

February 1, 2016  
Joint Meeting of Town Buildings Committee and Selectboard

Attendees

- Dave Upton
- Sandy Mackenzie
- Lisa Sieverts
- Russ Thomas
- Dave Birchenough
- Maury Collins

Guests

- Jerry Tepe, Architect
  - jrtaia@aol.com

**Action Items**

Dave U

- Contact Mr. Berube to get the his thoughts on why the determination was made that the sprinkler regulation applies (bars, night club, discotheque, dance hall, festival seating), in order to understand whether it is Town Hall rentals that have alcohol and music, or the folk dances, that triggered the requirement

**Meeting of the Town Buildings Committee called to order at 6:01 PM.**

Introduction of Jerry Tepe, architect and fire code consultant, and overview of situation regarding fire code inspections

Selectboard was informed in December that there were a number of violations in Old School Building, Town Hall, Library, and Safety Building /Town Barn complex

Copies of violation reports shared with Jerry Tepe

Town Needs

- Town Caucus will be held next week. There has not been time to develop detailed budgets for this year's Town Meeting.
  - Some money has been added to the Town Maintenance Budget
  - Town needs to get confirmation that these are valid estimates
- Support for estimate development
  - for the equipment upgrades and signage cited in the violations report
- Questions of design work
  - Since all of the buildings are old, does the regulation for new buildings apply?
    - Jerry says that in his review, he sees that the specifics are for existing buildings even though the introductory paragraph specified new buildings, so this was probably a cut and paste error

- Jerry shows us MFPA 101
  - the primary document used for Fire Code
  - the occupancy chapters are key
    - the pages for new buildings in the book are directly across from existing buildings, so that it is easy to compare the requirements
- Note that Selectboard has asked the Fire Chief to dictate where the emergency signage should be

Maury Collins arrives at 6:10 PM

**The meeting of the Nelson Selectboard is called to order at 6:10 PM**

Specific question about requirement for sprinkler system, and the conditions of use

Jerry brought the specific page

- for new buildings, sprinklers are required
- for existing buildings, it varies
  - Note that the Fire Marshall is supposed to visit every occupancy building every year. It may not happen exactly every year, but it does happen.
  - you look at the square footage of the room
    - then for a Town Hall without tables, use 7 square feet per person
      - This is the “occupancy load”
      - it does not matter whether we limit the occupancy to 100
      - all that matters is the size of the room
      - Use 15 square feet per person if there are tables and chairs
  - re dance hall
    - this is really for bars, night club, discotheque, Jerry does not believe this definition applies to the Nelson Town Hall.
      - though the code does not define dance hall
      - Jerry does not believe that other similar halls have been cited
    - this determination is key, as the only “existing” buildings that need sprinklers added retroactively are bars, nightclubs, discotheques, dance halls, and halls with “festival seating.” The regulation is very specific.
    - it is possible to appeal the determination of “dance hall”
      - first appeal is to Mr. Berube who signed the document
        - did he classify it as a dance hall because sometimes there are rentals with alcohol and music, or because of the folk dances?
          - We need to know this in order to come up with the correct action plan.
      - second appeal is to building review board in Concord

- Festival seating
  - defined as no seating, people seated on the floor
- Historic buildings
  - broadly states that the fire service has a bit of leeway in its determination
  - bottom line: codes still apply

Specific question about fire escape from 2nd floor of the Old School House

Jerry can review requirement for fire escape and alternatives to blocking off the windows

Specific question about no storage in the crawl space under the Town Hall

the concern from the Fire Marshall is that once storage is allowed, there is a risk that flammable materials will be stored

Jerry's Availability

available now to review the buildings

in two weeks, he will be away, but he will have access to what he needs to do reports while away

Jerry will do the work to validate the estimates/budget to do the remediation (not including sprinklers)

- Some of this ideally would wait until the Fire Chief responds regarding number and location
- Jerry will make his best guess so that there are good numbers for the warrant

Jerry will validate whether specific requirements mentioned in the violations are required

- Note that highlighted paragraphs are remediation ideas from the Selectboard

Would be ideal to have budget numbers by Caucus on February 10th

Selectboard is more than willing to make appropriate changes related to fire code, as it is much better to be doing this proactively rather than looking back after an incident.

However, a sprinkler installation for the Town Hall would be an enormous cost, thus it is important to research whether this is required, or is simply a misunderstanding of building use.

**Town Buildings Committee recommends Jerry Tepe for this work. The Selectboard will make the decision on Wednesday.**

**Minutes of the Nelson Town Buildings Committee of January 11, 2016, motion to approve by Sandy, second by Dave B. All in favor.**

Caucus

- Dave U will introduce the solar warrant article, but Dave B and/or Sandy should speak to the article.

- Lisa will not be there

Brochure for solar

- Dave B will do a first draft and send to Sandy
- Greg Blake talk on Saturday February 13th 11 AM
- Sandy will work on people who would go door to door March 5/6

Next Meeting

February 22 6 PM Town Offices

Motion to adjourn both the Buildings Committee and Selectboard by Russ, second by Sandy, all in favor, at 7:45 PM.