

CRCOG Ad Hoc Committee on Concrete Foundations Issues

Minutes

October 5, 2:00 PM
211 Murphy Road, Hartford, CT

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

Name	Organization / Town
Steve Werbner	Town Manager, Tolland
Jeff Currey	State Rep.
John Elsesser	Town Manager, Coventry
John Filchak	NECCOG
Christina Mailhos	1 st Selectwoman, Willington
Tony Frassinelli	1 st Selectman, Stafford
Scott Shanley	Town Manager, Manchester
Pauline Yoder	CRCOG
Richard Kehoe	Senator Blumenthal's Office
Tim Ackert	State Rep.
Tom Delnicki	State Rep
Joyce Stille	Town Administrator, Bolton
Tony Guglielmo	State Senator
Peter Kochenburger	Council Member, Mansfield
David Eaton	1 st Selectman, Union
Chris Davis	State Rep.
John Rinaldi	Assessor, Manchester
Lyle Wray	CRCOG
Mary Lavallee	Assessor, Columbia
Kevin Alvarez	Congressman Courtney's Office
Alex Saylor	House Republican Office
Sheila Cyr	Tolland
Brenda Draghi	Ellington

Chair, Steve Werbner, called the meeting to order at 2:06 PM.

1. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Stille made a motion to adopt the minutes. Mr. Elsesser seconded; all voted in favor.

2. Legislative Update (if applicable)

Dr. Wray and Mr. Filchak as well as other reported on a presentation that was given by the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the pyrrhotite issue. Some highlights of the presentation included the need for more research regarding the curve of the impact verses the level of pyrrhotite. The presentation also discussed that the chemical composition in Canada and Europe were different from what has been found in Connecticut.

Issues discussed included quarry quality control and potential development of cheaper test for pyrrhotite other than petrographic analysis. There was no discussion regarding remediation.

Mr. Filchak and Dr. Wray and legislators who attended the meeting felt it was very positive to see representatives from the federal level actually see the damage and the issues. Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were represented at the meeting.

Mr. Kehoe and Mr. Alvarez discussed some options that were available at the federal level and the various aspects the federal delegation was working on in order to provide help for the situation.

Mr. Shanley stated that it's important for the Ad-Hoc Committee to continue on a bifurcated focus both on testing as well as on remediation and assistance to homeowners.

Mr. Elsesser suggested further insight would be helpful regarding water and if there's a way to slow down the process by keeping water away. For this more information is needed. Visual inspection against deterioration might be a way. Perhaps a checklist for visual inspections and whether the home had certain things such as curtain drains, water proofing, etc.

Mr. Kehoe mentioned that the senator is working with NIST (National Institute of Science and Technology) for a pathway for both agencies NIST and Army Corps to work together for testing protocols and standards. No one has the answers yet, but there are several bills in Congress for NIST and Army Corps to work and use together. Once federal budget has passed hoping can task something in the budget and they are not giving up home for funding for actual repairs.

Mr. Guglielmo stated that the legislators on both sides of the aisle met to revise the portion of the two bills to work for a solution to combine the two bills (regarding remediation)

Mr. Alvarez stated that on the federal side there is a bill regarding IRS revenue procedures, NIST and HUD for remediation funds and the House is willing to move on some other items as well.

Mr. Shanley noted that Hurricane Sandy relief included non-hurricane emergencies and wondered if it would be possible with the relief bills that will be coming up.

Mr. Kehoe stated that the non-hurricane relief was one of the criticisms of the Sandy bill but there are provisions that would dove tail and all would depend on what is moving in Congress. Current bills are re-filling FEMA disaster funds not a free standing bill so it is more difficult.

There was a discussion regarding FEMA disaster declaration and there has been no formal declaration of disaster primarily because FEMA has to do an assessment first then a declaration can be made.

There was also a discussion that it would be helpful to have a similar event that included policy people or those from FEMA who can influence policy. FEMA regional person was part of the team that did look at the homes.

Mr. Kehoe stated that discussions are ongoing with FEMA to emphasize the differences with this verses drywall or other defective product.

Mr. Davis mentioned that the legislator is working towards the same goal for homeowners to have help as quickly as possible.

Mr. Frasinelli asked about the level of intensity outside the 37 towns.

Mr. Davis said that the spotlight has been on the issue and awareness of it in other parts of the state.

Mr. Currey stated that the aid is now tied to the overall budget and consequently helps with getting people on board.

Mr. Guglielmo stated that this is an issue that leadership considers that can be resolved.

Mr. Werbner passed on a suggestion from a state resident that CT sales tax be waived on materials and services for foundation repair.

3. Discussion Regarding Potential Sub-Committee to Review Alternative Practices

Ms. Yoder stated that there have been many companies coming forward regarding alternative remediation and wanted to propose the subcommittee formed to review qualified vendors open up to also reviewing potential alternatives.

The committee would like the involvement of the State Building Official in the process. The suggestion was also made that the state building official should consider a class on building inspections and what should contractors should be doing.

Mr. Ackert requested to be in on the meeting.

One committee member stated that there are smaller contractors that have the homes done for a lot less than the published amounts. Concern was voiced from Mr. Heim regarding if they had done it before and if the work truly covers everything. What additional work is being left out? Will the house be standing 10-15 years from now or is there another way of showing that it works?

4. Testing Program Update

Ms. Yoder stated that the Department of Housing had given CRCOG a contract on September 26th and CRCOG executed the contract on the 27th. CRCOG is currently working to set-up the testing program and making the process electronic and as easy for homeowners as possible.

There was a discussion regarding FAQ's as well as that there are a number of towns that will be doing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) testing program and the differences between the two programs (income restricted / not restricted, reimbursement / contractor pay, etc.) and the need to be clear for the homeowners.

A concern was raised regarding the chain of custody of the cores.

5. Other Business

Mr. Heim mentioned that CCACB was working on a public meeting, tentatively scheduled for 11/4.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Elsesser motioned and Ms. Stille seconded for adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 3:16 PM.

