Fire Code TAG March 30, 2012

Present: Dave Kokot, Chair; Corey Thomas, Dan Sheir, Diane Glenn, Hank Teran, Jim Kambeitz; Lee Bailey.

Absent: Allen Spaulding, Barbara McMullen, Dave Nelson, Joe Puckett, Margie O'Brien, Michael Montgomery, Robert Eaker

Staff Present: Tim Nogler, Joanne McCaughan

Guests:

- 1. Review Agenda; Adjust the agenda to update the issues around quorum and TAG member attendance (2a). Agenda approved as modified
- 2. 2a Several members have not been participating on a regular basis. Staff will contact them to clarify their availability. Shawn Shepherd is appointed per earlier discussion. Tim indicated that when repeated absence occurs members can be considered ex-officio; our bylaws require us to inform them they will not be counted in the quorum. Alternates can be appointed. When a quorum is not present the issues can be discussed, but a vote cannot be taken. The TAG would do a report on the issues, and position on issues would be confirmed by the TAG when a quorum is present. Under the current Council discussion around the by-laws, there is some consideration to change TAGs so they would not be a voting body. They are continuing to look at the issues. Lee asked for clarification on alternates. Tim noted that they can show up and announce they are serving as alternate; however we do attempt to provide alternates from the beginning of the process. Dave noted we had a challenge filling all the positions for this Fire TAG. We are already hampered because we don't have all the positions filled. Staff will contact absentee members to confirm their availability and check on potential for alternates. Dave reminded the group that next week's meeting is in Spokane, and folks may need to call in to ensure we have a quorum.
- 3. Minutes of 3/16/12 meeting reviewed. Corrections were provided to staff; it was moved and approved to accept the minutes as corrected.
- 4. Review the schedule for proposals and key issues. Dave went over the schedule for new proposals; Shawn is prepared to report on his research re: PV issues. Jeff Randall, the proponent for the PV proposal, was unavailable but will attend a future meeting.
- 5. New matrix. Dave reminded the group that they need to provide their revised draft language to staff. We may need to follow up on emergency rulemaking re: photo-luminescent markings. We will add the issues that are outstanding...we will keep track of the details on the matrix; staff provided a shortened version of the status of the TAG review of the IFC state amendments.
- 6. 2012 IFC/Chapter 53 Medical Gas. There are correlation issues with the plumbing TAG; the exception refers to the plumbing code. Multiple versions of the standard are cited. NFPA 99 is what they refer to in fire service for enforcement. Dave will propose changes to 3006.4, which will refer to the NFPA standard in the maintenance & testing section. There was a brief discussion of the issues among the TAG members present, but they did not come to any decision or consensus proposed language. Would need to modify the exception to be installed in accordance with the plumbing code. Lee asked if they do work together; Dave notes the

- plumbing code does refer to NFPA 99. Dave will have wording to the group before the next meeting, and will coordinate with Plumbing Code TAG. Tim notes it is good to differentiate between installation and maintenance. He gave some of the history of the issue from the 1990s, and said it needs to be addressed again; it will be addressed during the public hearings process.
- 7. Type One Hoods. The group reviewed the proposal from Council member Eric Vander Mey. It provides some background on inspections with baseline information from a testing lab; inspectors should be expecting that information. Shawn talked about the testing and grease particulate level is five units over eight hour's duration, and depends on which food product is used for the test. UL does the testing based on a particular type of food; he is working with ASHRAE on a two year study of hoods. Dave discussed the current exception for under 16 residents in R-2, and asked for additional information. He noted that refers to cooking for a large number of people on a daily basis; it is due to licensed facilities in a residential setting. We need to follow up with our TAG members who represent those entities. In the proposed table it appears they can choose between the hoods based on the type of food being cooked. If it is in NFPA 96 there has been a reasonable review. There is an assumption of safety in the use of the facility and the equipment. Lee added that at one time if the facility provided a written statement that they would not have as much concern; they could be exempted from the commercial hood requirement. Shawn noted they look at it from the perspective of referring to IMC, and/or putting it into the Fire Code. Maureen Traxler wanted feedback from the Fire Code; the mechanical code is the charging code. Shawn says 609 is there just for maintenance; if you put in a type one, it has to be kept clean. Lee asked what the inspector would do if they found a type two hood upon inspection, if he is not aware of the allowed exemption, would they red tag it. Dave asked about the threshold to require a suppression system. It was noted there is one exception in the code now, they could add the table and the additional exception. The table may be helpful for someone new to the field, however Shawn believes it would be better to match the language, so that everything is in the Fire Code. Dave explained that the current language does not match; the mechanical code drives the hood, all the fire tag is worried about is the suppression issue. Diane noted that would be okay, because the builder goes to the mechanical code; Hank added it might be better not to have it in the fire code, they might think it is up to them to enforce language that is not really their responsibility. Would add in the table in 609.2, with the exception, if the Mechanical Code is going to adopt it; if they do not, we will not. Dave recommends specific wording should be written to put this into the Fire Code, and he will develop that language, including the issue 5 milligrams per cubic meter. We would keep the current amendment to 609.2. Lee asked if local jurisdictions would be able to adopt their own amendment to require the hoods, Tim said they would. The TAG will revisit the issue in future meetings to review Dave's proposed language.
- 8. Elevator pressurization. There is a problem with numbering between the Fire Code and the Building Code. It is 909.6.3 in fire and 909.21 in building; it is already covered in Chapter 7. Pressurization is an alternative in lieu of having a lobby. We can leave it in 909.6.3. TAG recommends leaving it in as it is currently written. Shawn notes there is very little change between 2009 and 2012 in 909. Need to get the notes on this from the Building Code proponent. Shawn recommends leaving this as it is currently in the Fire Code; 909.6.3 reference may need to be updated. Will need a correction to the reference; staff will make this correction.
- 9. Photovoltaic issue update from Shawn Oregon requirements are based on the law in that state; stand alone law through administration, permitting, fees, installation, electrical amendments, etc. They used the CA fire model extensively. For small installations there are benefits, with some technical flaws. Looking at the current comments, he does not think they are reading it right. He believes they will still be able to have their arrays; Oregon addresses building egress. Where

there is an escape window no PV will be allowed outside the window. 2012 IFC does not address that at all. Oregon also addressed building classification for roofing being fire rated or not. They do not address building integrated PV systems in the building materials themselves. The building official is the one inspecting in the Oregon model. Separation is required, or rules apply. IFC exempts them. In some places the electrical marking are required even for exceptions. Marysville has requirements like CA, they must be marked according to certain specifications. Oregon does not address access to roofs. On the commercial side Oregon is more restrictive than IFC, the ventilation access is greater. Separations are access paths around the roof, with some exceptions. There is more design flexibility, but it prohibits certain locations. There is a valid concern of PV panels being located away from the ridge, as it has an effect on how they function with heat; also an issue with snow loads. There is a wide breadth of available panels, quality of the material, and endurance of the products. He does not see much in the code that is very problematic. Will expect to hear further from the proponent. Hank attended the recent Fire Chiefs conference; they are interested in the issue and what is being proposed. We should have proper information to ensure the code amendments adopted are correctly vetted. Dave wants to ensure the Fire Chiefs have a chance to weigh in. Lee asked why it is not addressed in the building code TAG, Tim noted it is because the Fire Code has language. Shawn added there is not much in new home construction, mostly on existing homes. Permits are required; building departments don't have the ability to enforce anything as it is not in the code. Diane has some concerns about access from the ridge and window clearance issuess. Tim notes that the Oregon code has it under the building code; Shawn says it is a stand-alone code, will adopt as written by the IFC code. Oregon gave the authority to the building official, and it applies to all structures on which solar arrays are located. Lee noted there are several angles of concern for the building department; he has issued some permits for solar array, addresses hold downs, inspects to manufacturers' standards and specs for the electrical permit. Marysville inspectors have dealt with it. Shawn notes it is a very large complicated issue. Dave added it could be affecting four codes, including fire, residential, building and electrical. Shawn noted the electrical code is getting many code proposals to make changes for the next cycle. Dave wants to be sure the other TAGs are informed about the issues. Shawn noted Portland had a fire where the access paths were great, following the Oregon model. Bellevue had a fire where the firefighters were unaware that solar panels were present, thinking it was a skylight. These fires were not caused by the solar arrays. Hank notes houses are built tight for energy efficiency, there are challenging ventilation issues. If available, the proponent will address the proposal in April.

10. Other issues; CO Alarms, new language goes into effect April 1. We are more restrictive than model code in some ways, but less so in others. We need clarification of the language. There was a lot of discussion around 'fuel-burning fireplace' and we included that as a state amendment. We copied section 908.7 from the 2012 IFC, and can remove the amendment once we adopt the code. It is a challenge to go through all the details of the issue; we will want to have TAG members take a look at section 908.7 and whatever we do in IFC, we will need to look at IBC. Dave noted the CO TAG had consensus on most issues. Lee suggested definitions within the Fire Code might be helpful. Jim wants to know what the general sense is on having alarms even when there is no fuel source, e.g., bringing in a source. How we deal with alarms in existing construction. Upon sale of the home it is required. The realtors did not have the rule in place; we added specific language requiring the alarms when a permit is pulled. We need to look at wording changes in 2012 IFC/IRC/IBC. These code amendment only addressed residential because it was based on legislation in reaction to the 2008 power outages and related residential deaths. Certain new IRC language is for monitoring alarms. Lee wanted to know if the TAG might consider moving toward interconnected alarms with battery backup. Tim noted this could be controversial and would need to go to public hearing. There is a question of existing apartments; we have a state amendment that says we install them when they get a permit, but the

- legislation demands compliance by January 1, 2013. We need to do clean-up during this process; we should take a look at NFPA 720 to be clear about those requirements.
- 11. Luminescent markings. 1104.1. This was put forward in 2011 for an emergency rule; now it includes 1104.24. During the testimony there was discussion about the modification in NYC. The rule will be renewed; there was an appeal to the governor's office. The reply was that the Governor does not have authority to overrule the emergency rule adopted. Lee wants to know what the requirements are for an existing building. Since we did not get a proposal to change it, we are comfortable to allow it to remain. There is consensus to continue the emergency rule, carry through the process to public hearing.
- 12. Basement sprinklers. This is addressed in significant changes, and includes some new restrictions. Sprinklers would be required for certain renovations, including something as minor as placement of a bookshelf that could restrict water, where travel distance is greater than 75 feet. This has been submitted multiple times, and was finally allowed at ICC. Lee asked about the old language, which required it sprinklers for specific travel distance, with no restrictions. Spokane has an amendment based on travel distance, Dave will provide wording at the next meeting; Hank has an issue re: the obstruction issue; he believes the IFC language is unenforceable.
- 13. WUI Code. Hank and Dave reviewed it. There are no significant changes to WUI in the 2012 edition. The only changes are minor in nature; they clarify and enhance what it in the current code and the current amendments should be maintained; consensus achieved.
- 14. Significant Changes review. Section 317 regarding roof gardens; the TAG did not identify any problems at this time.
- 15. In some parts of the code there is a distinction between the authority of the Fire Official and the Building Official; the dispute goes to the hierarchy of codes. Lee notes there are inconsistencies between the building and fire codes in terms of which official is named. Hank noted that rarely is there conflict in the field. No action was taken to address the issue.
- 16. Shawn noted that he looked at sections 506.1 and 607.5. Looking at fire service elevator keys; he noted this section should be coordinated with L&I elevator inspectors.

Tim noted there are issues in Chapter 10 that will need to be correlated between the two TAGs, IBC/IFC.

Jim K. asked about language for the chapters they are assigned to review. Should TAG members submit language if it is just a number change. Hank noted he will need some clarification on some of the issues he is reviewing.

Lee asked about chapter 5, which is not adopted by the state; does it include the new sections like traffic calming devices in the non-adoption. The answer is yes, since the entire chapter is not adopted.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m. The next meeting will be April 6 in Spokane.