

Construction Code Development Listening Session Transcript, September 23, 2026

22:19: Office of Construction and Building Standards: Good morning, everyone. And thank you for attending today's Construction code development listening session hosted by the Department of Buildings. We will be giving a five minute grace period just to give some folks enough time to get in the room. We are expecting a few more attendees today, so we're gonna give that five minute grace period, give them time to come on in, and we'll be starting promptly at ten oh five.

Once again, good morning and thank you for attending today's construction code development listening session with the Department of buildings.

So as promised, it is ten oh five AM and good morning once again. And thank you all for attending today's construction code development listening session on fire code with the Department of buildings. My name is Ashelley Wilder. I am the Department of Buildings training coordinator and I will be facilitating today's listening session.

But before we get started and jump on into meeting our panelists and getting into the listening session, I wanted to go over some house rules we have here as the training department with the Department of buildings. So just to let everyone know, this is a recorded session and all attendees will be muted during. Right, and we will a lot time at the end for all attendees to unmute and share feedback about today's co development session. And just to ensure that everyone has enough time to give their feedback and share their feedback, please limit to two minutes at a maximum. But once again, also remember have the chat feature today also. So without further ado, I would like to pass it off to our presenter and our leader for today. Mister Nev Jordan. Nev, thank you so much.

27:49: Nev Jordan: Good morning, everyone. Today is September twenty fourth, twenty twenty six. Thank you all for attending the dobs seventh listening session on construction code development. Today focuses on fire.

Our agenda for today is as follows. We'll start with a brief overview moving to the construction code development process and timeline. Then make time for you all to provide feedback on fire codes and we will have our closing remarks after that.

Moving into our overview, the DOB is preparing to issue regulations to amend and update all twelve construction codes to keep pace with national model code cycles and support safer, more efficient, and more sustainable development across the district. This involves a robust public engagement.

DOB has kicked this off with a series of virtual listening sessions. These open facilitated sessions present an opportunity for stakeholders, partners, and community members to share input, raise concerns, and offer suggestions that will help inform our work.

The DOB is the international Code Council ICCs twenty twenty four model codes and drafts local amendments incorporating feedback from agencies and stakeholders as well as substantial work completed during previous construction code development cycles. This allows the district to carry previously vetted concepts, lessons learned, and community driven recommendations into the new set of local amendments. The proposed amendments will be published in the DC register and will then be made available for public comment.

After the public comment period has ended, DOB will review comments received and make proposed changes as necessary. If substantive changes are necessary, DOB will publish a second proposed rule making that will allow for additional public comment. If no substantive changes are necessary, the mayor will send the proposed amendments to the DC council for its review. If the council does not act to make any changes to the proposed amendments within the required review period, the new code provisions will be published entitled twelve of the District of Columbia municipal regulations, the DCMR.

Moving into our construction code development timeline, we are currently in phase one, which is our first notice of proposed rule making. Throughout the summer of twenty twenty six, we held six listening sessions. Today is the seventh. We first started on June twenty fifth, twenty twenty six with property maintenance swimming pool and spa July ninth, twenty twenty six building an existing building July twenty third, twenty twenty six electrical August fifth, twenty twenty six residential, August nineteenth twenty twenty six fuel gas code mechanical and plumbing; September ninth, twenty twenty six energy conservation and green construction. And once again today September twenty fourth, twenty twenty six is fire. Moving into fall twenty twenty six, we will publish our first notice of proposed rule making, and then we'll move into our public comment period, which will last for forty five days.

Phase two, the second notice of proposed rule making in early twenty twenty seven, we will prepare content for our second notice of proposed rule making, and summer of twenty twenty seven will publish our second notice of proposed rule making, and then we'll move into our second public comment period, which you will have thirty days to put your comments in. Phase three final codes, will prepare those final codes and then move into fall twenty twenty seven. The council will review period and then late twenty twenty seven, we will publish our final codes.

We'll now move into our section of the session for feedback. This is your opportunity to talk, and regarding the current fire codes, we're seeking your feedback on the following Code provisions that work well and should be maintained. Sections that are difficult to interpret or apply, requirements that create challenges during design permitting construction, inspections, maintenance or enforcement, and areas where clarification modification or additional guidance may improve the code. And before we move into this session section, I'd like to introduce our panelists who are listening in with me. First we have strategic enforcement administrator. Keith Parsons, Chief Building Official

Nicole Rogers, deputy Chief Building official, Jeff Reiss and Chief Building Inspection official Peter Nyabagosi. And without further ado. Go ahead and move directly into this section of our session.

Looks like we have some common feedback that is coming in through chat. If there's anyone.

33:42: Office of Construction and Building Standards: Looking to see if there are any hands raised, so this is also an opportunity where you can raise your hand if you have any comments. I will send you a request to unmute your mic and you will have the floor. Our chat is clear, so: Our mics are also free.

34:03: Nev Jordan: Fisher has their hand raised. Yes.

34:08: Office of Construction and Building Standards: Fisher, I have sent you a request to unmute your mic. You now have the floor. Hi.

34:13: Aaron Fisher: Can you hear me? Yes.

34:15: Nev Jordan: We can. Hi.

34:17: Aaron Fisher: Aaron Fisher here. I'm with Ernest Mayor. We manufacture concrete masonry units and things like, and in just outside DC. But we'd obviously do a lot in DC with the building.

Are you guys able to comment at all on single stairwells? I saw a Bill had passed recently about and and was curious what might be coming on this round of the, the code.

34:45: Nev Jordan: Floor is open for any of our panelists that want to respond to mister Fisher.

35:00: Jeff Reiss: So good morning. Can you repeat the question I have a little volume unfortunately on my end, the technical issue.

35:08: Aaron Fisher: Yeah, I I was I know the city council had passed a rule on single stairwells and was curious what, if any was coming in this round of changes.

35:21: Jeff Reiss: So we are currently working with DC Fire and EMS and our code construction group partners and stakeholders. As it pertains to the single access or one front door. Not be part of the first NOPR and we anticipate everything will be ready for the second notice of public record.

35:57: Aaron Fisher: Ok. Thank you.

I had one more follow on question too if you don't mind. I I guess it's the second, it's not a follow on to that question. We've started to see some pushback on passive and active fire systems so non combustible materials versus spring core systems, obviously they

both have value.

Making making any kind of recognition that they they've, they both, they serve different purposes, but they have the same goal and so having both of those in a, in a building is, is ideal.

36:48: Jeff Reiss: Is this pertaining to a single access or one, one single stare, one front door?

36:55: Aaron Fisher: Not really, it's just a general question.

37:01: Jeff Reiss: So our current codes and the future codes evaluate all processes and materials and there is a provision in the code that does allow for modification.

From standard practices that can be used. However, it may require code modification or a or additional research, and supporting documentation.

37:40: Aaron Fisher: Thank you. Thank you.

37:44: Nev Jordan: Thank you for that mister Fisher.

37:48: Office of Construction and Building Standards: And we have Carmen C to Jones. I am now going to send you a request to unmute your mic. You now have the floor.

37:56: Carmencita Jones: All right: Carmen.Can you hear me?

38:03: Office of Construction and Building Standards: Yes, you sound good. We have you now.

38:07: Carmencita Jones: Okay, great. Thank you. So my name is Carmencita Jones and I'm the founder and the CEO of Carmen's Pride and Joy. I'm a licensed expanded family childcare home in wards seven.

I would like to ask DOB to review the Sprinkler requirement that affects individual seeking to open new family childcare. Expanded homes. I want to be clear that I am fully support strong fire and life safety protections for children, but my concern is whether a residential sprinkler system is necessary and proportionate.

Home seeking to become a license family childcare facility. This has been a huge cost to small business owners who want to open To children and the district has decreased. Of family childcare homes. In the city. We are down to ninety two now. And this cost is anywhere between To fifty thousand dollars. Small business owner to even think about, opening up their home to children.

39:57: Nev Jordan: Thank you for the feedback.

40:08: Office of Construction and Building Standards: We have a comment in the chat. Is it possible to join those technical discussions on the one front door Act.

40:28: Keith David Parsons: What a I'm not sure I understand the question for the questionnaire like to elaborate?

40:35: Office of Construction and Building Standards: Aaron I sent you a request to unmute your mic so you can engage to elaborate more on your question.

40:43: Aaron Fisher: Hopefully you can hear me. Yeah, so, so you mentioned that you're engaging with fire officials and some other folks.

I have a deep technical knowledge of the fire code, and with like to be engaged with some of that stuff cause it's a single stairwell is already allowed by the IBC code, so it isn't clear what exactly would be allowed or what would be differing from that. And so I I just wanted to be engaged in those conversations so that I could provide some of the knowledge that it is already allowed in limited situations and I don't know. So that that's kind of my ask is I'm trying to raise my hand to get on a committee. Cause it sounds like that's what you're kind of getting feedback from: I'll. Did I get heard? Yes.

41:49: Office of Construction and Building Standards: You were. My apologies I was waiting for the responses to come in. So at this time we do not have committees. We do not have committees to join.

42:00: Aaron Fisher: So who's providing this feed? So I mean there was, you mentioned the the Firefighter: Gone.

42:08: Nev Jordan: Miss mister Fisher, you, you can reach out directly to us and and we'll follow up with you. Feel free to shoot us an email as soon as this is over and we'll get you some info.

42:21: Aaron Fisher: Who do I direct that email to? I'm presenting there's a lot of folks there.

42:26: Nev Jordan: Sure, as a matter of fact, I actually have your contact information, so I'll reach out to you directly and we'll, we'll start communication that way.

42:34: Aaron Fisher: Much appreciated, thank you. Absolutely.

42:50: Office of Construction and Building Standards: Okay I'm going to look for any additional raised hands. We don't have any at this time. I'm reviewing the chat. There are any further comments. So the floor is still open.

43:09: Nev Jordan: Mister Fisher has his hand up again. Yep.

43:17: Aaron Fisher: Sorry, sorry for another question, Totally different topic. Type four,

kind of buildings mass timber. Intention to bring those into the code as well? Bye.

43:38: Jeff Reiss: So mass Timber is included as part of the family of codes in twenty four.

43:51: Aaron Fisher: And it's being adopted as written in the international code cause I know a few jurisdictions like Pennsylvania have applied additional provisions on top of it. So is the intention to pull in as written In IBC.

44:05: Jeff Reiss: So at this point in time we cannot commit to as written. It is currently under. And when that comes out in the notice of public record, you can comment upon that.

44:23: Aaron Fisher: Okay, thank you.

44:32: Nev Jordan: Thank you mister Fisher. Do we have anyone else that would like to speak. As a gentle reminder, you can use the chat box to type in your feedback if you do not want to speak on.

45:05: Office of Construction and Building Standards: Yeah, we have a hand raised. Carmencita we have sent you a request to unmute your mic. You now have the floor. You may have muted yourself. You have the ability to unmute yourself, there you go.

45:34: Carmencita Jones: Okay, there I am. Okay. Addressed this issue? I saw that you did: Residential and is this something that Concern that I've brought up.

46:00: Jeff Reiss: So miss Jones, thank you for your comments: ASSI and DC Fire and EMS, to Fire protection.

46:20: Carmencita Jones: Okay.

46:21: Jeff Reiss: And maintains code. We are fully aware of the conditions that exist and we're actively seeking Information feedback. And collaboration with our partners to make things happen. I would strongly suggest that you go. You submit your comments to your licensing agent or directly to mister Idune Clemet dot idune at DC dot gov.

And he can make sure that they get to miss Longere and then back to the Department of Buildings.

47:02: Carmencita Jones: Yeah, when you talk to, ICE Asi. They tell us. That we need to work with DOB because in order to Get a license from OSC, we have to first obtain a certificate kit of osa occupancy for the center Or a home occupancy license. So unless we can get that through D O B, there's no need to go to OSC is what I've been told, but I I'm I know mister Clemen very well. Carmencita Jones: And so, miss Lager. So I mean, I can go back to them but again they say that this is if a fire code issue and a DOB issue. I've been trying to find a temporary location. So I can renovate my current home. But

because of the sprinkler issue. I can't find the place in my neighborhood. So this is gonna impact my family's. Find childcare elsewhere while I get renovations done. But again, like I said, we can't even get any new providers Licensed because of this issue. So OSSE is telling us it's not their issue. It's not their regulation. You guys have to, You know, work with the fire or whom, whomever else at DOB.

49:08: Jeff Reiss: Understood. Miss Jones, if you would be so kind to put your email in the chat so that we can record it and I will make sure that our staff. You so we can discuss your individual concern and the greater concerns at a scheduled meeting.

49:31: Carmencita Jones: I appreciate that. Thank you so much. Yes.

49:35: Jeff Reiss: Ma'am.

49:40: Nev Jordan: Thank you for the feedback. Do you have anyone else that would like to chime in?

49:50: Office of Construction and Building Standards: We do have a comment in the chat, more of a heads up, and it is from David Melloff and it says I am on travel, but just sent in an email to chief Rogers and mister Parson's Fems Marshall Coffman is also copied. MOLC and ORM may also be copied later today. Thank you. Was the comment. And thank you Carmes Carmerceita, we've received your information in the chat.

50:23: Nev Jordan: Thank you for that. Alright, is there anyone else that wants to speak? Concern to them. Does not look like we have anyone else that would like to give any sort of feedback. But before we end, I'd like to thank Mayor Bowser and DOB director Hanlon and the construction code development team for all of their efforts and pushing forward that we're working on. And just a quick reminder to everyone in attendance, we will be making this meeting recording as well as the transcript available soon. So you'll be able to reference this in the future. And with that being said, please feel free to reach out to us at any of these avenues and once again, thank you so much for coming out. And we look forward to hearing from you during the comment period. Have a great day.