

## CCBFC/PTCBS

### Joint Task Group on the Model Codes

#### Review and Development Process

Report of the First Meeting  
5th September 1997  
Toronto, Ontario

#### Members present:

Chair: Bruce Clemmensen  
Ann Borooah  
Mike Dwyer  
Chris Fillingham  
Serge Goulet  
Dick Miller  
Fred Nicholson

Ross Rettie  
Jack Robertson  
Ted Ross  
Chris Tye  
  
IRC Staff:  
Bob Bowen  
Richard Desserud

#### INTRODUCTION

The goal of this first meeting of the Task Group was primarily to agree on the Terms of Reference and establish a general work plan. It was agreed that members would approach the task without preconceived notions and an open mind.

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE.

The Terms of Reference of the Task Group were discussed and confirmed. It was agreed to include the National Fire Code process and the Canadian Council of Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners (CCFM/FC) will be asked to name representatives.

#### Purpose

The Task Group has the objective of recommending strategies aimed at improving the model code process to ensure an appropriate level of participation of the provinces/territories, and other stakeholders, at all stages of model code development, including policy advice and direction, technical revision, coordination of public review and comment, and decision-making.

It was agreed that the preamble to the Terms of Reference should include a statement as to the benefits to industry, the economy, and the public of having uniformity of building and fire regulations.

## General

During the discussion of the Terms of Reference, the following observations were made:

- Designers are increasingly working outside their own provinces and greater uniformity would be beneficial.
- Resources for code development in some provinces are diminishing, however it is important for code users at the regional level to be involved.
- It would be beneficial to reduce duplication of efforts.
- Code development and adoption at the provincial level must account for the realities of political priorities and influence of various stakeholders, whereas the CCBFC process tends to be focussed on technical issues.
- An important message is that the CCBFC is a non-governmental agency, essentially free from political influence. This is mirrored in some of the provincial processes such as Alberta and Nova Scotia.
- There will always be the need for regional variations and additions, but agreement on a core set of provisions should be achievable.
- There are two basic issues, reaching consensus and the development process.
- Consensus is easier to achieve in committee than in the public at large.
- There is a need in code development to know and account for the priorities of provincial decision-makers.
- Political decision-makers might find it desirable to be able to direct lobby groups and those criticizing code requirements away from themselves to an independent process that the province uses and supports.
- It is important to ensure that stakeholders support the code and its development process. This will help eliminate the perception of some provincial decision-makers that the codes are a problem as opposed to an asset.
- We should look to successes in similar areas. The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System WHMIS was cited as an example where provincial buy-in was achieved relatively easily. The acceptance of a single code in Australia is another example.
- The goal of the Task Group should be to achieve a “Single Uniform Code Development Process” without reference to it being “national.” Since building regulation is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, this may make buy-in a bit easier.
- It will be important to get a handle on what concerns and issues have caused stakeholders to differ from the CCBFC process.
- The change to Objective-based Codes are seen as a challenge by many adopting authorities. Objective-Based Codes should help as the focus is changed from “what is required” to “what is acceptable.” It will be important to coordinate the work of this Task Group with the one studying implementation of Objective-Based Codes.

## Questioned to be Addressed

The Task Group reviewed the list of questions to be addressed during its work. (See Agenda material) It was decided to group the questions more logically.

Some need to be reworded to give a clearer focus. Possible answers or solutions could be provided in point form.

## **WORK PLAN**

In order to get the most effective level of participation the Task Group agreed to the following:

There should be wide publicity of the Task Group's work.

Meetings are to be held across Canada at one to two month intervals.

Attempts will be made to notify stakeholders at each meeting location and to invite them to attend.

Written submissions will be requested. However, the Task Group will not deny requests to make presentations at meetings.

The Task Group will have a Web Page on the Internet which will include meeting reports, membership lists, meeting schedules, discussion papers, etc

A communication paper needs to be prepared that can be used to encourage groups and individuals to participate in the process.

The work should be completed in time to be included in the agenda of a proposed meeting of Provincial Deputy Ministers contemplated for late 1998. Recommendations should also be available in time for them to be considered for use in the process to produce the 2001 edition of the NBC. A Deadline of the end of Sept, 1998 is proposed.

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

A number of documents were included with the Agenda or distributed at the meeting. The Task Group was requested to keep these for future reference. These included:

- CCBFC Code Review Process
- Excerpts from Measures to Implement the CCBFC Strategic Plan
- Federal/Provincial Task Group on the NBC-1987
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Provincial Procedures- Alberta, B.C., N. S., Ontario, Man., Sask., NFLD., Yukon, PEI
- US Model Code Processes- BOCA, ICBO, ICC
- Standards Development Organizations- Canadian Gas Association, CSA- Canadian Electrical Code

## **AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the first two meetings of the Task Group will be primarily devoted to information collection and work planning. It was agreed that at the next meeting, each jurisdiction would put on a brief presentation on their code development and review process, if any. An attempt will be made to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps.

The Agenda should include:

Revamped questions to be addressed, with possible solutions.

Communication paper to encourage participation.

Information on strengths and weaknesses of the CCBFC system as part of the analysis done for the Strategic Plan.

Excerpts from the CCBFC Strategic Plan and possible implementation measures.

List of Organizations to be contacted

Ideas put forward in the past on this subject

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 21 and 22 in Winnipeg. Future locations are Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Halifax and Toronto. If possible meetings are to be on Sunday and Monday and will normally end at 3 p.m. the second day.