

New York State Building Officials Conference Central Chapter

June 2007 Newsletter

Newsletter 2007 Officers:

President :

Neal Smith - nsmith@oswegony.org

First Vice President:

Bernard English - benglish@salina.ny.us

Second Vice President:

Tim O'Neil- toneill@townofcamillus.com

Past President:

James Conlon - jconlon@townofdewitt.com

Treasurer:

Gail Swistak - gswistak@ci.syracuse.ny.us

Secretary:

Cindy Heid - cheid@townofclay.org

NYS Delegates:

Amy Bertini – bert@cortland.org

George Keeler – gkeeler@salina.ny.us

Andrew Worden-aworden@townofdewitt.com

NEXT MEETING:

June 21st, 2007

Thursday

3 Hours In Service Training Credit

Topic:

High Pile Combustible Storage

Location:

Barbagallo's

6344 East Molloy Road

Pre-registration is required. See attached form on cost and times.

Any questions regarding registration, please contact Gail Swistak at 448-8608.

President's Column- June 2007

Politics are like the air we breathe, it is everywhere. Code enforcement officers inhale this air on a daily basis, even though they have no "D" or "R" after their names. Some elected officials believe that CEO's operate solely to benefit them in the eyes of their constituents and have no problem "leaning" on CEOs to help them follow their agenda.

Keeping politics out of the enforcement process is never easy but is as necessary as understanding the codes themselves. Accessing the Codes Division website to identify approved training dealing with this topic will be fruitless however. There is no official course or "manual" to help the CEO maneuver through political minefields. One must learn to identify, then avoid, political tampering as part of experience and "on the job training".

To paraphrase a well-known adage, "I can't define pornography but I know it when I see it". Substitute "political pressure" for "pornography" and the picture becomes clearer, or rather, less murky. Like a rock jutting out of a lake, CEO's must steer clear of this hazard.

Developing good relations with elected officials is important, but not at the cost of compromising standards or integrity. Code officials have a responsibility to "take the high" road in the face of political pressure, making it clear at all times that interpreting the code is not subject to the whims of politicians.

One useful tactic to deter interference is stating emphatically that the codes are "state laws", the implied message being that Mr. or Ms Politician should maintain his or her distance from the enforcement process. Dropping a few references to "friends" at the Codes Division cannot hurt either. As members of NYSBOC generally and code officials specifically, you can expect support from the Codes Division in the face of politically motivated agitation. Better yet, develop a reputation for independent decision-making that is not subject to "persuasion". That way, the lawmakers will think twice before they ask you to reconsider a decision.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal J. Smith
President

Effective Now:

Amy Bertini will be replacing Ed Cusato as a delegate to the State NYSBOC Chapter.

Amy also is our Education Chairperson.

For questions on in-service credits given by our chapter, please contact Amy at bert@cortland.org.

NYSBOC Scholarships Available

“JERRY ST.HILAIRE CENTRAL CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP”

is now available on our website at www.nysboc.com or contact Jim Conlon, jconlon@townofdewitt.com.

NYSBOC STATE CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP:

Available at www.nysboc.net

New York State Building Officials Conference Inc.
P.O. Box 5065
Syracuse, NY 13220

