

MEETING MINUTES

9 May 2017 (Tuesday), 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Crowne Plaza Hotel, 109 W. International Airport Rd, Anchorage

Held in conjunction with the Alaska DHS&EM-sponsored workshop:

“Alaska's Next Big Earthquake & Tsunami: Mitigating Impacts”

(Questions: Contact Michael West, Chair: mewest@alaska.edu; 907.687.4288 cell)

I. OPENING

- Call to Order – West; John Aho, David Gibbs, Laura Kelly, Buzz Scher, De Anne Stevens, Sterling Strait, Kim Weibel, Michael West; Charity Carmody and Michael Holman were excused; Guests: Barrett Salisbury, DGGS.
- Approval of agenda – Stevens moved; Aho seconded. Agenda accepted without modification.
- Ethics Act – Nothing to report.
- Public Comments – none.
- Chair Comments – West summarized the sentiments presented during the “Opportunities and interests” discussion during the April 17 telecon. See section III below.

II. BUSINESS IN PROGRESS

- Haines Highway earthquakes one-pager and thoughts for next time – The one-pager format would benefit from a date and disclaimer somewhere on the page. Disclaimer would convey that the information is preliminary and could continue to evolve.
- Packet of policy statements tied to Haines Highway earthquakes – Discussion about how best to deliver these.
- FNSB RVS Draft Report – Kelly stated that we are currently awaiting review comments.
- 2016 Annual report – Scher stated it is last call for comments on the annual report.

III. ACHIEVING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

This discussion, the main focus of the meeting, was premised on the results of the April 17 telecon agenda item titled “opportunities and interests”. During the April 17 meeting each commissioner was asked to address three questions: (i) What motivates you to commit professional or personal time to the Commission? (ii) What earthquake/tsunami issue do you feel strongly about? (iii) What is a frustration you have with the Commission? While responses varied by individual, three themes were consistent across the discussion:

- Commissioners have a strong desire to impact the state’s earthquake resilience. All feel like this is a deeply important issue. Several commissioners felt it was a way to “give back” using their professional experience.
- All commissioners expressed frustration with the commission’s limited influence. Some commissioners pointed out the need to play “the long game” and be positioned to seize opportunities as they arise. Some commissioners were eager for more proactive endeavors.
- Several commissioners expressed an opinion that the commission’s time and energy might be more effective if we narrowed the number of projects we were pursuing.

With these three themes as the backdrop, the goal of the May 9 in-person discussion was to identify actions the commission could take during the coming year to best achieve our strategic plan. After

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relatively brief discourse, school safety came to dominate the rest of the evening's discussion. There was broad, if informal, agreement that the earthquake safety of schools is an ideal flagship project for the commission and that focusing on it, perhaps at the expense of other efforts, may provide a good vehicle for multiple parts of the Commission's Strategic Plan.

Reasons given include:

- It provides opportunities to engage the Commission's two different audiences: the public and policymakers.
- It leverages all types of expertise across the Commission (some other projects are fully reliant on the expertise of just one or two Commissioners).
- Schools can be viewed as just the first tier in an on-going set of critical infrastructure (e.g., schools, then hospitals, then fire stations, etc.)
- The Commission has a very positive track record with school RVS projects.
- DHS&EM has been very supportive of school RVS proposals to the FEMA NEHRP program.
- The steps toward addressing school safety are clear (if not necessarily easy): Rapid visual screening to identify potential needs; raise public awareness; Identify specific design and retrofit needs; secure funding to pay for retrofits.
- The Commission can take cues from others states that have been very proactive about school safety including Utah and California.

Suggested steps forward:

- Review the maintenance priority list maintained by the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). The list is public (Aho).
- Engage DEED early in the process to avoid misunderstanding and to secure their collaboration.
- Consider using the school RVS effort as a platform to develop the Commission's outreach mission.
- Use school safety as a vehicle to build stronger advocates in the Alaska legislature.
- Consider engaging local chapters of the American Society of Civil Engineers.