wajcs, Jr., Public Member
William Zoeller, RA, Energy Efficiency

DAS in Attendance: William Abbott, OSFM, State Fire Marshal
Omarys Vasquez, AIA, NOMA, State Building Inspector
David Woods, OSFM, Fire & Life Safety Supervisor
Peter Zvingilas, DAS, Assistant Director, Regulatory Compliance

Also Present: Joseph Cassidy
Joseph Summers

1. CAS MINUTES

- a. A motion was made by Donald Harwood and seconded by Timothy Mikloiche to accept the minutes of the November 8, 2023 CAS meeting. No additional discussions, all voted in favor, none opposed, motion is APPROVED.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

No new correspondence was received since the last CAS meeting.

3. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Chair Louis Free and State Building Inspector Omarys Vasquez updated the CAS on the 2025 Connecticut State Building and Fire Safety Code Development.

- i) Code Review Work Groups and Meeting Schedule Discussions:
 - (1) The chairs for each work group are usually the first person identified on the work group list; Keith Flood and Michael Sinsigalli will be co-chairs for the Fire Prevention Work Group.
 - (2) State Building Inspector Vasquez will coordinate with Chair Free and Deputy Commission Darren Hobbs to identify the contact(s) for the constituent representative(s) to work with specific Code Review Work Groups (i.e. Connecticut Department of Health for pools; Connecticut Insurance Department and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for resiliency, etc.).
 - (3) The Resiliency / Weather Work Group should schedule working sessions and partner with constituents early in the review process to identify areas of concerns or potential legislative initiatives that DAS may not be aware of through other sources.
 - (4) Ilona Prosol requested splitting Mechanical / Plumbing from Electrical and delaying the proposed Work Group presentation scheduled for the February 28, 2024 CAS meeting due to the amount of plumbing code changes since the last code. State Building Inspector Vasquez noted that Mechanical / Plumbing has two proposed presentation dates, February 28, 2024 related to commercial construction and May 8, 2024 for the residential construction. The discussion items for these two can be switched so that residential construction is on February 28th and commercial is on May 8th. As an alternative, the Accessibly Work Group presentation scheduled for the March 13, 2024 CAS meeting can be moved to February 28th and the Mechanical / Plumbing Work Group takes March 13th. Another alternative presented is the Mechanical / Plumbing Work Group present the mechanical commercial and residential construction changes on February 28th and present the plumbing commercial and residential construction changes on May 8th.
 - (5) The Accessibility Work Group is reviewing the 2017 ICC A117.1 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities Standard which is referenced in the 2023 IBC and IPC. State Building Inspector Vasquez requested that the Work Group consider reviewing the 2023 ICC A117.1 version to determine the differences with the possibility of referencing this version as part of the 2025 Connecticut State Building Codes. Chair Free requested OSBI to review with DAS Legal the legal implications or impacts by going with the 2023 ICC A117.1 since the 2024 I Codes references the 2017 ICC A117.1 and not the 2023 ICC A117.1.

- ii) Peter Zvingilas provided an update on the ICC premium code access for CAS members. Peter has negotiated with the ICC the redline code version access, has received all the emails requiring access and the entire CAS will receive the online access. Several CAS members expressed their concern and displeasure with only obtaining the on-line access to the codes noting that if you go back in Connecticut's code development history, CAS members used to get a full set of hard copy codes. Then a few years later CAS members received only a set of PDF copies. In the last code development cycle the CAS members had only online access but lost access after the first year or when the new code was published. Many CAS members prefer the hard copies or PDF copies to review. OSBI will look into this issue and report back to the CAS.
 - iii) The preliminary schedule for the public to submit code change proposals for the 2024 codes is from March 1, 2024 to April 30, 2024.
 - iv) The Work Group Assignments and Proposed Subcommittee Meeting Schedule will be finalized for the next CAS meeting on December 13, 2023 so DAS can post it on the CAS website for public information.
 - v) DAS is in discussions in ICC related to the financial benefit of creating a Code Development Process (Cdp), the process ICC uses to modify their model building, fire, and safety codes, specifically for the Connecticut codes. The current Connecticut codes amendment process is to document code changes through a Word document, which once approved gets sent to ICC. ICC then takes the time necessary to integrate these code changes into their online codes database system. Once done, ICC sends back to DAS PDFs of the code changes, DAS then compares the PDFs to the original Word documents to proofread their work to make sure the changes are correctly reflected in the PDF. This process prolongs the final effective date of the codes to when the actual printed codes are available for use. Unfortunately, this new process to set up the Cdp with ICC will take 6 to 10 months. Consequently, going forward for the next code adoption cycle and not this one, any code changes that are drafted and approved will go into ICC's online system making the changes within their system rather than putting it in a Word document first.
- b. **Public Act No. 23-102 - AN ACT STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS FOR CONNECTICUT'S CONSUMERS OF ENERGY**

Sec. 40. (Effective July 1, 2023) Not later than December 31, 2023, the Department of Administrative Services, the office of the State Building Inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee shall study and jointly submit a report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety regarding the inclusion of gas detectors within the State Building Code. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the anticipated feasibility of requiring gas detectors in all buildings that use natural gas or propane gas, (2) recommendations for future

legislative changes, (3) the current availability of gas detectors that meet the standards of the National Fire Protection Association, (4) a recommended code alignment process to accommodate any changes, and (5) the fiscal impact on the state or owner of public buildings.

Discussions:

- i) Public Act No. 23-102 Item (1) challenges/questions such as using electrical outlets for plug-in gas detectors in relationship to the location of the natural gas source; locations of appliances in different rooms; manufacture recommendations of gas detectors within 10 feet from the appliances, as an example do they get installed near each appliance even if the gas appliances are far apart; cost could run \$50-\$150 per detector. Item (2) CAS recommends following the code adoption process and not legislative changes. Item (5) fiscal impact on the state or owner of public buildings would be challenging to identify, tied to scope and extent of work which could be unique for many different conditions.
- ii) Question on the genesis of Public Act No. 23-102. Where are we experiencing problems; gas leaks in residential or is it in other structures; is there a loss of life; identifying locations should be based on data.
- iii) CAS to identify which Code Review Work Group this should fall under so that this group can review and address; invite legislators and constituents to the work group to understand the goals and objectives so we can ensure that it meets the intent of their goal.
- iv) State within the report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly that without further information on the key objective and what is driving this need, we have high level recommendations but requires further study to provide recommendations based on what the Public Act is to achieve.
- v) This topic are usually safety issues that are brought in national codes; is there a group that has seen this problem nationally? Is this topic stemming from another issue or national conversation?
- vi) Question was asked if CAS/OSBI/OSFM have ever drafted brand new code sections in the Connecticut code amendments. Chair Free responded that in the last 4-5 code adoption cycles the CAS objective is create minor revisions to the model code only when necessary (i.e. statutory language, Connecticut standard modification approvals) but on exceedingly rare occasions will create a new section(s) to address Connecticut specific issues (residential swimming pools, radon detection). Now that Connecticut is up to date with current code cycles, there may be less section adds to implement going forward and will look to submit code change language at the national level to minimize local amendments.

- vii) What was the impetus for NFPA 715 Standard for the Installation of Fuel Gases Detection and Warning Equipment 2023 Edition? It may have been from the Merrimack Valley (Massachusetts) gas explosions in September 2018. There is history of several residential home explosions in Connecticut, one from 1985 and in locations such as Vernon 2 years ago, East Hartford, Avon. The Merrimack Valley (Massachusetts) gas explosions were from construction issues that supercharged the gas supply system. OSFM has been in contact with NFPA, and the 2024 codes are not currently addressing this issue, but the 2027 codes are anticipating adding this to the residential board and care sections.
- viii) The referenced NFPA 715 Standard for the Installation of Fuel Gases Detection and Warning Equipment 2023 Edition is a large document totaling 195 pages.
- ix) Public Act No. 23-102, Sec 40 was part of another bill and OSFM has spoken with one of the subgroups who indicated that it was recommended that it go through the code review process and implemented into the codes rather than make it a part of legislative statute.
- x) Question if we are protecting existing gas lines, just appliances or both?
- xi) Questions related to gas detection within single and two-family homes which is currently the largest building stock in Connecticut and regulated by the IRC for new construction and alterations; how would this requirement be enforced in existing building structures; make it a requirement for alterations; cannot be a Fire Prevention Code issue because the local fire marshal does not have enforcement in single and two-family homes. If, in theory, the local Fire Marshal (FM) was to be the responsible authority having jurisdiction for the gas detection enforcement in single and two-family homes, then it would require a legislative change for the FM; this may be unfavorable to the FM community as it will add to their workload. Another statute change could be in the Real Estate statute to require gas detectors be installed prior to home sales; however, we would still need to identify location and quantities recommended.
- xii) A majority of the housing stock utilized oil burners, not may have gas; initiative currently out there to ban gas stoves and go electric.
- xiii) Identify the impacts of the legislative change both positive and negative on how this might impact the stakeholders and enforcement communities;
- xiv) Have to make this implementable and enforceable for this to be able to be recommended to move forward to code inclusion.
- xv) What is the impact on affordable housing; as new legislation is proposed that incrementally increases the cost on construction which additionally puts a burden on the already increasing construction costs for new and retrofit housing projects.

- xvi) It was noted that radon code integration took multiple meetings and presentations to the CAS by the proponents / local public health departments. It also took several code cycles before it was integrated into the current building codes.
- xvii) Is there any data available of gas explosions in Connecticut that would assist in identifying the need for detectors and narrow the scope to where it is most needed; OSFM to assist and review their records and report back to CAS.
- xviii) Need to involve the public utilities and gas distributors on this matter so that we hear their thoughts on this requirement; also included LP gas, not just natural gas.
- xix) Chair Free recommends creating a separate workgroup with a cross section of CAS members and include the constituents from utilities and distributors; include any interested parties and legislators to the workgroup as a vested member on the issue (unless otherwise directed). CAS members interested in serving on the Gas Detection Work Group to send an email to State Building Inspector Vasquez and Chair Free stating such.
- xx) John Butkus made a motion to assign the research on Public Act No. 23-102 related to gas detectors to the entire CAS for consideration in the next code cycle in January 2024, Timothy Mikloiche second the motion. No discussion, the vote was all in favor and none opposed, the motion is APPROVED.

4. NEW BUSINESS


A valued and long-standing member of the CAS is retiring, and Codes and Standards Committee Chair Johnny Carrier will address this at the December C&SC monthly meeting.

No additional new business.

5. ADJOURNMENT

John Butkus made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:52 PM, Timothy Mikloiche second the motion. No discussion, the vote was all in favor and none opposed, the motion for adjournment is APPROVED.

The next Codes Amendment Subcommittee meeting is set for December 13, 2023 at 1:30 PM and will be held on-line using Microsoft Teams Meeting platform.



Louis Free, Chair
Codes Amendment Subcommittee