



Draft MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: July 8, 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
John Tostanoski
Tony Sanchez-Corea
Brian Salyers, F.P.E

Excused

Jonathan Rodriguez
Rene' Vignos, S.E.
Marc Cunningham
Gina Centoni
Zachary Nathan, AIA, CASp

Absent

Henry Karnilowicz

Others Present

David Kane, DBI	Jimmy Cheung, DBI	Vivian Huang, DBI
Thomas Fessler, DBI	Tate Hanna, DBI	Andrew, Public
Ken Hu, DBI	Calvin Hom, DBI	Matthew Armour, DBI

- 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 regular meetings of May 13, 2026.
- A motion was made to approve the minutes as written.
 - Seconded and approved.

- 3.0 Discussion and possible action regarding proposed ordinance amending the Housing Code to reduce the minimum ceiling height for habitable rooms to seven feet and other rooms to six feet eight inches. (File No. 260623)

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

Discussion:

- The ordinance is intended to create a pathway for legalizing existing non-habitable spaces and illegal dwelling units, particularly in existing buildings where the current 7'-6" requirement prevents conversion.
- Staff noted that the California Residential Code already permits lower ceiling heights in certain existing residential spaces, although its application is generally limited to one- and two-family dwellings.
- Three approaches were discussed:
 - Amend the existing Housing Code language directly.
 - Add a specific provision for existing basements/attics in one- and two-family dwellings.
 - Create a broader exception allowing existing non-habitable rooms to be converted to habitable space with a minimum ceiling height of 7'-0".
- Concerns were raised regarding:
 - Whether the provision should apply to three-or-more-unit buildings.
 - The definitions and limitations of "basement" and "attic."
 - Potential confusion for homeowners, plan checkers, and applicants about where the reduced ceiling-height requirements apply.
 - The difficulty of determining whether an existing non-habitable room was "legally constructed."
- Staff generally favored the broader third approach, because it would:
 - Avoid limiting the provision to basements and attics.
 - Potentially apply to buildings with three or more units.
 - Provide a clearer pathway for existing non-habitable spaces to become habitable.
 - Be easier for applicants to understand.
- The Committee discussed modifying the language to:
 - Allow existing non-habitable rooms to be converted to habitable space when the ceiling height is at least 7'-0".
 - Reduce the minimum ceiling height for rooms other than habitable rooms to 6'-8".
- It was clarified that converting space to an additional dwelling unit would still require compliance with all other applicable code requirements; the ordinance would only provide relief from the ceiling-height requirement.
- An information sheet was discussed as a way to clarify applicability and direct applicants to other requirements, without attempting to explain every potential code trigger.
- The Committee agreed that the ceiling height for sloped ceilings would continue to be evaluated under the applicable building-code provisions.

Public Comment:

Clarified that the proposed exception is intended to allow an existing unfinished garage-level space with a 7'-0" ceiling to be converted to habitable space through a permitted remodel. The conversion would still need to satisfy all other applicable code requirements, not just the ceiling-height requirement.

Action:

- A motion was made to recommend an amendment to add the following new exception:
EXCEPTION: Existing non-habitable rooms built before the effective date of this ordinance may be converted to habitable space, provided the ceiling height is at no less than seven feet.
- Seconded and approved.

4.0 Discussion and possible action regarding proposed Administrative Bulletin 115: Application & Permit Expiration Guidelines.

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

Discussion:

- The Administrative Bulletin was reviewed the AGD & DA Subcommittee on June 8, 2026 and received unanimous approval.
- Modifications were made to clarify:
 - OTC processes.
 - Fire-only processes.
 - Supervisor escalation procedures.
 - Inspection documentation.
 - Notification of permit expiration.
- Expiration notifications:
 - Applicants will receive notification approximately 60 days before a site permit expires.
 - Applicants must contact the Department to request an extension or take other appropriate action.
- Parent permit and deferred permits:
 - The parent permit will control the expiration date for associated revisions and deferred submittals.
 - Extension of the parent permit will automatically extend the associated permits.
 - The Committee discussed whether separate expiration dates for deferred submittals are necessary.
- Committee members agreed that the revised bulletin incorporated the issues discussed at the previous meeting.
- Staff agreed to add a version/date to the Administrative Bulletin for clarity and document tracking.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Action:

- A motion was made to approve AB 115.
- Seconded and approved.

- 5.0 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 the Chairperson.

Public comment was received regarding the ceiling-height discussion under Item 3.0. The commenter asked whether San Francisco intends to adopt a requirement stricter than the California Residential Code, which allows certain existing basements to be converted to habitable space with a 6'-8" ceiling height. The commenter requested clarification and justification if San Francisco will require 7'-0" instead. The commenter noted that this issue could affect existing garage/lower-level spaces with 6'-8" ceilings.

- 6.0 Committee comments on items not on this agenda.

- No Committee comments.

- 7.0 Subcommittee Reports: (Discussion & possible action)

- a. Housing Code Subcommittee:

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

- Discussed only the ceiling-height ordinance.

- 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

- No meeting. No report.

- 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.

- 8.0 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.
- Occupant load factors in B Occupancy office spaces.
- 9.0 Adjournment.
- The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

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