



State of California
ALFRED E. ALQUIST
SEISMIC SAFETY COMMISSION



Governor Gavin Newsom

Seismic Safety Commission Meeting
State Capitol, Room 437
Sacramento, CA 95814
March 12, 2020

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM by Michael Gardner, Chairperson. Salina Valencia, Director of Legislation & Communications, conducted the roll call.

Present:

Michael Gardner
Mia Marvelli
Representative Elizabeth Hess for Ken Cooley
Jorge Meneses
Cindy Silva
Andrew Tran
Representative Jim Hackett for Ida Clair
Ivan Wong
Fuad Sweiss - (arrived at 9:40 AM)

Absent:

Jerry Hill
Mark Ghilarducci
Dr. H. Kit Miyamoto
David Rabbitt
Timothy Strack

II. Chairman's Remarks

Discussion:

Chairperson Michael Gardner introducing a new staff member, Tanya Black Administrative Processes Manager.

The Seismic Safety Commission meeting minutes of July 11, 2019, September 12, 2019, and November 14, 2019, unanimously approved.

III. Report on Puerto Rican Earthquakes of January 2020

Speaker – Kyle Krause, Assistant Deputy Director of Division of Codes and Standards, Housing and Community Development

Discussion:

Mr. Krause was a member of the California team sent to Puerto Rico by Governor Newsom and discussed the damage to the island from a series of earthquakes. He described how most of the buildings lack any kind of lateral force resisting system. There were problems with reinforcement, rusty rebar, lack of coverage, lack of continuity and just a total overall inadequacy of reinforcement in the concrete. There was significant damage to many older commercial buildings in Ponce, located just a little bit to the east of Guánica.

Schools and other industrial types of buildings suffered significant damage. But most of the construction methods are very similar. They use a lot of reinforced concrete with masonry infill for both residential and commercial buildings. The damage was similar in both building categories. Many commercial buildings in the downtown areas were unreinforced masonry.

There was one death associated the earthquake. Because of the continued earthquake activity, residents were afraid to sleep in their homes. When the magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck on January 7, 2020 no one was in the buildings that collapsed.

Mr. Krause was there for two weeks, January 26 through February 10. He was on the second wave of California experts which consisted of representatives from Housing and Community Development, the Division of the State Architect, and Caltrans. There were also representatives from Louisiana, North Carolina, and the State of New York. These representatives reported to CalOES.

All the buildings inspected were older buildings. Damage was widespread, with approximately 4,000 buildings in the area of Guánica with significant earthquake damage. There were no aerial images available for the team.

Mr. Krause stated the several organizations will be preparing their own internal report to advise their government on how they should proceed with changes to building codes or code enforcement.

Vehicles with loudspeakers drove through the communities and informed residents about where to go for resources and to contact FEMA, to receive food, water, any medical assistance.

Commissioner Miyamoto will have a second report and possibly aerial photos at the next Commission meeting in May.

IV. Relocation of Commission to CalOES

Speaker – *Kristin Shelton, Department of Finance*

Discussion:

Kristin Shelton from the Department of Finance presented the results of her Mission Based Review of the Commission which recommended the relocation of the Commission from the Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES). Additional support for the Commission from the General Fund was also included in the recommendation.

During its review, the Department of Finance spent considerable time talking with staff and commissioners, nearly daily over the course of a month. The recognition was made that the Commission needs to move under a larger department that could provide administrative support which would free up the six staff to better serve its mission and provide improved communication with the Governor's Office.

The review concluded that the number of commissioners was too large. The recommendation is to reduce the size of the commissioners from 20 to 15 and reclassifying or repurposing the way that membership is established. No existing sitting commissioner would have their term interrupted should their expertise be chosen for elimination. The new structure would follow that of the California Building Standards Commission which uses subcommittees of experts to focus on specific issues. The intent is to transfer or disperse the 5 areas of expertise to serve on the subcommittees as needed.

Chairman Gardner asked for elaboration on how CalOES anticipates the reporting and decision-making structure of the advisory boards? The advisory boards would only be formed at the behest of the commission.

Commissioner Silva asked, what would be the Office of Emergency Service's role in directing our work and projects? Who does the executive director report to? Ms. Shelton responded that the executive director is selected by and reports to the commission.

Chairman Gardner asked, what guarantees are there that the commission is a standalone, independent agency? There are no guarantees was Ms. Shelton's response and believed the Commission will still have an independent structure. Its meetings will still be open to the public.

Ms. Shelton said the Legislative Analyst's Office as well as Senate and Assembly staffers were briefed.

Commissioner Hackett shared his concern for independence but also sees that this as a tremendous opportunity for the commission. Having a relationship with emergency response can be a tremendous advantage. Commissioner Hackett asked, if there had been any consideration for expansion of the role of the commission? Ms. Shelton indicated that was certainly something we talked about at some length. First and foremost, she emphasized that the commission needed to be financially secure.

Commissioner Sweiss stated that there are many benefits, of having a much closer relationship between the Commission and the CalOES. He also asked about the difference between this proposal and another one considered few years ago. Ms. Shelton responded that the previous proposal had a sunset date of three years to eliminate the Commission while this proposal is not temporary and will not lead to canceling the Seismic Safety Commission.

Ms. Shelton briefed the Governor and he agreed on this recommendation.

Ms. Shelton reiterated that nothing in the statutory framework says the Office of Emergency Services shall direct the projects or the efforts of the commission. There are numerous references in statute that talk about how the commission interacts with other efforts, like the earthquake early warning advisory body. None of that changed. She believed that the Commission has been sitting off to the side due to its continued struggle to maintain adequate funding. This has hindered, on some level, what the commission has been able to do. Ms. Shelton still sees the Commission identifying critical projects, guiding and directing efforts, and making recommendations. Under the new arrangement, the Commission will have a much more direct tie and a stronger voice in that process.

V. Update Homeowner's Guide

**Speakers – *Cindy Silva, SCC Commissioner*
*Ivan Wong, SCC Commissioner***

Discussion:

Executive Director McCarthy said that the Homeowner's Guide was completed on time and posted on the Commission's web site. After the document was posted, the contract with Zoom Media ended.

The commission received suggested changes to the guide from members of the public after it was posted. Since the contract had expired, the subcommittee decided to hold all suggestions regarding the guide in a file and revisit them when the document is revised in the future.

The new agency Secretary was briefed on the Homeowner's Guide and the Commercial Building Owner's Guide. She suggested that the guides be translated into Spanish. Mr. McCarthy informed the Secretary that her request would be presented to the Commission at its March meeting.

Chairman Gardner appointed a Commercial Building Owner's Guide subcommittee consisting of Commissioners Wong and Silva to lead the update project.

VI. Commission Draft Annual Report for 2019

Speaker – *Salina Valencia, Director of Legislation & Communications*

Discussion:

The Commission's draft Annual Report for 2019 was presented by Salina Valencia, the Commission's Legislative Director. This document presents all the Commission's projects completed in 2019 and upon approval, will be posted on the Commission's web site. She informed the Commissioners to please send the suggested edits to her via email.

The revised draft will be brought back to the Commission in May for the final approval.

VII. Executive Director Report

**Speakers – *Richard McCarthy, Executive Director*
*Salina Valencia, Director of Legislation & Communications***

Discussion:

Executive Director McCarthy stated that the Commission will finish the fiscal year with a surplus due to the retirement of two professional staff.

Tanya Black, Administrative Process Manager reminded the Commission that the deadline for filling Form 700 with the FPPC is April 1st. She reminded commissioners to send in updated bios and/or photos to be posted on the Commission's web site.

Ms. Black reminded the Commission that information on the 2020 Census was sent out by mail and they should receive it by mid-March.

Salina Valencia, Director of Legislation & Communication stated that the duty statement for the vacant Senior Structural Engineer position has been completed. An advertising/interviewing process will begin sometime in April. The Department of General Services hiring practice takes 54-days to complete.

Staff is working with Assembly member Nazarian on A.B. 429, the vulnerable building inventory. This bill is still on the Senate floor and it is waiting to be taken up for vote.

There will be guidelines that are going to be released on how to deal with the coronavirus.

VIII. Public Comment

None.

IX. Miscellaneous & Good of the Meeting

Commissioner Sweiss had a recommendation as to the voting procedure for Chair and Vice Chair. Charter requires the commission to elect a chair and vice chair every year. Commissioner Sweiss suggested a full discussion on possibly revising how the Commission chair and vice-chair are selected. Mr. McCarthy suggested that he would place this item on the agenda for discussion at the May meeting. Chairman Gardner agreed to Mr. McCarthy's suggestion.

Commissioner Meneses stated that the San Diego Earthquake Scenario was presented at a national earthquake conference meeting last week in San Diego. This project was the main theme of the event. It was led by San Diego chapter of EERI. There was very good cooperation with the media. The conference attendees announced that a goal should be to achieve a seismic resilient San Diego by 2050.

X. Meeting Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Michael Gardner, Chairperson.