Changes to 2019 Editions of the ICC IEBC and IECC

By Dana Glenn Peterson, AIA, and David Handwork, PE

By the time this issue is published, the International Code Council (ICC) will have finalized proposed changes to the numerous Group B category model codes that they maintain and update on a regular basis. Two of the Group B model codes are codes that a significant portion of APPA members report having to comply with for work upon their campuses. They are the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) and the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). These two codes are closely monitored by the APPA Standards and Codes Council (ASCC) through the efforts of its ICC Work Group. The ICC Work Group comprises one or more volunteers from APPA member institutions representing diverse sizes and types of education-focused facilities. The 2018-19 Group B Work Group consisted of members from the following schools:

- Cleveland State University
- University of Michigan
- University of Rochester
- Middlesex County College
- Brigham Young University
- Penn State University
- Virginia Community College System
- University of Washington
- Georgia Southern University
- California State University Stanislaus
- University of Texas at Austin
- Rutgers University

The ICC Work Group is chaired by ASCC member Dana Glenn Peterson, AIA, Associate University Architect (retired) at the University of New Hampshire.

The Work Group began its efforts for the 2019 editions back in November 2018 by canvassing the APPA membership for any applicable code change suggestions they would like to see. With no suggestions offered, the group turned its attention to considering the scores of change proposals that were submitted by a variety of other groups ranging from individuals, code enforcement officers, and first responders, to manufacturer lobbyists and special interest groups.

PICKING AND CHOOSING

It is important to note that the Work Group did not review the changes to every Group B code, due to the fact that some ICC model codes have limited or insignificant applicability to the typical academic institution. For example, the International Residence Code (IRC) is a Group B code, but the Work Group did not review changes to it because of its limited impact on APPA members. The ICC IEBC is used by many jurisdictions to govern periodic building inspections and minor alterations to existing buildings. The ICC IECC is widely used across the country to set minimum requirements for state and local energy codes and construction aspects that affect the use of energy.

Likewise, it is not feasible for the Work Group to review every proposed change, even to applicable codes. On average, the ICC receives many hundreds of individual change proposals for each of its many model codes, and only allows less than 60 days between their public release and their adoption for continued consideration (or rejection) at their Technical Action Hearings, where a panel of experts take testimony for and against the measure and vote to approve or disapprove it. For these reasons the Work Group uses a code-consulting firm to screen the proposals to a more manageable number, to include those that would have the greatest impact on educational institutions.

Based on that process, the list of hundreds of potential changes proposed for the 2019 editions was reduced a list of 48 red-flagged potential changes to the IEBC and IECC model codes. In a series of weekly conference calls occurring from mid-March to mid-April 2019, the Work Group had a chance to discuss

the possible impacts of each identified proposal. Each institution was then allowed to cast a vote on whether they (be it an individual representative, or the consensus of an institutional group or committee) supported the change, opposed it, or had no opinion on it.

In total, the Work Group recommended support for 12 proposals, opposed 13, and had no opinion on 23. The Work Group submitted its report and recommendations to the ASCC Council, which considered and approved them in late April 2019.

PROPOSALS AND POSITIONS

Following the Committee Action Hearings (CAH), the Work Group considered the outcome of the hearings and whether or not to recommend that APPA should submit a public comment on any of the 11 unsuccessful positions taken (for or against) during the designated public comment period, which extended through July 2019. After that discussion, the group decided that none of the unsuccessful positions were significant enough to warrant making a challenge to the Technical Committee votes, and so adjourned its work on the 2019 Group B codes. Click here to view the results of the CAH and Public Comment Hearings (PCH).

All of the positions taken by the CAH regarding the original 48 red-flagged proposals were sustained by the voting membership, with the following exceptions: CE44-19 was overridden from "Disapproved" to "Approved as Modified," CE55-19 was overridden from "Approved" to "Disapproved," and CE150-19 was changed from "Approved" to "Approved as Modified." One proposal, EB54-19, was designated as a "Consent Agenda" item, meaning that the Final Action Consent Agenda for each code or segment of code changes will be placed before the assembly with a single motion for final action. There was no action taken during the PCH in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The proposed new editions are currently undergoing an online ratification vote, after which they will be published and promoted to the various state and local jurisdiction committees to be adopted formally into law, and an enforcement date set. Further changes are unlikely; however, it is up to the state and local enforcement agencies to adopt the latest edition or not. These jurisdictions also have the power to make amendments as they see fit, but after adoption, local jurisdictions can only enforce terms that are stricter than the adopted terms.

Until recently, there was an ICC Group C family of codes, but because the only significant code in that group—the International Green Construction Code (IGCC)—has been largely delegated to the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), the ICC Work Group will be idle until resuming work in late 2020, when the Group A code cycle is up for consideration again.

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