
From: Zemel, Felix (DPS)
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 5:14 PM
To: Carley, Stephen (DPS)
Subject: Fwd: Energy Code Public Hearing

Felix I. Zemel
Department of Public Safety
Technical Director / Acting Chief of Inspections -- Building

Sent from my iPhone. Please excuse any errors and/or typos.

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Goldfine, Seth"
Date: June 14, 2016 at 4:51:20 PM EDT
Subject: Energy Code Public Hearing

Felix,
Along with all of the other comments addressing the Energy and Stretch Codes, I would appreciate it if you could share these thoughts with the Board.

Thank You,
Seth

Seth Goldfine, Registered Architect, LEED AP
Faithful + Gould

June 14, 2016

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Public Safety
Board of Building Regulations and Standards

Dear Members of the Board,

I have served in various roles in the construction, design and project management industries in the Boston area for many, many years, and have been a member of the BSA Codes Committee for much of that time. I attended the June 14, 2016 public hearing on the proposed changes in the Energy Code and Stretch Code and would like to offer what I think is a somewhat different view than what was presented at the hearing.

Not surprisingly, representatives from the Sierra Club and from alternative energy industries spoke in support of Massachusetts amendments and the Stretch code, in particular on "PV-ready" and "EV-ready" building provisions in new construction, both as a hedge against high retrofitting costs and as a step toward a renewable energy future. Nor was it surprising to hear representatives from the homebuilding industry and from commercial real estate groups oppose these same provisions on the basis of inadequate demand and on cost considerations. Most interesting, though, were the questions raised as to whether provisions for EV charging stations should be or are even statutorily permitted to be in our State Building Code.

Largely missing from the presentations, however, was the ideological issue of what our building codes should be now and in the foreseeable future. The 4th edition of the Mass Code I still have on a shelf is a lifetime away from the 8th edition we work with today. The questions we should be asking are (1) how the code is positioned relative to our median cultural expectations for health, safety and welfare protections, (2) what level of consumer protections we want to exercise at any given time in our culture, and (3) what constitutes environmental advocacy as opposed to basic protection of health, safety and welfare? Should the Code be reactive as it was after events like the Coconut Grove or Station Night Club fires? Of course not. At the other end of the spectrum should the Building Code be a ground breaking platform to further the interests of environmental advocates and industry special interests when the base IECC arguably provides more than adequate consumer protection in the context of our current culture in Massachusetts. Our legislators should use adaptive code that simply protects the basic health, safety and welfare of our citizens, and avoid making it any more difficult to navigate the increasingly complex process of design, regulatory approval and construction? To borrow loosely from other anti-regulatory expansion rhetoric, if we fully enforced the current regulations rather than adopting new and more stringent ones, we'd probably be right where we ought to be.

Respectfully,
Seth Goldfine

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