



NEWS & VIEWS

National Society of Professional Surveyors

Meeting of the Technical Mapping Advisory Council to FEMA

Virtual meeting Wednesday January 31, 2018

Report submitted by Wendy Lathrop, PLS, CFM

This was a brief (under 2 hours) administrative meeting during which we elected a new Chair (Jeff Sparrow, PE, CFM), who will take up the reins when the 2017 Annual Report is reviewed by the FEMA Administrator. While that date has not been shared with TMAC, we do know that the Report was submitted to FEMA on January 10, 2018. When the Report is made publicly available, I will share the link with NSPS. The dedicated webpage on FEMA's site for TMAC updates, open to the public and containing links to all reports, is <https://www.fema.gov/technical-mapping-advisory-council>.

Next on the agenda was a brief update on attempts to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program, which was set to expire this past fall and has been extended several times, just weeks at a time, the latest extension being from the January 19 shutdown until February 8, 2018. Political disarray has resulted in multiple reauthorization proposals, some containing new charges for TMAC. Many of these competing House and Senate proposals suggest changing approaches to mapping, to flood insurance, or to both. There are too many variations to digest and report on, and the landscape is shifting too much for me to be able to update NSPS on this coherently. The impact on TMAC is that there may be effects on what we are supposed to accomplish this year, which complicates planning our 2018 Annual Report and starting our research and writing. Reports are supposed to be essentially complete by October 1st, with subsequent meetings prior to January 1st for technical edits only, not substantive changes.

While there will be work groups meeting between full TMAC sessions, at present there are only three full group meetings planned. The first will be an in-person public meeting in the DC area May 15-16. A mid-July virtual public meeting date has not yet been established, nor for the proposed early September two-day in-person public meeting.

Unrelated to TMAC, but regarding the review of the Elevation Certificate mentioned in my December report, those meetings have slowed down to one per month instead of every week or two, with the last meeting held on January 17. During that session conflicting viewpoints were heatedly expressed about requiring surveyors to attach certifications of manufactured flood openings rather than attaching them "if available" (as the current instructions state). The difficulty with making this a mandate is two-fold: (1) For uniquely designed engineered openings created for specific buildings, unless the property owner supplies the certification from the designing engineer there is no way to find it. (2) Not every mass-manufactured engineered opening has gone through a testing and certification process by the ICC-ES (www.icc-es.org) to have PDFs readily accessible on line, and not every manufacturer clearly identifies its models for a surveyor to know who to contact to find out if the manufacturer has a certification form to distribute (more time and effort and cost in a surveyor's research). No draft revised form is available yet. As a reminder, the current form expires November 30, 2018. When FEMA does not have a replacement ready, it extends the expiration date. When new forms do come out, there is always a phase in period during which both old and new forms can be used before the new one becomes mandatory.