

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY  
NEW JERSEY FIRE SAFETY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Meeting of May 19, 2011**

The NJ Fire Safety Commission meeting was held on Thursday, May 19, 2011, at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (Room 129) in Trenton, NJ.

**Commission Members Present:** Assemblyman John Wisniewski, Chairman  
Senator Donald Norcross  
Mr. Pasquale Intindola, Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Charles W. Schilling  
Ms. Kathleen O’Leary  
Mr. Armando Roman  
Mr. Roger Potts  
Mr. Ronald Phillips  
Mr. Lewis Candura  
Mr. Arthur Londensky  
Mr. John Lightbody  
Mr. Paul Hartstein  
Mr. Arthur Mercurio

**Commission Members Excused:** Senator Anthony Bucco  
Mr. C. Kenneth Anderson  
Mr. Lawrence D. Wood  
Mr. Steve O’Gorman  
Mr. Daniel DeTrollo

**DCA Staff Members Present:** William Kramer, Acting Director  
Paul Allen, NJDFS  
Chris Eckert, NJDFS  
Jim McFadden, NJDFS  
Mike Gallagher, NJDFS  
Charles Luxton, NJDFS  
Lou Kilmer, NJDFS  
Charles Lavin, NJDFS  
Heather Allen, NJDFS  
Jerry Clark, NJDFS  
Rick Farletta, NJDFS  
Andrew Kondor, NJDFS  
Kent Neiswender, NJDFS  
John Honer, NJDFS  
Michael Whalen, Codes and Standards

**Guests:** Stephen Jones, ICC/BOANJ Daniel Mulligan, Ocean Co. FM  
Kevin Bellew, LV 696 Chuck Aughenbaugh, NJDFCA  
Richard Silvia, SR Fire/EMS Rich Heimbach, Master Planning A.C.  
David Matos Jr, NJ Fire/EMS Instit. John Carlin, PSE&G Nuclear  
James Yates, WWFES Kevin Monaco, Leading Edge Govt. Relations  
Michael Maitland, Sen. Norcross Office David Kurasz, NJFSAB  
Stanley J. Sickels, NJFPPA Sara Yenkes, ICC  
Ray Lonabaugh, NFSA Gary Lewis, City of Summit

**Guests (cont.):**

Ed Cardinal, NJ Assembly  
Angela Lange, NJFSAB

Chris Dayton, NJ Assembly  
Kathy Conlan, Saint Barnabas Burn Center

**A. Call to Order**

Chairman John Wisniewski called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and began the meeting with the “Pledge of Allegiance” and pointed out the fire exits.

**B. Approval of Minutes**

With no discussion requested or necessary corrections, the minutes of the regular meeting of March 17, 2011 were approved.

**C. Correspondence**

Chairman Wisniewski noted that all correspondence for today’s meeting is contained in the Fire Safety Commission packets. With no discussion requested on any of the correspondence at this time, the meeting was moved to Public Comment I.

**D. Public Comment I**

Chairman Wisniewski opened the floor to any member of the public wishing to speak.

David Matos from the New Jersey Fire & EMS Institute distributed an invitation to all Commission members to their Fourth Annual Dinner and Meeting. It will be taking place on June 13<sup>th</sup> at the Trenton Marriot and all Commissioners are welcome and encouraged to attend. Also enclosed with the invitation is an application to advertise in the dinner programs if anyone is interested. Mr. Matos also gave a report on the work the NJFEMSI is doing in the area of recruitment and retention stemming from recent seminars that were held on volunteerism. The NJEMSI has also been instrumental in getting the local Port Authorities to post electronic messages promoting the Move Over Law.

Chuck Aughenbaugh from the New Jersey Deputy Fire Chiefs Association raised a couple concerns about new Training and Education requirements. One is the requirement that members of a Rapid Intervention Team have three years of service. His members seem to feel that this is unworkable. There were also concerns about the amount of training hours for a RIT team. Mr. Aughenbaugh urged the Fire Safety Commission that, if these recommendations are adopted, there be an addendum added that provides for dual-credit when the training is received.

New Jersey Fire Prevention and Protection Association President Stanley Sickels raised the issue of Senate Bill S-7295. This purpose of the bill is to eliminate duplicate housing registrations and unreasonable housing registration fees. Some of the language in the bill says that it will eliminate any registration fees charged by local municipalities and could prohibit towns from doing inspections or imposing fees (except for during a change in

occupancy. Mr. Sickels has been told that this will not have any affect on fire safety registrations or inspections, but the bill doesn't explicitly say that. His concern is that this language needs to be in there to be clearer on this. Senator Donald Norcross said that he's gotten a lot of phone call on this same issue and will look into the Bill himself.

**\*\*\*\*SPECIAL PRESENTATION\*\*\*\***

The regular business of the New Jersey Fire Safety Commission was paused for a special awards presentation. The Commission's Chairman, Assemblyman John Wisniewski, was given the "Elected Official of the Year" award from the International Codes Council. The award was presented by Steven Jones and Sara C. Yerkes, Senior Vice President of Government Relations at the International Codes Council. Assemblyman Wisniewski received this award because of his staunch support of the fire service and the sponsoring of many pieces of pro-fire safety legislations. Assemblyman Wisniewski thanked the International Codes Council for this great honor. He also thanked the Fire Safety Commission for educating him on the important issues of fire safety and guiding him towards the pieces of legislation that have saved lives and property throughout the State of New Jersey.

**E. Division of Fire Safety Activities**

Acting Director William Kramer reported on the issue of the SCBA bottles that have been purchased by several fire departments and not permitted to be used. The Division of Fire Safety has been in contact with the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Health, and the Department of Labor. While there is no substantial progress to report on this issue at this time, a meeting with all of these departments is scheduled for May 26<sup>th</sup>. Chief Kramer will be reporting on the outcome of this meeting at the next Fire Safety Commission meeting.

Chief Kramer gave an update on the issue of the Large-Diameter Hose Manifold failure that resulted in an injury in Sussex County last year. The device is still undergoing testing in Delaware, but some very preliminary results have been reported. Major Chris Eckert has been in contact with the metallurgist on this issue and they have reported back that the device is being cross-sectioned and analyze to decide whether it is faulty or fragile. Hopefully more conclusive and specific results will be available soon.

A discussion was held on the requirements of a fire department to report to the Division of Fire Safety when a piece of equipment malfunctions or is insufficiently effective. Chief Kramer said that when it results in firefighter injury, it is always reported to the Division of Fire Safety. Assemblyman Wisniewski asked how we might get this information before an injury occurs. He stated that he will begin looking into legislation on requiring a fire department to report such malfunctions on equipment to the State and have the equipment turned in for inspection, even when an injury has not yet occurred. Chief Kramer said the Division of Fire Safety has been in contact with several organizations, but there is no Federal agency or Federal oversight on an issue like this. What makes it even more difficult is that the manufacturer is out of state and the Division

has had a hard time getting them to cooperate. In the meantime, the Division of Fire Safety has put out two safety alerts to all fire departments in the State. This alert calls their attention to the possibility of the device malfunctioning.

Chief Kramer spoke about the Rehabilitation Guidelines that were submitted to the NJDFS via the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council. The document has been molded into a guideline for posting on the Division website by Major Chris Eckert and Captain James McFadden. The plan is to distribute the guideline to all fire departments electronically once it's completely done and ready to go. Chief Kramer also spoke about the proposal in the March 21<sup>st</sup> New Jersey Register that amends the Contractor Certifications to comply with NICET. The comment period ends tomorrow and only one comment has been received thus far, so it seems as though the amendments will be adopted without any issues.

Chief Kramer reported on some data that was requested by Assemblyman Rible at the prior meeting. There is a report in the Commission meeting packet that includes data on civilian fire fatalities from 2001-2009. Also included is data on what started those fatal fires and firefighter deaths. Chief Kramer added that the Commission packet also include information on the Contractor Certifications Unit as requested by Commissioner Candura. Commissioner Candura added that he would also like to see data relative to violations of contractors. Chief Kramer answered that the data on violations has been submitted once before, but the Division can certainly update that report.

Chief Kramer spoke about the issue of VFIS potentially charging higher insurance premiums to fire departments where a Juvenile Firesetter program was present. This issue had been raised by Commissioner Hartstein at a prior meeting. Chief Kramer spoke to the national office of VFIS and they guaranteed him that this is absolutely not the case. Commissioner Hartstein added that it was found to not be the case and VFIS's local personnel was extremely helpful in getting the data.

Chief Kramer reported the updated numbers in regards to collections of outstanding Life Hazard Use fees. From December 2009 through May 16, 2011, roughly \$3.1 million has been collected by the Division of Fire Safety as they work with the Division of Revenue. \$2.2 million of that has been during this fiscal year. Also, in the June 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the New Jersey Register, the Division of Fire Safety will be able to propose implementing the federal mattress flammability standards by reference. This will allow the NJDFS to enforce the federal standards under our fire code.

In the absence of Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo, Chief Kramer reported on the 2011 New Jersey FIRE Bowl. The Championship program was held on May 18<sup>th</sup> and featured Primary Prep of Jersey City against Carteret Middle School. The competition was won by Primary Prep in front of a packed auditorium. Chief Kramer said it was a great day, full of information, and all the students competing were very impressive. The program was hosted by Tony Caputo of News 12 New Jersey. Also, the winners of the NJ Fire Safety Poster Contest were selected on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Their names and schools are listed in the Commission packets. A luncheon will be held in their honor on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Chief Kramer reported that the Division of Fire Safety has lost a staff member who had been assigned to the State Exercise Support Team – whose job it is to test the emergency services and the state’s ability to respond to them. The team has been reorganized and moved to Homeland Security, so that employee – Peter Hodge – has been moved out of the Department of Community Affairs.

*[Chairman Wisniewski requested that the Division of Fire Safety report be briefly interrupted to conduct a discussion on Residential Sprinklers. See below under “Residential Sprinkler Committee Report”]*

Chief Kramer resumed his report by asking Charlie Luxton to give an update on the “Fire Is” program. Mr. Luxton spoke about the fire safety video “Fire Is” by Dr. Frank Field as being the basis of a state-wide education program. This is being done through a grant obtained by the NJ State FMBA, and it makes it easier to educate both adults and children by spread the video by way of the schools. Seminars are scheduled on how to implement the program, one of which was held yesterday at Middlesex County Fire Academy. Chief Kramer added that anyone (located in the City of Trenton and north) who needs smoke detectors can contact Charlie Luxton about when they will be available. The detectors have been received and a press release will be coming out on that.

Chief Kramer reported that NJDFS staff Michael Gallagher and Tim Weiss have been around the state conducting training on the new Highway Traffic Safety Guidelines. A bunch of these training sessions have been scheduled through Kean University as these guidelines continue to be implemented. Over a thousand first-responders have been trained on this thus far. Also, Chief Kramer reported that the Division lost Tina McQueen who was the regulatory officer. She has been replaced by Andrew Kondor who came on last month.

Bureau Chief Lou Kilmer reported on the ongoing progress of the Division of Fire Safety’s new computer system. A lot of staff time has been dedicated to this and the developmental sessions with the contractor have finally wrapped up. In all likelihood there will be some kind of system to begin testing in 2012 with possible implementation late in the year.

Chief Kilmer reported that the Pee Review Committee is in the process of getting back up and running, as there are a few issues that need to come before this Board. This should be taking place within the next few weeks. Chief Kilmer also said staff is spending a lot of time working with local and county government on shared services. This is a sign of the times.

Commissioner Pat Intindola inquired about the status of the Commission report for DCA Commissioner Lori Grifa. Chief Kramer said it has been completed, but not sent to the Commissioner. Chief Kramer and Assemblyman Wisniewski agreed to speak about this following the meeting.

Commissioner Richard Blohm asked about the manufacturer of the non-compliant SCBA bottles that have been purchased by local fire departments. Commissioner Blohm wanted to know if there would be a waiver issued to allow their use. Chief Kramer said the manufacturer of the bottles used to supply bottles to one SCBA manufacturer, but no longer does. Also, the bottle manufacturer has sent out a notice to emergency services trying to petition the federal government to allow their use. Chief Kramer is hoping to get some guidance on this issue at the upcoming meeting with the Attorney General's Office.

Commissioner Ronald Phillips followed up on the issue of water supply notifications to fire departments in regards to the Board of Public Utilities. It is his understanding that water companies that fall under the jurisdiction of BPU have to follow an 11-point notification that spans from the State to the BPU themselves. BPU representatives are currently looking into making this law. Chief Kramer and Chief Rick Farletta will be following up with the Board of Public Utilities on this issue. Commissioner Phillips also talked about a recent incident on State land in Kearny. There was a large pile of debris on the property that the State did not make the fire officials aware of. Chief Kramer said the Division of Fire Safety only recently became aware that this was State property and will be looking into the issue further.

Commissioner Arthur Londensky reported on the PARADE Conference from the National Fire Academy. One particular story from the conference Commissioner Londensky raised was an incident in Atlanta where several thousand counterfeit smoke detectors were distributed to citizen of the city. He asked that the Commission and Division of Fire Safety be vigilant while distributing these types of devices.

**\*\*\*\*SPECIAL PRESENTATION\*\*\*\***

In response to an inquiry by Commissioner Arthur Mercurio, the Division of Fire Safety reached out to the Salem Hope Creek nuclear facility to ask about their level of preparedness should something happen like the recent incident in Japan.

Chief John B. Carlin from Salem Hope Creek attended the meeting and gave a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on the emergency response capabilities of the plant. They are extremely involved with local fire departments and law enforcement, and they have state-of-the-art equipment and training to respond to several types of incidents – both natural and man-made disasters. Chief Carlin showed many pictures and examples during his presentation to give an inside look at security measures and emergency response capabilities at Salem Hope Creek.

Commissioner Arthur Mercurio asked if they had their own Neptune System. Chief Carlin answered that they have their own smaller version of that system, but they also have access to the southern region's larger Neptune System if they have the need for it. If Salem Hope Creek were to borrow the Southern Region's state system they would be financially responsible for it.

Mr. Ray Lonabaugh asked about the emergency response is handled when local fire department personnel are brought in for mutual aid. Chief Carlin answered that the on-site staff (usually six firefighters) brief the local personnel coming on to the site and guided before they are put into any kind of hazardous area.

## **F. Advisory Council Reports:**

### **1. Codes Advisory Council**

Commissioner Charles Schilling reported that the Codes Advisory Council met on April 20<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy. Commissioner Schilling prefaced his report by expressing the frustration of the Codes Council on several items that have been unanimously approved by the Fire Safety Commission, yet they are not acted upon by the Department of Community Affairs. Commissioner Schilling said a lot of work goes into these recommendations and hopes that they will be acknowledged and approved in the future.

Commissioner Schilling distributed a memo outlining eight Proposed Amendments to the Uniform Fire Code. The proposed amendments are as follows:

1. Bed and Breakfast Inns (N.J.A.C. 5:70-1.5, 3.2, 4.11 and 4.13) – The Department provided a consultant's report prepared in response to concerns raised with the enforcement of Subchapter 4 of the Uniform Fire Code at historic bed and breakfast inns in Cape May. The Fire Codes Advisory Council, through its Subchapter 4 Committee, has reviewed the recommendations contained in the consultant's report and discussed these proposals with representatives of the bed and breakfast owners. These draft rule amendments reflect the consensus reached through these discussions of the consultant's recommendations.
2. Mobile Enclosed Arcades (N.J.A.C. 5:70-1.5, 2.7 and 2.21) – These proposed amendments define and establish requirements applicable to mobile enclosed arcades. These are recreational vehicles or box trailers that have been customized as mobile entertainment units with screens and fixed seats that are used for children's parties and other events. Because these units are used primarily on weekends and travel from place to place, the draft calls for the Division to issue the permits and gives local enforcing agencies the ability to cite unsafe conditions.
3. Portable Unvented Heaters (N.J.A.C. 5:70-3) – This proposed amendment restores a signage requirement for the sale of portable, unvented heaters that was in the previous edition of the State Fire Prevention Code (Section 308.5.2(1)) but was inadvertently omitted from the current edition.
4. Compressed Gas Cylinder Exchange (N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.7 and N.J.A.C. 5:70-3) – These proposed amendments would establish requirements in the State Fire Prevention Code for compressed gas cylinder exchange similar to those already in place for liquefied petroleum (LP) gas cylinder exchange.

5. Vacant Buildings (N.J.A.C. 5:70-1.5 and N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.7) – These proposed amendments define unoccupied and vacant buildings and create permit requirements to enable local enforcing agencies to monitor fire safety in these buildings.
6. Ambulatory Health Care Facilities (N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.4B) – These proposed amendments update the terminology and descriptions used in the life hazard use categories for outpatient surgery centers.
7. Self-Service Storage Facilities (N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.4B) – The proposed amendments add self-storage units with interior access as a life hazard use required to be registered.
8. Handling of Fireworks (N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.7) – The proposed amendment adds the word "handling" to address situations where fireworks are being handled or set up for discharge, to enable the local enforcing agency to ensure that necessary safety precautions are in place.

The Fire Safety Commission voted to unanimously approve all of these amendments to the Uniform Fire Code – with the exception of #2 concerning Mobile Enclosed Arcades. Vice-Chairman Intindola felt it was necessary to look into these structures further, as they are currently not equipped to be handicap-accessible. It was his contention that these structures should be available to everybody.

## **2. Training and Education Advisory Council**

With Commissioners C. Kenneth Anderson and Lawrence Wood unable to attend the meeting, no formal report was given. Kent Neiswender of the NJDFS Training and Certification Unit gave a brief report in their absence:

The Division of Fire Safety is working with the Training and Education Advisory Council and moving forward with IFSAC and ProBoard accreditations. This is through many of the Division's certifications and we will be working on this aggressively in the near future.

The Division of Fire Safety is also reviewing the officer credentialing instructional program. They need to move to a new curriculum and the regulations need to be changed to comply with the correct program (Delmar's 3<sup>rd</sup> edition). The Training and Education Unit is also taking 201 students down to New Jersey Weekend at the National Fire Academy. This weekend is scheduled for June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

The next meeting of the Training and Education Advisory Council is scheduled for June 21, 2011 at 10 am at the Dempster Training Center in Lawrenceville.

## **3. Statistics and Information Advisory Council**

In the absence of Commissioner Gerard Naylis, no report was given.

#### **4. Master Planning and Research Advisory Council**

Commissioner John Lightbody reported the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council met on May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Toms River Fire Academy. At that meeting, Commissioner Lightbody and the Council reviewed their Annual Report for 2009-2010. The report has been distributed for the review of the Fire Safety Commission at today's meeting. Commissioner Lightbody said this full, comprehensive report is chock-full of pertinent data and covers two full years of activity by the Council.

Commissioner Lightbody reported that Dan Mulligan has been in touch with NJDFS Acting Director Bill Kramer about getting contact information for all New Jersey fire departments. This contact info could be of great use for collecting data from around the State. The Council is looking into a possible survey to examine areas where shared services could be advantageous to local fire departments from both a firefighting and economic standpoint.

Commissioner Lightbody reported that shared resources is also becoming a large issue at the municipal and county levels as the government looks to save money in any way possible. This is being done by consolidating in areas such as Construction Departments, Police Departments, Fire Departments, etc., etc. Commissioner Lightbody said that the fire service was subject to this as much as any area. He feels it is important to collect the data and dictate the process. It would be better to have the fire service work towards sharing resources themselves than to have it come down from the administration in a way that may not necessarily work well for the fire service.

On the topic of Recruitment and Retention, Commissioner Lightbody pointed to a lot of good information in the Annual Report. He has also been working with Public Education Chairman Daniel DeTrollo on this and feels there should be a State committee to examine and help keeping the volunteer fire service staffed properly. Strategies like Junior Firefighters, recruiting locally in schools, and benefit incentives are being looked at in-depth.

Commissioner Lightbody also spoke about the one inspection computer program that has been put together for Ocean County. About half of the County is on it now. This "Hub" system is also being developed on the State level, which would be ideal because you would have the entire State sharing information. Chief Lightbody feels it is important for the fire service to be interconnected, sharing ideas, information, and statistical data.

The next meeting of the Master Planning and Research Advisory Council is scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup> at the Toms River Fire Academy at 10 am.

#### **5. Public Education Advisory Council**

In the absence of Commissioner Daniel DeTrollo, no formal report was given. However, Chief Kramer felt it was important to give a special thank you to the sponsors of both the

New Jersey FIRE Bowl and New Jersey Fire Safety Poster Contest. Charles Lavin reported that the sponsors for each even are:

NJ FIRE Bowl:

- IMTT-Bayonne
- Joshua Marcus Group
- New Jersey State FMBA
- Hartz Mountain Industries
- Kean University

NJ Fire Safety Poster Contest:

- New Jersey Fire Prevention and Protection Association
- New Jersey Association of Fire Equipment Distributors
- American Fire Sprinkler Association, New Jersey Chapter
- Atlantic City Electric
- Joshua Marcus Group

The next meeting of the Public Education Advisory Council is scheduled for July 14<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy at 10 am.

## **6. Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council**

Commissioner Richard Blohm reported the last meeting of the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council was on March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy.

The Department of Health has started looking into some fire departments that have oxygen filling stations and how they operate. The Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council is also looking into the SCBA bottle issue that Chief Kramer touched on earlier, and they will be awaiting the outcome of the Division's meeting with the Attorney General's Office on this matter.

The New Jersey Forest Fire Service will soon have drop aircrafts, as well as 14 new hires that have been long-awaited. Commissioner Blohm also took a minute to thank his Advisory Council members on all their work that was put into the Rehabilitation Guidelines – Chief Yates, Kathy Conlan, Richie Silvia, and Jim McFadden of the Division of Fire Safety.

The next meeting of the Firefighter Safety and Health Advisory Council will be today, May 19<sup>th</sup> at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in Trenton at 1:30 pm.

## **7. Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Council**

Commissioner Paul Hartstein reported the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Council met on May 11<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy. A big topic at the meeting was VFIS and the idea that they may be raising their premiums in areas where a juvenile firesetting prevention program is present. After looking into this, Commissioner Hartstein

determined that the charge was a rider on the policy for molestation protection. It appears that there will not be a way to avoid these charges. Also, the “Fire Is” education program was discussed at length at this meeting.

Commissioner Hartstein reported that the details for the “Clinical Treatment Strategies and Solutions for Children Who Set and Misuse Fire” have been finalized. The program will take place on Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at the Middlesex County Fire Academy. This program actually does not target the fire service community, but mental health professionals. There is a flyer included in all Commission packets about this event.

Commissioner Hartstein announced that the Division will be partnering with North Hudson Regional Fire & Rescue and the Hudson County FPPA to present a JFIS 1 program in Hudson County. It will be held at the Hudson County Vo-Tech High School on May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. See Charlie Luxton if interested in participating.

The Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Council is tentatively shooting for December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Juvenile Firesetter Conference. The plan is to partner up with Kean University on this Conference and hold it at Middlesex County Fire Academy.

The next meeting of the Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Council is scheduled for July 13<sup>th</sup> at the Burlington County Fire Academy at 10 am.

## **G. Committee Reports**

### **1. Residential Sprinkler Committee**

In the absence of Commissioner Gerard Naylis, no official report was given. However, the following discuss on Residential Sprinklers took place earlier in the meeting:

Senator Norcross spoke about the repealing of the law in Pennsylvania that would have required fire sprinklers in new construction. The reasons being given for not adopting this law – in Pennsylvania and New Jersey alike – are purely economical. The housing industry is being crushed by the current state of the economy and so they are using that fact to lobby against the fire sprinkler requirements. The administration does not want to put any more requirements on them at this time. Assemblyman Wisniewski said that these fire sprinkler systems are a miniscule fraction (around 1%) of the cost of building a new home, so he feels the logic of the housing industry does not hold up. Assemblyman Wisniewski also pointed out that thousands sprinkler-fitters are not being put to work, and that would actually help the economy.

Commissioner Richard Blohm referenced the hearings that took place in the wake of the dormitory fires at Seton Hall University. He was there to testify on the need for fire suppression in dormitories for the safety of the students, as well as the firefighters responding to emergencies there. Commissioner Blohm, at the time, said it was his hope that they wouldn't be back years later explaining to new sets of families why their child died in an unsprinklered dormitory. He asked that the legislators present use Seton Hall

as an example. Red Bank Fire Marshal Stanley Sickels pointed out that the tragic examples are already upon us, as four people recently died in a residential fire in Middletown. He also used the analogy of the auto industry – an industry that has been hit hard economically. But they can't start taking out seat belts or airbags as a compromise. Also, these fires are costing towns money, water, pollution, etc., etc. Senator Norcross urged the Commission that he and Assemblyman Wisniewski understand the severity of the problem, but even if they could get the legislature educated and on-board with the issue – there is a very good possibility that it would be vetoed regardless.

Commissioner Lewis Candura pointed out that the lack of fire sprinklers were not as much of an issue in the past because they didn't have as much lightweight construction. Today's homes are so combustible (because of the materials they contain) and it is absolutely necessary that they be suppressed. The builders have already been given a huge economic advantage by being able to use lightweight materials – it saves them a tremendous amount of time and money. But it is creating fire traps. Ray Lonabaugh spoke about the situation in Pennsylvania, and the argument of sprinklers being cost-prohibitive was nothing but an excuse. Mr. Lonabaugh described the actions of the housing industry as pure shenanigans, and it allowed them to gain control when opposing anything in the ICC Code. Commissioner Arthur Londensky added that in such trying economic times – with cutbacks, layoffs, etc. – that the fire sprinkler head is the cheapest and most effective little firefighter available.

Kathy Conlan from the St. Barnabas Burn Center spoke about her own personal experience in the wake of the Seton Hall University fire. In addition to the three fatalities, she talked about the tremendous amount of loss and suffering that occurred in that burn unit because of the fire. She suggested that maybe the legislators and housing industry people should take a tour of a burn unit. Then they can see the horrific effects of fire before they are so quick to oppose fire sprinklers. Ms. Conlan suggested contacting the National Burn Association to help advocate for residential sprinklers as well.

Commissioner John Lightbody gave an update on the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Coalition. There are many, many new individuals and organizations getting on board to help advocate for residential sprinklers and educate the public on their advantages. The Coalition is developing its own website to serve as a home base for all the information.

Richie Silvia from the Saddle River Fire Department spoke about the connection of residential sprinklers to the reduction of insurance premiums. He has personally spoken with representatives from Chubb and they have said it would reduce homeowners insurance by 10% annually. Therefore, over the course of a couple years, the sprinkler systems wind up paying for themselves. This is a fact that is often overlooked when people oppose residential sprinkler systems based on cost. Mr. Silvia also stressed that fire sprinklers are a necessity to preserve the lives of firefighters as well as citizens. The speed of flashovers today is so fast due to the amount of hydrocarbons in the house. That is why homes are burning like never before. James McFadden from the NJDFS spoke from personal experience about his home sprinkler system and how much money it has already saved him. Heather Allen from the NJDFS NFIRS Unit added that so far in 2011

there have been 26 civilian fire fatalities, more than half of which have been in single-family homes.

Commissioner Hartstein suggested that it may be time for a public hearing on residential fire sprinklers. Senator Norcross agreed and said he would look into setting that up.

Gary Lewis from the City of Summit spoke about the hearings after the Seton Hall firefighters. Legislators were railing against the DCA saying, "Why didn't you tell us this is a problem?" Mr. Lewis said that we are clearing calling attention to the problem now, but the administration will still not act on residential fire sprinklers. He hopes they will not be at another hearing sometime down the road after a horrible tragedy.

## **H. Old Business**

Commissioner Arthur Mercurio gave a brief update on the condition of fellow Commissioner C. Kenneth Anderson. It was his understanding that Commissioner Anderson has been doing better in recent weeks and is now at a rehabilitation facility working to get back healthy. The entire Fire Safety Commission offered their thoughts and prayers that Commissioner Anderson make a fully and speedy recovery.

Chairman Wisniewski spoke about moving the Fire Safety Commission's regular meetings back to Wednesdays. The Commission had tried to hold the meetings on Thursdays for 2011, but the consensus is that Wednesdays are much better for everyone. Therefore, it was decided that, for the remainder of the year meetings will be held on Wednesdays. The only exception will be September, where the meeting will be held on the Thursday leading into the Wildwood Convention.

## **I. New Business**

Acting Director William Kramer announced that the Homeland Security Conference that the Division of Fire Safety puts on every year will be held on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at Kean University. Save-the-date postcards were mailed out yesterday. All Commission members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## **J. Public Comment II**

Chuck Aughenbaugh from the New Jersey Deputy Fire Chiefs Association spoke about a recent conference on Mutual Aid that the Assembly Homeland Security Committee was supposed to have held. Mr. Aughenbaugh asked why the meeting had been cancelled. Assemblyman Wisniewski answered that he did not know why the conference had been cancelled, but would look into it and get back to Mr. Aughenbaugh. Assemblyman Wisniewski suspects it could be because June is a tough month with the legislative calendar.

Commissioner Paul Hartstein brought up the issue of e-mails going around about the Fire Safety Commission and that it should be eliminated. He feels that the fire service in

general is not getting the correct information on all the good work the Fire Safety Commission does. Chairman Wisniewski commented that the Fire Safety Commission is, by definition, an advisory body – yet it has been able to get an incredible amount done in that capacity. Chief Kramer urged all the Commissioners to be pro-active in keeping the organizations they represent informed about all that goes on with the Fire Safety Commission. Each Commissioner is representing one organization or another, and they should be taking the information from the meetings back to those constituents.

#### **K. Adjournment**

Chairman Wisniewski asked if anyone had any additional business they would like to bring before the Commission. There being none, the meeting adjourned at 12:29 pm.

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**\* The next meeting of the Fire Safety Commission will be held on Wednesday, July 20, 2011 at 10am. It will be held at the Toms River Fire Academy in Toms River, NJ**