

Utah Seismic Safety Commission

Meeting
April 4, 2008
Minutes

On April 4, 2008, a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Utah Seismic Safety Commission (USSC) was held in room 130 of the State Capitol Building, Salt Lake City, Utah. Chairman Peter McDonough called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present:

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| -Peter W. McDonough | Chair, American Society of Civil Engineers |
| -Walter Arabasz | University of Utah Seismograph Stations |
| -Rick Allis | Utah Geological Survey |
| -Matt Cassel | American Public Works Association |
| -Evan Curtis | Governor's Office of Budget and Planning |
| -Sheila Curtis | Utah Insurance Department |
| -Roger Evans | Utah League of Cities & Towns |
| -Jeff Gravier | Division of Homeland Security |
| -Michelle Jones | Association of Contingency Planners |
| -Rep. Michael Morley | Utah House of Representatives |
| -Matthias Mueller | Utah Division of Facilities Const. & Management |
| -Jason Richins | Utah Department of Transportation |
| -Barry Smith | Western Mountain Region, American Inst. of Architects |
| -Doug Bausch | Federal Emergency Management Agency (Ex-Officio) |

Members Not Present:

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| -Senator Peter C. Knudson | Utah State Senate |
| -Mark Petersen | U.S. Geological Survey (Ex-Officio) |
| -Jake Watson | Structural Engineers Association of Utah |

USSC Staff Present:

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| -Bob Carey | Mitigation & Natural Hazards Section, DHS |
| -Karen Vetterli | Mitigation & Natural Hazards Section, DHS |
| -Amisha Lester | Mitigation & Natural Hazards Section, DHS |
| -Chris DuRoss | Geologic Hazards Program, Utah Geological Survey |

Guests Present:

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| -Steve Bowman | Geologic Hazards Program, Utah Geological Survey |
| -Gary Christenson | Friend of the Commission |
| -Emily Atkins | Veterans Administration Medical Center |
| -Michelle Jones | Association of Contingency Planners |
| -Jim Higbee | Utah Department of Transportation |
| -Shawn Olsen | State Farm Insurance Company |
| -Larry Reaveley | Earthquake Engineering Research Institute |
| -Jim Stritikus | Veterans Administration Medical Center |
| -Mark Walton | State Farm Insurance Company |
| -Barry Welliver | Structural Engineers Association of Utah |
| -Jane Zhang | Utah Office of Education |
| -Judy Fahys | Salt Lake Tribune |
| -Rep. Larry Wiley | Utah House of Representatives |
| -James Pechmann | U of U Seismograph Stations |
| -Kris Pankow | U of U Seismograph Stations |
| -Kevin Franke | Brigham Young University |
| -Judy Watanabe | Division of Homeland Security |
| -Chris Purcell | State Farm Insurance Company |

➤ **WELCOME/OVERVIEW**

Chair Peter McDonough welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance and asked for introductions.

Bob Carey announced Amisha Lester is moving on to a new position, Karen Vetterli will now be taking over for Amisha. The Commission would like to thank Amisha for her hard work and support.

➤ **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Peter McDonough asked for any corrections and comments to the minutes.

Motion: *Sheila Curtis made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting held on January 11, 2008. Roger Evans seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.*

➤ **PRESENTATION**

Kris Pankow from the University of Utah Seismograph Stations gave a presentation on the Wells, Nevada earthquake of February 21, 2008. Two teams were sent to deploy portable seismographs throughout the Wells area and to support the Nevada Seismological Laboratory. This event was an excellent training event for the Seismograph Stations.

Chris DuRoss from the Utah Geological Survey (UGS) presented and described the work he and his team performed in Wells, Nevada. The UGS sent a reconnaissance team to look for geologic evidence of earthquake activity (e.g, surface faulting, ground cracks, or rock falls). The UGS team did not find any geologic evidence for strong ground shaking, but the poorly located epicenter (which originally plotted in Independence Valley) and frequent snow fall hampered their efforts.

Barry Welliver reported on building damage in Wells, Nevada. The early damage assessment teams used different colored ribbons as part of the damage assessment process. The ribbons were later changed to the standard placarding system. The bulk of the damage to structures was in the historic district of Wells. Unreinforced masonry structures did not perform well in the ground shaking; wood-framed structures performed better. There was considerable chimney damage throughout the town. The Structural Engineerings Association of Utah sent volunteer teams to Wells to assist in the damage assessment.

Bob Carey reported on the Emergency Management activities following the Wells, Nevada earthquake. The Utah Division of Homeland Security activated their Emergency Operations Center to a Level 2 Activation. The Division assisted in getting the teams for the University of Utah Seismograph Stations, Utah Geologic Survey, and an evaluation team from the Division into the disaster area. There was a limited response by the City of Wells to the earthquake as a result of the earthquakes size. The most notable response was to a 500 gallon propane tank leak, a broken water main, and a hazardous material spill in the high school. Red Cross volunteers from Salt Lake City were dispatched to Wells to assist the local chapter at the Disaster Relief Center established at the elementary school.

Representative Morley provided the Commission with the details of House Bill (HB) 177, which addressed geologic hazards areas and zoning. There were several meetings held with the League of Cities and Towns and other concerned parties to come to a consensus on the most significant issues surrounding the bill. For example, the group agreed to encourage municipalities to legislate better zoning in their communities, define hazardous areas on maps and designate an experienced arbitrator to help render judgement instead of going to court to resolve impasses.

Representative Wiley explained the details of the School Seismic Hazard Inventory Bill (HB 162). The intent of the bill was to perform an inventory of school buildings to assist in characterizing possible seismic-hazard issues with existing buildings. The Appropriations Committee moved this bill up on the priority list. The bill had a mitigation plan for a ten year program to distribute \$500,000 through two school districts. Unfortunately the Committee took it off the list and tabled the bill due to the high fiscal note attached. Representative Wiley commented that the longer we wait to fix the problem, the more money it is going to cost.

Representative Wiley also discussed the Joint Resolution Recognizing Unreinforced Masonry Buildings (URMs) (HJR7), which tasked the Commission with conducting an inventory of URMs statewide. After much debate during the legislative session, the resolution was amended to include only public buildings. Walter Arabasz thanked the Legislators for their hard work and support during the legislative session.

The Commission conducted a discussion on how to implement HJR7. By statute, public buildings would include public schools as well as state buildings, local government buildings, colleges, and universities. There is a rating system in place to catalog building types, construction, and occupancy types. The Commission discussed the scope of the project, methodology for inventory collection and what resources are available. The Commission decided that acquiring the numerous inventory lists of public buildings and cataloging each one would be a logical first step. As for state buildings, the Division of Facilities Construction and Management (DFCM) manages property for the state of Utah. DFCM has hired a group of consultants to evaluate all state owned buildings. Each year buildings are selected by critical needs and funding is requested from the Legislature for repairs. This list only includes schools owned by the state.

Motion: *Walter Arabasz made a motion to extend an invitation to the Structural Engineer Association of Utah (SEAU) to be a full partner with the Commission in meeting the requirements of HJR7 to compile an inventory of public unreinforced masonry buildings in Utah. Barry Smith seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.*

➤ **NEWS & UPDATES**

Earthquake Preparedness Week is April 6 thru the 12, 2008. The Commission will submit a proclamation to the Governor's Office in conjunction with Earthquake Preparedness Week.

The WSSPC annual business meeting will be held in the evening of April 22 and its annual awards luncheon will be April 24. Field trips for the conference will be conducted on April 26.

➤ **NEXT MEETING**

DATE: Friday, July 11, 2008
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Auditorium
State Capitol Building
Salt Lake City, Utah

➤ **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 P.M.