



Draft MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: May 13, 2026 (Wednesday)
TIME: 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
LOCATION: 49 South Van Ness Ave, 5th Floor, Room 0511

Note: Public comment is welcome and will be heard during each agenda item. Reference documents relating to agenda are available for review at the 49 South Van Ness Ave, 2nd Floor, Key Programs Counter. For information, please email ken.hu@sfgov.org.

Present

Ned Fennie, A.I.A, Chair
Stephen Harris, S.E., Vice-Chair
Jim Reed
Arnie Lerner, FAIA, CASp
Don Libbey, P.E.
Paul Staley
Deepak Patankar, AIA, LEED AP
Zachary Nathan, AIA, CASp
Henry Karnilowicz
Gina Centoni
Marc Cunningham
Tony Sanchez-Corea
Brian Salyers, F.P.E

Excused

Jonathan Rodriguez
Rene' Vignos, S.E.

Absent

John Tostanoski

Others Present

David Kane, DBI	Jimmy Cheung, DBI	Vivian Huang, DBI
Thomas Fessler, DBI	Tate Hanna, DBI	Guest, Public
Ken Hu, DBI	Call-in: 6502****15, Public	Nate Dison, Public
Call-in: 6504****49, Public	Call-in: 6262****93, Public	Todd Levine, Public
Riley Wilhite, Public		

1.0 The meeting was called to order. Roll call found a quorum of committee members were present.

- 2.0 Approval of the meeting minutes for the Code Advisory Committee's regular meetings held on August 13, 2025, November 12, 2025, and April 8, 2026.
- A motion was made to approve the minutes as amended below.
 - Correction: Zachary Nathan was not present at the November 12, 2025 meeting.
 - Correction: Tate Hanna's last name was misspelled in the August 13, 2025 meeting minutes.
 - Seconded and approved.

- 3.0 Discussion and possible action regarding proposed Administrative Bulletin implementing ordinance file no. 250811 related to the timing of expiration of certain building permits and building permit applications.

Possible action would be to make a recommendation to the Building Inspection Commission for their further action

Discussion:

- The proposed Administrative Bulletin (AB) was reviewed by the AGD & DA Subcommittee and will return next month with recommended revisions.
- The subcommittee conducted a detailed review and proposed several amendments and clarifications.
- Key revisions include:
 - Clarification that the bulletin applies to issued permits.
 - Reiteration of the requirement for DBI to notify applicants 60 days before application expiration.
 - Addition of guidance regarding over-the-counter (OTC) permit applications.
 - Establishment of an escalation process for permit extension disputes and denied extensions.
 - Clarification of documentation requirements for inspectors when granting or denying extensions.
 - Confirmation that permits filed before the effective date will remain subject to existing rules.
- Members discussed concerns regarding permit expiration tracking and limitations of the current permit tracking system.
- Staff reported ongoing efforts to update information technology systems before implementation.
- Questions were raised regarding documentation of inspection determinations and public access to records.
- Members discussed how extension provisions apply to trade permits, including fire alarm, electrical, plumbing, and sprinkler permits.
- Staff agreed to further clarify procedures for fire-only permits and extension requirements.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Action: No action.

- 4.0 Discussion regarding occupant load factors in B Occupancy office spaces.

Discussion:

- CAC member Brian Salyers made a presentation.

- The discussion focused on how occupant loads should be calculated for modern office spaces under the current code.
- Since the 2019 CBC/IBC update, offices are generally calculated at 150 gross sq. ft. per person, while concentrated business uses (such as call centers, trading floors, and similar high-density spaces) may use 50 gross sq. ft. per person.
- There is inconsistency in how plan reviewers and agencies apply the 150 gross versus 50 gross occupant load factors.
- Participants noted that interpretations may differ between Building Department reviewers and Fire Department reviewers, potentially resulting in inconsistent application of occupant load requirements during project review.
- Applicants often face uncertainty during leasing and permit processes because occupant load interpretations can vary.
- Some projects are being required to use the more restrictive 50-square-foot occupant load factor, even when they appear to be typical office layouts, which can significantly increase calculated occupant loads and result in additional exit requirements, stair capacity issues, increased restroom and plumbing fixture requirements, and permit approval challenges for existing buildings.
- Some participants stated that they had not encountered widespread application of the 50 sq. ft. factor until recently and that interpretations appear to vary between projects.
- Conference rooms, collaboration areas, break rooms, and amenity spaces were discussed extensively, with several participants noting that these areas are typically used by existing office occupants and do not generally introduce additional occupants to the floor.
- Questions were raised regarding how other jurisdictions apply these code provisions, whether guidance should be developed to clarify when the 50 sq. ft. versus 150 sq. ft. occupant load factors are appropriate, and whether furniture layouts and occupancy calculations should be required to support the proposed load factor.
- DBI staff acknowledged these concerns and expressed interest in receiving recommendations from industry groups, reviewing potential guidance documents or information sheets, and exploring ways to provide greater certainty and consistency during project review.
- An expedited pre-application process for occupant-load interpretation was discussed as a possible interim solution.
- Industry representatives, including American Institute of Architects and other stakeholder groups, will continue developing draft guidance and recommendations. The working group may prepare a document outlining criteria for applying concentrated business occupant load factors, and DBI expressed its willingness to review future recommendations and continue discussions on the issue.

Public Comment:

BOMA San Francisco Codes and Regulations Committee Chair Riley Wilhite expressed appreciation to the Code Advisory Committee and DBI for addressing the occupant load factor issue. Mr. Wilhite stated that BOMA's primary concern is not with the code language itself, but with how it has recently been interpreted and applied. He noted that some tenant improvement (TI) projects are being classified as high-density occupancies, resulting in additional restroom requirements, egress and life-safety concerns, increased design and construction costs, and delays and complications in leasing transactions. He further pointed out that higher occupant load classifications can also affect elevator system capacity requirements and HVAC system design and capacity, particularly in buildings originally designed for standard office occupancy levels. Mr. Wilhite emphasized that uncertainty in code interpretation creates challenges for landlords, tenants, architects, and project teams. He stated that the commercial office market continues to face significant challenges, including office vacancy rates exceeding 30%, and that additional

permitting and design uncertainties may hinder market recovery. Mr. Wilhite thanked the committee for the opportunity to provide comments and encouraged continued efforts to improve clarity, consistency, and predictability in the application of the code.

Action: No action.

5.0 Discussion regarding state legislation affecting the Building Code.

Discussion:

- DBI Legislative Affairs Manager Tate Hanna presented an overview of recent state legislation affecting building codes and permitting processes.
- Staff noted that many bills are still moving through the legislative process and may require future implementation by DBI.
- Committee members discussed practical concerns regarding remote inspections, asynchronous inspections, private plan checking, and enforcement limitations.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Action: No action.

6.0 Public Comments on items not on this agenda but within the jurisdiction of the Code Advisory Committee. Comment time is limited to 3 minutes or as determined by of the Chairperson.

- No Public comments.

7.0 Committee comments on items not on this agenda.

- No Committee comments.

8.0 Subcommittee Reports: (Discussion & possible action)

a. Housing Code Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Henry Karnilowicz
Subcommittee Members: Jim Reed
Paul Staley

- No meeting. No report.

b. Mechanical Electrical Plumbing & Fire Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Brian Salyers, F.P.E.
Subcommittee Members: Henry Karnilowicz
Jim Reed

- No meeting. No report.

c. Administrative & General Design and Disability Access Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Jonathan Rodriguez
Subcommittee Members: Arnie Lerner, F.A.I.A., CASp
Tony Sanchez-Corea
Zachary Nathan, A.I.A., CASp
Henry Karnilowicz
Deepak Patankar, AIA, LEED AP

- The AGD and DA Subcommittee met prior to this meeting and reviewed Item 3.0 on this agenda.

d. Structural Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Stephen Harris, S.E.
Subcommittee Members: Rene' Vignos, S.E., LEED A.P.
Marc Cunningham
Ned Fennie, A.I.A.
Don Libbey, P.E.

- No meeting. No Report.

e. Green Building Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Chair: Zachary Nathan, AIA, CASp
Subcommittee Members: Gina Centoni
Henry Karnilowicz
Jonathan Rodriguez

- No meeting. No report.

9.0 Committee Member's and Staff's identification agenda items for the next meeting, as well as current agenda items to be continued to another CAC regular meeting or special meeting, or a subcommittee meeting.

- No items.

10.0 Adjournment.

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

DRAFT