



State Of California

ALFRED E. ALQUIST
SEISMIC SAFETY COMMISSION



Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

Minutes of Meeting
January 8, 2009
State Capitol, Room 4202
Sacramento, California

Members Participating

Mark Church, Chair
Ken Cooley, Vice Chair
Andrew Adelman
Kandiah (Arul) Arulmoli
William Chubb
Christina Curry
John Littrell (arrived @ 9:10 a.m.)
Elizabeth Mathieson
Gary McGavin
Dennis Mileti
Don Parker
Ali Sadre
James Schwab
Michael Stevens
David Thorman (arrived at 9:34 a.m.)
David Walls

Members Absent

Jonathan Changus
Lucy Jones
Sharron Leason
Brad Mitzelfelt

Staff Participating

Richard McCarthy, Executive Director
Karen Cogan, Executive Assistant
Robert Anderson, Staff Geologist
Fred Turner, Senior Structural Engineer

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commission Chairman Mark Church called the meeting of the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission to order at 9:03 a.m. Executive Assistant Karen Cogan called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

II. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman Church informed the Commission that Secretary Rosario Marin was unable to attend the meeting due to illness, so Executive Director Richard McCarthy would cover her points in his remarks.

Committee Appointments

Chairman Church drew attention to the revised committee rosters.

Commissioner Andrew Adelman expressed interest in representing the Commission on the Hospital Building Safety Board. Chairman Church noted that Commissioner Ali Sadre was the current representative, with Commissioner John Littrell as alternate. Commissioner Adelman said the current representatives were satisfactory to him.

Commissioner Adelman asked to be added to the Public School Safety and Field Act Ad Hoc Committee, and commissioners agreed to include him in that group.

ACTION: Commissioner Gary McGavin made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ken Cooley, that:

The Commission approve the committee assignments as proposed.

- * Motion carried, 14 – 0 (Commissioners Littrell and Thorman absent during voting).

2009 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Cogan welcomed suggestions from commissioners for future meeting locations. She said she would email a revised calendar to all commissioners. She noted the Commission is considering two out-of-town meetings during 2009, one in northern California and one along the central coast.

Chairman Church observed that the Commission will be meeting in alternate months, so the next meeting will be in March.

III. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 14, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner John Littrell drew attention to the last line on Page 1 and noted the word “million” should be “billion.”

Commissioner Elizabeth Mathieson recommended inserting the word “average” between “140-year” and “intervals” in the last line of the first paragraph on Page 3.

Referring to the second sentence in the last paragraph on Page 6, Commissioner Sadre proposed adding “with reinforced concrete walls” after “concrete core building.”

ACTION: Commissioner David Walls made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary McGavin, that:

The Commission approve the minutes of the November 14 Commission meeting as amended.

- * Motion carried, 15– 0 (Commissioner Thorman absent during voting).

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. McCarthy informed the Commission that Secretary Marin was sorry she had to miss the meeting and would like to reschedule her presentation.

Budget Report

Mr. McCarthy noted that Governor Schwarzenegger would be releasing his proposed 2009-2010 budget on January 9. He said the Commission will continue to receive funding from the Insurance Fund for the next three years, with the expectation that an alternate source of funds will be found after that.

Mr. McCarthy advised that the Governor's Office wants to consolidate and streamline state functions, and there has been a proposal to merge the Seismic Safety Commission with the Board of Registration for Geologists and Geophysicists. He said the Board has a staff of nine and a budget of \$1.3 million funded by fees from licensees. He noted that the merger would have to be approved by the Legislature, and he promised to keep the Commission informed.

Mr. McCarthy reported that the governor is proposing a 10 percent salary savings for all state agencies by mandating a two-day furlough each month and giving up two paid holidays. He said it is likely all affected state offices would be closed on the same days to reduce salary and energy costs.

Mr. McCarthy referred to the budget reports prepared by Contracted Fiscal Services (CFS) and by the staff. He noted that the difference between the two estimates will narrow in the coming months. Mr. McCarthy stated that the staff has been preparing for a worst-case scenario in case additional cuts are required. He said Mr. Larry Rillera's position will be left vacant for a while.

Mr. McCarthy noted that the Commission has not yet charged any overhead for its research projects, so those costs can be kept in reserve and used as necessary. He said the Art Center College of Design project has been completed, and a couple more research projects will be finished in the spring. He added that the research fund was still intact, although the worsening budget crisis could change that.

Mr. McCarthy advised that the Commission will begin charging for review services provided to other entities, such as the California Energy Commission and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. He observed that the Commission can obtain funds from outside sources, but the Department of Finance needs to authorize any spending, and state contracting rules still apply.

Commissioner Mathieson stated that she had experience with the Board of Registration for Geologists and Geophysicists. She noted that California's licensing program has a strong consumer protection component and is a model for other states. She offered her assistance in evaluating and planning for the proposed consolidation.

Commissioner Don Parker observed that the Seismic Safety Commission has many disciplines, not just geology, and he questioned the rationale for merging the Commission with any one

specific discipline. He said the missions and functions of the Commission and the Board of Registration are different and not redundant.

Mr. McCarthy indicated that the staff will try to investigate the reasons behind the proposal. He remarked that many people equate earthquakes with geology. He said a merger would change the makeup of both boards.

Commissioner Gary McGavin recalled that although the Commission went through a difficult process a few years ago when it came into the State and Consumer Services Agency, that move in retrospect was beneficial because it increased support for the Commission and added more representation on the Commission. He expressed his opinion that the current proposal would take a step backwards and would not improve seismic safety in California.

Commissioner Cooley noted that consolidation proposals become controversial when they affect consumer protection. He observed that the Commission's purview is different from the Board's, and regulatory boards have strict requirements that could result in additional expense and complications.

Chairman Church concluded that the Commission had serious reservations about the proposed merger and its effect on the Commission's composition and mission. He expressed his opinion that the consolidation was not a good idea, and noted the Commission will wait for more details.

V. RESEARCH PROJECTS – CYCLE 2 PROPOSALS

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Commission's research fund allows the Commission to fund research projects that improve seismic safety, and the Commission approved funding for an initial round of five projects last year. He noted that the Commission tries to work with partners as a way of leveraging funds. He recommended that the Commission consider two new projects, one for the California Science Center, and another for California Public Television. He invited representatives from each organization to describe their proposals.

California Science Center

Mr. Jeff Rudolph, Director, California Science Center, requested that the Commission provide funds for an expansion of the California Science Center and a new seismic exhibit. He explained that the California Science Center receives funds from the state and a nonprofit foundation, and its mission is to inspire and educate the public about science.

Mr. Rudolph said the California Science Center plans to refurbish and expand its Creative World exhibit, which includes sections on structures, transportation, and communications, with a green technology overlay. He reported that about 88 percent of the second phase of construction has been completed, and the new exhibits will be ready to open in 2010.

Mr. McCarthy recommended that the Commission appoint a commissioner to work with Commissioner Lucy Jones and the staff to negotiate a contract for the Commission's approval in

March. He also proposed asking the California Earthquake Authority to sponsor half of the California Science Center proposal as a way of leveraging more funds.

ACTION: Commissioner Cooley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McGavin, that:

The Commission authorize negotiation of a contract as proposed.

Mr. Rudolph thanked Commissioner Mathieson for her comments.

* Motion carried, 16 – 0.

California Public Television

Mr. McCarty said the California Public Television project was still in draft form, and he thanked Commissioner Parker and Commissioner Michael Stevens for bringing this proposal to the Commission. He noted that the proposal calls for a partnership with the California Earthquake Authority and Department of Insurance to produce television programs on two major types of disasters, earthquakes and wildfires.

Mr. McCarthy commented that the public needs information about the FEMA reimbursement process, resources for homeowners and businesses, reasons to prepare, and mitigation options. He observed that the proposed videos seem to focus, as many other programs have in the past, on earthquake shaking, faulting, and damage. He added that he liked the second half of the proposal, in terms of the budget for the project and plans for dissemination. He encouraged the Commission to discuss the proposal and provide feedback to Commissioners Stevens and Parker.

Commissioner Stevens explained that the idea for this project grew out of a presentation to the American Insurance Association. He stated that the intent of the project is to emphasize preparedness during and after an event. He agreed with Mr. McCarthy that the draft program focused too much on historical events and not enough on practical advice.

Commissioner Dennis Mileti commented that this project could have great potential. He recommended clarifying the goal of the final product.

Commissioner Mileti questioned inclusion of wildfires, noting that only fire following earthquake was within the Commission's purview.

Commissioner Mileti recommended applying social science knowledge about what motivates people to prepare. He said a statewide catalog will be released soon with details about what has already been done and what popular myths need to be overcome. He suggested taking the results of the UCLA preparedness survey and using them in this project.

Mr. McCarthy commented that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) will use the survey results to develop future outreach campaigns. He observed that the release of the survey findings

comes at an opportune time for California Public Television. He asked Commissioner Mileti to attend the next planning meeting to provide his input.

Commissioner Parker noted that the proposal appears to reflect what California Public Television thinks the Commission wants and what people will watch. He recommended introducing other issues, including fire following earthquake. He stated that the earthquake scenarios used in the Southern California ShakeOut and the 1868 Hayward Earthquake Alliance demonstrate that fire following earthquake rivals shaking as a cause of damage. He advocated incorporating mitigation survey findings and involving the insurance industry.

Commissioner Sadre expressed interest in learning more about what other countries are doing compared to the United States. He suggested narrowing the topics to earthquakes and fire following earthquakes.

Commissioner Cooley observed that because many California earthquakes are not catastrophic, people become complacent and ignore the risk of a real disaster. He emphasized the need to convey the message that recent earthquakes were not catastrophic, and to motivate people to create family disaster plans, store drinking water, and take other steps to prepare. He said the most important message is that California has the potential for a catastrophic earthquake, and individuals need to prepare. He recommended focusing on response and recovery messages.

Commissioner Mileti clarified that uncontroverted social and behavioral science evidence shows that warning people about the Big One does not improve household preparedness; in fact, such messages turn people off, and they then tune out. He advocated abandoning this antiquated and ineffective approach and focusing on what does work. Commissioner Mileti said the Department of Homeland Security plans to use the results of the household mitigation survey as the basis for public education campaigns.

Commissioner James Schwab remarked that the California Public Television project presents an opportunity for the Commission to highlight seismic safety science and the background behind the state's building codes. He noted that public television programs inspire people to ask questions and learn more.

Commissioner Sadre suggested including an interview with the Commission's chair or executive director to explain the Commission's mission and activities.

Chairman Church thanked commissioners for their comments.

Mr. McCarthy noted that the Commission still needed to appoint a second commissioner to work on the California Science Center contract. Commissioners McGavin and Mileti volunteered.

VI. ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Cogan drew attention to the revised draft of the 2008 Annual Report. She said that once approved by the Commission, the report will be submitted to the Agency, and then to the

Governor's Office and Legislature. She welcomed comments and suggestions from commissioners.

ACTION: Commissioner Parker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Cooley, that:

The Commission approve the annual report as amended, leaving the final revisions to the staff and the review committee.

* Motion carried, 16 – 0.

VII. SEMS TRAINING

Commissioner Christina Curry informed the Commission that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) was merged with the Office of Homeland Security in October to create the new California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA). She noted that the state's emergency services operations began in the early 20th century, and the original emphasis on civil defense has broadened over the years to address all hazards now. Commissioner Curry said the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) was created in response to communications problems in the 1991 East Bay hills fire. California's system led to creation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in 2003.

Commissioner Curry introduced Ms. Curry Mayer, Training and Exercise Branch Chief, Cal EMA, and invited her to provide an overview of the SEMS and NIMS systems and their place in California's emergency planning.

Ms. Mayer traced the origin of SEMS and explained its four key components: the incident command system, multi- and interagency coordination, mutual aid, and the operational area concept. She said California's emergency communications system is intended to facilitate coordination and deployment of resources from the field, local governments, operational areas, regions, and the state.

Ms. Mayer described the federal NIMS system, and observed that it incorporates the same components as SEMS, plus a resource management program and a certification/qualifications program for emergency managers.

Ms. Mayer said California's recently revised State Emergency Plan provides a base response plan and identifies 17 emergency functions. She noted the document also includes information on best practices and the Governor's priorities for the state.

Ms. Mayer described some new Cal EMA initiatives that will be implemented during the coming year. She said the Public/Private Partnership Initiative gives state government greater flexibility to partner with private organizations that provide first responders, lifesavers, resources, and emergency volunteers. For example, she noted, WalMart has the biggest private aircraft fleet in the U.S., a resource that could augment emergency response throughout the state. Ms. Mayer stated that Cal EMA has assembled an Emergency Partnership Advisory Workgroup, consisting

of representatives of state agencies and the private sector, and the Workgroup has established seven subcommittees to focus on particular issues.

Ms. Mayer ended by discussing the executive's role in planning, training, and establishing policy direction. She provided Cal EMA's Website address and presented a list of links to other resources.

Commissioner Mathieson noted that the 17 emergency functions appear to include input from scientists at the planning stage only. She recommends that OES incorporate scientific expertise as certain emergencies are evolving, such as when a landslide is enlarging, threatening houses, or threatening to block a river.

Chairman Church and commissioners thanked Ms. Mayer for her informative presentation.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

IX. MISCELLANEOUS AND GOOD OF THE MEETING

There were no other items brought to the Commission's attention.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Church thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Sue Celli
Office Manager

Approved by:

Richard McCarthy
Executive Director