

Utah Seismic Safety Commission

Meeting
July 21, 2011
Minutes

On July 21, 2011, a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Utah Seismic Safety Commission (USSC) was held in the Kletting Room of the Senate Building on Capitol Hill in Salt Lake City, Utah. Chair Roger Evans called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Members Present:

-Roger Evans, Chair	Utah League of Cities & Towns
-Pete McDonough	American Society of Civil Engineers
-Greg McCombs	Structural Engineers Association of Utah
-Barry Smith	Western Mountain Region, American Inst. of Architects
-Rick Allis	Utah Geological Survey
-Meldee Love	Utah Insurance Department for Brad Tibbits
-Leon Barrett	American Public Works Association
-Enzo Calfa	Utah Division of Facilities Const. & Management
-Keith Koper	University of Utah Seismograph Stations

Members Not Present:

-Keith Squires	Division of Homeland Security
-Joshua Sletten	Utah Department of Transportation
-Michelle Jones	Association of Contingency Planners
-Evan Curtis	Governor's Office of Budget and Planning
-Senator Peter C. Knudson	Utah State Senate
-Mike Morley	Utah House of Representatives
-Mark Petersen	U.S. Geological Survey (Ex-Officio)
-Doug Bausch	Federal Emergency Management Agency (Ex-Officio)

USSC Staff Present:

-Bob Carey	Utah Division of Emergency Management
-Judy Watanabe	Utah Division of Emergency Management
-Chris DuRoss	Utah Geological Survey
-Steve Bowman	Utah Geological Survey

Guests Present:

-Barry Welliver	Structural Engineers Association of Utah
-Rep. Larry Wiley	Utah House of Representatives
-Glen Palmer	Structural Engineers Association of Utah
-Leslie Randle	Northridge Elementary, Orem
-Casey Coleman	Utah Division of Public Utilities
-Jim Higbee	Utah Department of Transportation
-Robert Pyle	Structural Engineering Consultant

-Scott Holt	State Farm Insurance
-Walter Arabasz	University of Utah Seismograph Stations
-Chris Kimball	Kimball Engineering
-Dimitre Assenov	American Public Works Association
-Tibby Milne	Utah State PTA

➤ **WELCOME/OVERVIEW**

Chair Roger Evans welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance and asked for introductions.

Commissioners reviewed and made corrections to the minutes of the April 28, 2011 meeting.

Motion: *Pete McDonough made a motion to approve the minutes. Motion seconded by Enzo Calfa. Motion was unanimously approved.*

➤ **Elections**

Walter opened the floor for nominations for the office of Chair.

Pete McDonough nominated Roger Evans.

Nomination was seconded by Rick Allis.

Roger Evans being the only nominee, nominations were closed by unanimous consent and Roger will continue for another year as chair for the Commission.

Walter opened the floor for nominations for the office of Vice-Chair. Walter explained that if there are more than two nominees then we will have a ballot vote and only members of the USSC can vote.

Pete McDonough nominated Dr. Rick Allis and Dr. Keith Koper

Nominations were seconded by Evan Curtis.

Dr. Rick Allis and Dr. Keith Koper being the only nominees, nominations were closed by unanimous consent and Rick and Keith will continue for another year as Vice-Chairs for the Commission.

Strategic Objectives of the USSC – A Discussion

This section contained a discussion covering the following agenda items:

- a. Increase earthquake awareness and education
- b. Improve emergency response and recovery
- c. Improve seismic safety of buildings and infrastructure
- d. Improve essential geoscience information
- e. Assess earthquake risk

Roger Evans encouraged guests to be involved in Commission activities. Roger shared personal goals of getting more involved in earthquake issues and how he has tried to get legislators and lobbyists involved in the Commission and earthquake issues. Roger led an open discussion on the Commissions strategic objectives and goals.

Bob Carey discussed about the Commission's willingness to do rapid visual screening (RVS) for school districts and meeting with the Utah Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to help drive the discussion from the ground up.

Barry Welliver added that the Commission needed to continue to drive the issue and that is accomplished with more data. School districts receive RVS reports that they do not completely understand. He suggested that the Commission offer their technical assistance to help the districts with the reports on what they mean and what to do with them. This would help school districts assess their earthquake risk.

Barry spoke to Patty Sutch with the Western States Seismic Policy Council (WSSPC) about their policy on school seismic rehabilitation issues and establishing a clearinghouse for WSSPC members and other interested organizations to contribute information on this issue. He concurred with the idea of going to school districts and helping them with these school building evaluation reports. Barry referred to how the State Building Board evaluate and prioritize state building projects.

Roger has been discussing the school issue with Tibby Milne, the new PTA Safety Officer. He noted that some PTA's were reaching out to information on their school buildings trying to understand their earthquake hazard and risk. The Commission needs a grass roots effort.

Walter Arabasz spoke to looking at the past and present Commissions where the Commission has usually worked through committees. He mentioned the need to review the working groups and committees along with their current projects. Then look at what issues need to be taken on and, if needed, form a new working group. Walter indicated the Commission's need to write a report on these committees, identify where there are gaps and problems and formally address the shortfalls.

Bob said that the Commission needs to advertise that we are looking for school districts who want RVS completed for their school buildings. This should allow the Commission to know who is really interested in evaluating their building stock.

Evan Curtis spoke to the need to educate the decision makers and use the ground swell to illustrate to the legislators the importance of the Commission's work with existing schools buildings.

Pete McDonough asked if the Commission had a commitment from the Structural Engineers Association of Utah (SEAU) to assist with RVS for school districts.

Barry indicated that there is commitment from SEAU to support the work being done by its Existing Building Committee. He said more and more school districts have jumped on the bandwagon after reading the "Utah Students at Risk Document." We need to create an opportunity to educate people and help the decision makers make more informed decisions. Barry reiterated his concern that school districts do not have the expertise to read the results of their engineering studies. When schools contract for a district evaluation there is public outrage for why they are doing this and what is the need. There are motivated school districts who want to do the right thing.

Pete asked if the Commission could capitalize on the school district's lack of expertise on evaluating these studies by offering technical assistance from the Commission.

Walter said that with the 2012 Great Utah ShakeOut (earthquake exercise) make school safety a big message of the ShakeOut. It would raise awareness and create opportunity to discuss school building earthquake risk.

Walter asked what Commission working committees are there to address the 5 strategic objectives. Strategic objectives "a and b" are being covered by Bob Carey and his colleagues. Objective "c" is being handled by the Existing Buildings Committee and objective "d" is part of the four UGS working groups, faults, liquefaction, ground motion, and earthquake probabilities. The UGS working groups are improving essential geoscience information not only for the science community, also for the general public.

Steve Bowman indicated that the working group on earthquake probabilities will need to have their work reviewed nationally; it will not be ready in time for the ShakeOut.

Chris DuRoss explained that the report for the recently formed Working Group on Utah Earthquake Probabilities would include earthquake probabilities for the Wasatch Front region, including the Wasatch fault. The probability of earthquakes on the different segments of the Wasatch fault would be the most useful from this report added Walter.

Roger asked who the Commission could provide this information to have to create the most impact to influence policy and direction. He indicated a need for a location (website) to access this information.

Rick Allis pointed out that the information provided needs to be really basic and that there need a mechanism that sends reminders that new information is posted there.

Walter stated that a working group was needed to culminate the efforts that Roger has been making with the PTA to have a defined outcome and tie it to the ShakeOut. The other is earthquake awareness and education with the ShakeOut. With the ShakeOut, formally engage the Seismograph Stations and UGS to gather information from the website. He said to look for the opportunities to engage key groups to get them involved.

Walter said the Commission needs to creatively discuss how ShakeOut can create opportunities to discuss on school building safety as California has done. The group discussed which districts would be possible candidates to get them involved.

Barry indicated that the Commission could help all districts. Charter schools are in some of the oldest buildings that were on school districts' surplus list and potentially have the highest risk.

Roger suggested creating a "Top 10" list of questions that one should ask their school board on school building earthquake safety.

Enzo Calfa indicated that once these school building issues have been identified, what can the Commission do with that information? Any action that requires funding, the

legislature will kill. This is the current legislative mentality and the reality of the economy unless the general public is willing to pay more in taxes.

Barry said the Commission’s message should be to get something started that does not require funding. We can still solve some issues. He said that identifying those schools most at risk and raising awareness that something has to be done should help start a movement to rehabilitate problem school buildings.

Tibby Milne, PTA Safety Office, joined the meeting and was briefed on the ongoing discussion of strategic objectives of the Commission.

➤ **The Great Utah ShakeOut**

Bob Carey played the “Preparedness Now” video. This video will be made available to the public in September for “National Preparedness Month”.

Leon Barrett mentioned that he would be encouraging the Utah members of the American Public Works Association to exercise their plans and he know of several members that would be participating in the exercise’

Bob mentioned a tabletop exercise being conducted in October for the drinking water and waste water districts along the Wasatch Front to prepare them for the upcoming ShakeOut exercise.

Walter suggested that the Commission should use Lee Seigel to help promote the ShakeOut.

Bob said that he was working the DEM’s PIO and FEMA on creating an opportunity for schools to participate in creating a preparedness video. He indicated that showing the Nevada video as a guide might encourage students to create their own video for the ShakeOut.

Walter suggested reward or prize for the best 30 second You Tube clip.

➤ **UGS Earthquake Clearinghouse**

Chris spoke about the UGS Clearinghouse website. He said the website is a virtual place to gather information, organize field teams and disseminate information to policy makers, emergency responders, emergency managers and the general public. He indicated that the website was currently in development with the goal of having it functional by the ShakeOut. Chris indicated that funding from the Commission had been approved to update the website. He said that the website would have active maps and GIS data and would encourage non-technical observations. He indicated that UGS would be generating reports summarizing important information.

Chris said the UGS would be archiving events so one can access all information on that particular event at a later date. A “Contribute tab” will allow one to put in technical observations from field (field reports, photos, and videos) and non-technical observations

from the general public. Press releases and links are included. The website will also have a member login with a profile. California has a similar website more in a blog format.

Walter suggested that a specific invitation be sent to the general public to submit photos to the website.

➤ **SEAU Existing Buildings and USSC URM Ad-Hoc Committee**

Barry spoke to the Committee's continuing efforts in updating the URM homeowners guide to make it more user friendly and have add it to the Commission and SEAU websites. He said that the Committee had been working with local building departments, roofers, and general contractors with the goal of developing better public relations and educating them on the parapet ordinance.

Barry also indicated that the Committee is still concerned with the schools that have not had a RVS performed. The Committee is considering offering the ROVER tool to school districts to create a RVS for their school building. Additionally, if schools do not have the funding to do their own RVS, the Committee would offer volunteer assistance to school to conduct a RVS study. The Committee recommends that the Commission support another RVS bill for 2012 Legislature to keep the issue on the legislative agenda. Representative Wiley has been sponsoring the bills, but the Commission may want to look at other cosponsors from the other political party. Barry indicated that it would be good to have buy-in from the State by establishing state school building committee?

Enzo suggested that school districts ask for the ROVER tool and ask for the Legislature for funding to do the RVS and determine their risk.

Barry indicated the ROVER tool is very accessible and could reside on their computer and they could inventory their structures. There is interest in the school district level to do these assessments. Barry recommended that the Committee evaluate the different approaches that the districts have employed in creating their inventories.

Enzo added the need for school district involvement or the bills will not go anywhere.

Barry said the need for RVS is not just schools issue, but is a state issue for all their buildings.

➤ **Statewide Amendment to the International Building Code**

Roger indicated that Chris Kimball could not be at the meeting. He said that Chris and the Existing Buildings Committee would be sending out a parapet brochure to all roofers and contractors. The parapet ordinance is on the books and there is a need to let people know of the issues and dangers of parapets in an earthquake.

➤ **News Items**

Barry spoke to the creation of an Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) chapter in Utah. The goal is to have a stand-alone chapter that brings together a larger

earthquake group. The chapter will work at the committee level to identify issues for our state. One issue is figuring out what our roles will be.

Walter spoke of the great value of a diverse membership of earthquake professionals that this chapter will have. People involved in earthquake advocacy could contribute and coordinate information. Traditionally, EERI chapter draw from universities, private practice, structural engineers, and government to bring together interested individual who would not normally be involved. Walter indicated there was some interest in starting a student chapter at the University of Utah. Northern California has a very active chapter of EERI and has great resources on how they have done.

Barry talked about FEMA “Mitigation for Hospitals” course to be held at the Intermountain Medical Center. The course is for technical and non-technical participates. The course will look at what hospitals can do to mitigate non-structural damage due to earthquakes. Reaveley Engineers will be there to discuss hospital design.

Roger spoke about the joint meeting with the Nevada Earthquake Safety Council. He indicated that he was firming up the topics of the meeting. The main focus will be on URM’s. He is hoping there will be a joint resolution between the groups. The meeting is in Las Vegas on November 9. Commission has a budget to allow for travel.

Roger indicated that Commission need to have legislative support at the Commission meetings on a regular basis.

Roger continued the discussion on the strategic objectives of the Commission.

Enzo indicated there needs to be more involvement with structural engineers in new building construction. He has enforcement over state buildings. There needs to be a push to have more coordination with structural engineers and new buildings using the new adopted code as a backup to that coordination.

Barry agreed and said there is some coordination with structural engineers. The hospital mitigation class is a start and other presentations to DFCM.

Roger asked the Commission to give him their top10 ideas on what they would like to see what happen with the Commission.

The group discussed the past use of standing committees and their focus. The discussion included looking infrastructure and its vulnerabilities in particular water systems. The group also discussed the need for an annual report.

➤ **NEXT MEETING**

Date: Wednesday, November 9, 2011
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Clark County Building Department, Las Vegas, NV

➤ **ADJOURNMENT**