

South Central Regional Construction Code Council Meeting
Thursday, August 16, 2007
Time: 9:00AM

Location: Lafourche Parish Council Chambers
Barrios Center
1618 Highway 182
Raceland, La. 70394

Meeting Minutes

Members in attendance were:

Michael Wich (SCPDC)
Pat Gordon (Terrebonne)
Kim Marousek (St. John)
Jody Chenier (St. James)
John Boudreaux (Assumption)
Debbie Moore (Lafourche)

No members were absent.

1. Discuss code issues in Lafourche:

Approximately 9am the pledge of allegiance was said followed by a welcome from Mr. John Boudreaux, president of the Regional Code Council. The meeting than began with everyone present introducing themselves.

Mr. Cullen Curole spoke on the purpose of the meeting. He stated the past few months SCPDC and Lafourche permitting department has not communicated very well. It all seemed to come to a head after SCPDC called a meeting putting a generic warning out and then placed stopped work orders. Mr. Curole feels we need to be a little more courteous with members of the public.

In the Lafourche original ordinance they did assign SCPDC to hire a building official. Since that time they have re-thought there position and looked into hiring there own building official. The state has sent them a letter informing them they cannot have two building officials.

Mr. Curole feels we need to make sure we communicate better. He feels the building codes are a learning process and needs to be treated as such. He knows communication between his office and SCPDC needs improvement. Lafourche will, if they have not already, provide SCPDC information on permits including those not handled by SCPDC.

Mr. Curole did not receive a call from SCPDC before the stop work orders were placed it was the residents who called. SCPDC is going behind third party independent inspectors

under the authority of the building official. This is a process problem that he feels can be fixed. It is not that Lafourche does not want to follow the building codes. The problem is the residents need to understand them, and contractors need to understand the process.

Mr. Curole stated Lafourche is not trying to leave the program but would like to talk more on a few issues.

One issue Mr. Curole wanted to advise the board on. He feels the parish should have more control in reference to the building official.

Another issue was in reference to moving existing buildings, Lafourche found they were doing the permits incorrectly. They had been handling existing buildings the same as mobile homes. He wanted to use this particular item to show this is a learning process and Lafourche would correct their error.

Mr. Curole feels we just need to provide a better way to let the people know what the building code is all about. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Wich commented there are questions as to why SCPDC requires the information they ask for when submitting plans. This is so SCPDC can check to be sure proper materials are being used. Mr. Wich informed Mr. Curole this issue did not develop last week. On several occasions SCPDC has requested information from his office including an email, but the information was never given. SCPDC actually got to the point where there were no other options but to physically go out in the field to see what was there.

It was moved by Ms. Debbie Moore, seconded by Mr. Pat Gordon to have the building official develop a summary that can be published in all papers throughout the region on the handling of existing buildings. Motion carried.

Next item for discuss was in reference to modular homes. The act passed by the legislature seems to deal mainly with commercial not residential.

Mr. Randy Noel did speak on behalf of this issue.

It was moved by Ms. Debbie Moore, seconded by Pat Gordon to have Mr. Wich, building official write something up in reference to what is required of residential modular homes. It was also requested the board review before it is published. Motion Carried.

The next item for discussion was appointing a deputy building official. Mr. Curole suggested and requested Mr. Wich to appoint one or more, would prefer two for Lafourche, deputy building official. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Wich informs he is looking into this matter and feels he will be able to appoint someone from his office. His concern is consistency through out all the parishes. This is an issue that still has not been resolved.

Mr. Kevin Belanger spoke on the issue of non-compliance. Work was stopped in all parishes not just Lafourche. The reason, SCPDC was legally advised if we had knowledge, failed to stop work and someone got hurt we would be held responsible.

Mr. Jimmy Cantrelle, general contractor, states his opinion on stop work orders. Mr. Wich explains the process. This is why it is so important to receive the information we ask for. The information SCPDC request from Lafourche was not given.

Mr. Wich made a statement in reference to the shutter issue. The only thing the shutters replace is impact glass. If your house is designed for 130 mile per hour winds and your windows designed for 100 your house is only designed for 100. Your house is only as strong as its weakest point. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Debbie Moore questions Mr. Wich on what information SCPDC request from there office.

Gentlemen, has questions in reference to third party providers. Mr. Wich explains procedure. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Drew Cantrelle, Cantrelle Construction speaks in reference to foundations and information. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Lee Rutter, Rutter homes questions if SCPDC is a third party provider like the independent inspectors. Mr. Chenier explains Mr. Wich and his inspectors work for the Code Council. This is a Code Council issue not SCPDC issue. They are getting beat up over something they have no control over. Mr. Wich explains he and his inspectors are the official code enforcement. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Belanger states the main issue is consistency. By trying to retreat from that if we allow one parish to do it differently we are defeating the purpose. Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Rhodes speaks in reference to getting permit numbers and addresses together on a computer program to make it easier to call in. Mr. Wich explains SCPDC is doing just that.

Ms. Debbie Moore motioned for a deputy building official within the parish to be appointed so Mike can refer back to them in reference to a stop work order. There was no second, motion failed. It will be settled at a later date.

Mr. Tommy Lasseinge, councilman with Lafourche parish. States his opinion he feels the program is not working. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Lyndell Toups, councilman with Lafourche parish. Stated he requested a meeting with Mr. Curole last week and never got a call back. Mr. Curole explained this is the meeting. Mr. Toups explains this is not the meeting he asked for and he still wants that meeting. It seems to him Lafourche is the only parish having problems.

Mr. Barry Blackwell, Parish Manager in Terrebonne parish states they had some problems when the process was new. Terrebonne submits all information SCPDC request and today there are very few problems. Terrebonne wants consistency with the codes to put everyone on an equal playing field.

Mr. Jimmy Rogers with Rogers home construction stated he feels the biggest problem is education.

The next item for discussion was from Ms. Debbie Moore. She wanted to know the procedure on mobile homes from the other parishes. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Charlotte Randolph stated she feels there would be less confusion if the State Code Council educated the region. There needs to be bulletins posted and the website updated quickly so the Code Council would not have to rely on interpretation. This would make it where third parties, SCPDC, contractors and the Parish would know right away what to expect as per the state guidelines.

Mr. Noel agreed and stated this is something they are working on. He informed the council they are welcome to call his office any time if they have a question. He feels the larger issue is third party. Third party providers were to be a supplement to the code arms. Mr. Noel does not feel it was ever envisioned it to be the end all. It is definitely turning into something else.

Mr. Noel stated third party providers need to be certified in what they do. If they are doing something they are not certified to do the code council can remove their registration. Very important they are careful in following the rules.

Insurance companies use a rating system so it is very important there is a place to store the stamped plans and inspections of the third party providers. Mr. Wich read from state rules, third party providers shall provide written copies of review to the code enforcement officer. Mr. Noel agreed it was very clear language. Discussion ensued.

Several members of the public got up to speak there views on the issues reviewed.

There being no further information to be discussed, it was moved by Mr. Chenier, seconded by Mr. Gordon to adjourn.

