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BOARD OF BUILDING REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

In accordance with the provisions of G.L. c. 30A § 20, notice is hereby given that the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) convened a regular monthly meeting and public hearing in accordance with G.L. c143 § 97 on:

March 11, 2025 10 am – 2 pm

Virtual Meeting Minutes

Meeting called into order at 10:06 a.m.

Lisa Davey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent	Tarica Leskiw	<input type="checkbox"/> present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> absent
David Riquinha	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent	Luke McKneally	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Michael McDowell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent	Atiya Rahim	<input type="checkbox"/> present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> absent
John Couture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent	Sy Nguyen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Jeffrey Clemons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent	Sarah Wilkinson, or designee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Jason Ferschke	<input type="checkbox"/> present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> absent	Jon Davine, or designee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Darien Crimmin	<input type="checkbox"/> present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> absent	Elizabeth Mahony, or designee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent

1. Review / Vote BBRS Minutes from 02/11/2025, BOCC minutes from 02/04/2025

Jeffrey Clemons made a motion to approve the BBRS minutes from 2/11/25 with minor amendments, seconded by Jacob Nunnemacher. A roll call was conducted and the motion passed unanimously.

Jacob Nunnemacher made a motion to approve the BOCC minutes from 2/04/25, seconded by John Couture. A roll call was conducted and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Review / Discuss Board Counsel Report

Board Counsel Charles Kilb reported about the Open Meeting Law. Counsel advised that the ability to operate these meetings remotely will be ending March 30, 2025. He anticipates it will be extended, yet if not, all the meetings will need to be live again and only a minority of the members could attend remotely. He will keep the board posted.

3. Review / Discuss Report from BOCC Designee

Andrew Bobola provided a report of the BOCC meeting held March 4, 2025 at the Norfolk Police Department. He noted the BOCC is actively pursuing a member of academia. Chair Davey recommended reaching out to the Chairs of the Engineering Departments at the local universities. Mr. Bobola reported that there are still 167 Building Officials who do not have the appropriate CEUs and the board is trying to find out whether they are intending to keep the certification.

4. Review / Discuss Executive Director Report



- a. Construction Supervisor License totals for the month of February 2025
 - a. Executive Director Tammy Gropman reported there were 112 CSLs issued and processed 1297 renewals.
- b. Construction Supervisor License Waivers/Reinstatements
 - a. Executive Director Tammy Gropman reported there was 1 reinstatement request granted, and 0 continuing education waivers issued.

Jeffery Clemons posed a question about pass/fail rates for CSLs, stating he is hearing of a high failure rate. This was brought up last month's meeting as well. Mr. Clemons opined that there needs to be a better passage rate and asked if data is available yet. Andrew Bridges commented that he does not yet have enough metrics and data in from 3 months of testing. He will continue to look into getting this data.

5. Discuss Status of Subcommittees

- a. 11th Edition Subcommittee

Chair Davey reported that when they met this month, they reviewed some recommendations for subcommittees, including members per subcommittee and their role based on recommendations from the DOL staff. Chair Davey reported they also reviewed a schedule provided by DOL staff with a staggered schedule to accommodate capacity of people. At the next meeting, the board will complete the member review and look at code chapters for each. Ian Finlayson noted importance of coordinating Energy Advisory and DOER Advisory and including them. Mr. Finlayson is invited to the next 11th Subcommittee Meeting.
- b. Solar Setback Subcommittee

Luke McKneally informed members that they did not meet quorum on the 2/28/25. Meeting was rescheduled for Friday, March 14, 2025. The hope is to wrap up recommendations to submit to BBRS in the coming month or two.

6. Discuss Stretch Code Changes

- a. Ian Finlayson presented a slide deck entitled MA Stretch Code and Specialized Code – Summary of energy code updates effective February 14, 2025. The presentation will be available on the ENE website and the BBRS website.
- b. The presentation began with the status of energy codes in Massachusetts. The 3 tiers available to MA towns and cities: Base code IECC 2021 (10th edition) with MA amendments, = 9% of population, Stretch Code IECC 2021 with key MA amendments = 61% of the population and the specialized Code IECC 2021 with key MA amendments = 30% of the population.
- c. The stretch code for both residential and commercial was reviewed.
- d. The top 6 changes - the 2025 update – were presented. These changes are aimed at making the stretch code more usable. These changes include a new optional credit for embodied carbon which makes a three HERS point difference if you pursue embodied carbon in either your selection of concrete or your selection of insulation on a project, a HERS maximum for ADUs, a HERS rating for existing buildings (table shown), how historic homes are treated, a reduction of ceiling R values, and a SHGC for windows with no maximum required.

Jeffrey Clemons posed a question about ADUs and protection from legislation. Ian Finlayson answer noted since ADUs are primarily defined at the municipal level as a zoning measure, no definition added. Any ADU qualifies for this HERS rating if it is in a stretch code or specialized code community.
- e. John Couture asked a question about the embodied carbon credit and if this is the new concrete mix, the global warming potential. Ian Finlayson reviewed slide which spoke to the Residential code. Ian spoke to the embodied carbon credit and the two options in residential, in which you can only take one of the credits. For residential, the first option

is to show that the insulation you use, some of it is storing carbon. The question is whether you get the credit or not - do the negative carbon savings you have above grade more than balance out the positive carbon in the insulation below grade.

John Couture asked question if table will be altered in the future as other insulations are looked at? It was answered that most of the common insulation products are listed. There is language that states if product is not listed on this table, to go to the manufacturer and ask for the EPD (product declaration form) and then use specific one.

John Couture asked a question to clarify you can only get credits for one not both the insulation and concrete. This may change in the future.

John Couture provided comments on the downsides to using concrete with lower embodied carbons. He mentioned it has slower dry time and curing time in cold temperature and it is expensive, \$15 to \$20 per yard additional cost. He did note the upside to it as well and that it is a stronger mix.

Ian Finlayson provided comment that folks have options and if their concrete mix is better than average, they would get the credit.

Chair Davey stated there are a lot of times we reduce the embodied carbon of our concrete mixes, but it's by reducing the cement ratio within our mixes instead of adding these other add mixtures. She asked if you could show that based on a mix and without using one of these add mixture plants, if you are reducing the embodied carbon, would you still be able to get these credits. As there are there are other ways to do it, that may not have the same implications in terms of drawing time and cold weather issues as well.

Ian Finlayson noted if the outcome is a better outcome for the climate, then you get the credit.

There were further questions from Luke McKneally about how the average is established and if you need EPDs from the concrete companies. Ian Finlayson provided an answer that included the need of EPDs for at least 90% of the concrete used on a project, recognizing that you might have different concrete for different parts of the building.

- f. Other updates with modest changes presented on ventilation requirements, EV ready spaces, passive house certification, and near passive house documentation. Ian Finlayson mentioned what used to be called the Tesla Charger is going to be the main standard added as an option.

John Couture posed question if there is any possibility that we can slide this eventually over to the electric code to avoid the confusion on this? He mentioned the electric code does have specific designations for this.

Ian Finlayson answered that there have been conversations with the Electric Code Board. The code states 20% of parking spaces for residential /business and 10% for everything else. The electric code is to be followed for how to do it.

- g. Presentation continued focused on the specialized code for residential and commercial. For the commercial specialized code, there are more small changes on definitions for on-site renewable energy for high ventilation buildings, additional efficiency requirements for district energy systems, and additional electric infrastructure.

Jeff Clemons commented on definitions, the confusion on the definition of all electric building and whether you could install a decorative type, fossil fuel appliances such as gas stoves or wood burning and if this part was changed in these definitions. The argument is that it is not for heating purposes yet decorative.

Ian Finlayson stated it is clear, and the definitions have not been changed on this. If you have combustion equipment, then it's not classified as all electric even if it's a decorative fireplace or a wood stove. He noted in certain parts of the states it is quite sensible to have a backup heating system. He provided there are electric versions of decorative fireplaces as an option.

Jake Nunnemacher weighed in and noted that fossil fuels are very specific and that this is very problematic on the appeals board.

There was further discussion that a home can have any heating system yet if you have any combustion equipment, it is a mixed fuel building, your house rating would be three points lower.

John Couture and David Riquinha expressed concerns about this, and a robust discussion followed. This topic will be added to a future agenda to allow for further discussion.

- h. The presentation continued for the Commercial Stretch Code updates for clarity on construction documents and submittals, a new section for the district energy system, some new definitions around district energy systems that are going through a transition, some new terms for ventilation engine recovery representing the two different testing standards for different size equipment, and then adding the

Tesla charging standard option for EV readiness in commercial buildings where they have underground parking or other spaces that are not really conditioned for human occupancy.

Envelope and mechanical updates were presented along with C 406 credit options and others.

- i. Question asked about where to find this presentation and information. The Energy website has been updated. There are unofficial versions of the Stretch and Specialized code on the website. An official version can be provided from the Secretary of State's office. Work is being done to get this out to all Building Officials at the regional building official meetings. There has been one webinar with Green Communities and Mass Save Training Program (run by PSD) has updated their materials. There is continued work updating technical guidance materials.

Jeff Clemons asked what outreach there is to CSLs? Answer - If there is an email list please send this along or would welcome ideas on how to do this.

There were a few other comments and questions from the board including if we should be making modifications to the 10th edition? Board Counsel Kilb commented on the first round of 10th edition updates and public hearings have to be based on the code change proposals being put forward. The time to actually add new things to the code is before the final public hearing, not after

7. Discuss other matters not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting

- a. Mike McDowell noted he would like a presentation regarding how the CSL testing is going with PSI. He is getting a lot of complaints about it and has feedback to pass on.

Jacob Nunnemacher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 AM, seconded by John Couture.

Items Relied Upon

Agenda

Draft Minutes

Copy of ADU law and regulations