

# BUILDING SAFETY NEWS

PUBLISHED BY BUILDING SAFETY DIVISION

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**Work Load**

1804 permits were issued in the first two months of 2008. These included 10 new attached single family units and 30 new detached single family units for a total of 40 new single family units. They also include 2 new multi-family residential projects, one project comprised of 9 buildings with a total of 120 units and a second smaller project with 12 units. Permits for commercial projects issued in February include the new Burger King at 8506 Hampton Blvd.,

As of the end of February, there were no residential plans in inventory. Residential turn around is running at one day. There are several new commercial plans in inventory including the Wachovia mixed use project north of MacArthur Mall, a new medical office building at 173 Kempsville Road, and a new Candlewood Suites hotel located at 5600 Lowery Road. Also received near the end of February were plans for a 17,570 square foot, \$12 million project for the zoo at 3500 Granby Street; and a 7,488 square foot warehouse to be located at 2801 St. Julian Av. While the average commercial turn around time improved to less than 10 days during the first two months, it has recently slipped to 14 days as more commercial additions, repair and alterations have been submitted along with re-submittal of plans previously reviewed.

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## THE ZONING CORNER

BY BOBBY TAZAN

Welcome to the first edition of the Zoning Corner. This corner gives a brief background of the discipline and some important yet standard regulations. The state of Virginia requires all laws applied in local municipal governments be approved by the General Assembly (Dillon Rule) the actual objectives and purpose of Zoning is stated within the Virginia Code. Virginia Code §15.2-2200. Zoning has the following objectives:

- Improve the public health, safety, convenience and welfare of its citizens Plan for the future development of communities to the end transportation systems be carefully planned.
- Recognize the need for mineral resources and the needs of agriculture, industry, and business in future growth.
- Provide residential areas with healthy surroundings for family life
- Preserve agricultural and forestall land.
- Assure that the growth of the community is consonant with the efficient and econo
- The efficient and economical use of public funds.
- Purpose of Zoning— §15.2-2283
- Provide for adequate light, air convenience of access and safety from fire, flood crime and other dangers.
- Reduce or prevent congestion in the public streets.
- Facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community

- Facilitate the provision of adequate police and fire protection, disaster evacuation, civil defense, transportation, water, sewerage, flood protection, schools, parks, forests, playgrounds, recreational facilities, airports and other public requirements.
- Protect against the destruction of or encroachment upon historic areas.
- Protect Against the overcrowding of land, undue density of population in relation to the community facilities existing or available, obstruction of light and air, danger, and congestion in travel and transportation, or loss of life, health or property from fire, flood, panic or other dangers.
- Encourage economic development activities that provide desirable employment and enlarge the tax base.
- Provide for the preservation of agricultural and forestall lands and other lands of significance for the protection of natural environment.
- Protect approach slopes and other safety areas of licensed airports, including U.S. military air facilities.
- Promote the creation and preservation of affordable housing suitable for meeting the current and future needs of the locality as well as a reasonable proportion of the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

(Continued on Page 3)

## HIGHLIGHTS OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES FOR MECHANICAL BY LEON YODER

The 2006 edition of the International Codes are available and will be referenced documents to be adopted by the State of Virginia within the next year. Here is the third in a series that takes a look at the significant changes in the codes: The International Fuel Gas Code:

- Section 301.3 The code is clarified in its content that appliances be installed and used in the manor consistent with the nature of their listing. This will prevent an appliance from being used in an application other than for what it was listed.

- Section 404.11 The text was clarified regarding alternatives to galvanized steel ducts. Alternatives must have strength, rigidity and corrosion resistance equivalent to galvanized steel.
- Section 306.6 This section was expanded to include a roof top hatch that is located within 10 feet from the roofs edge, to require a guard rail
- Section 404.1 Gas piping downstream of the point of delivery is no longer permitted to pass through townhouse units other than the unit served by such piping.

- A new section was added for connectors listed to Z21.69 are now required for all commercial cooking appliances that are moved for cleaning/sanitation purposes.
- A new section was added to piping conveying hydrogen is no longer allowed to be installed in concealed locations and must always be fully exposed for visual observation.



## ICC Code Development Hearings

Over 2000 proposed changes in all of the model codes were heard by 14 different committees over a two week period in February, 2008. The committees heard testimony from an estimated 6000 advocates for or against these proposed changes. There were significant changes being considered including mandatory fire suppression systems for all single family homes. Each of these proposals received recommendations from one or more Committees. The proposals will be available for public comment over the next few months. Then, in September, each will be considered by the entire membership in Final Action in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Those approved will become part of the 2009 Codes.



Virginia and the City of Norfolk had significant representation at these hearings with committee membership and testimony.

### Organization Meeting Schedule

#### VBCOA Region 8

Regular meeting...April 17th

#### VBCOA Chapter

April 27-28, 2008 Mid-Year Charlottesville  
Annual Conference...October 26-28 2008  
Wytheville

#### IAEI Eastern

Regular meeting ... April 22, 2008

#### IAEI National

IAEI Southern Section...October 12-15, 2008  
Alexandria

#### VPMIA

Forty Fifth Annual School of Instruction  
April 9, 10 and 11, 2008 Charlottesville

#### VFPA

2008 Annual Training Conference & Mtg.  
May 19, 20 & 21, 2008 - Virginia Beach

#### VCCA

VCCCA 2008 Annual Conference  
March 26, 27 and 28, 2008  
Harrisonburg

# COMMON REASONS FOR PLAN REVIEW FAILURES (THIRD IN A SERIES) BY TONY ANDERSON



### Homework

Time must be spent determining all pertinent aspects of the design that affect the project. This includes zoning, building codes, utility lines, deed restrictions, etc. Common errors include simple requirements that are overlooked. Do your homework.

### No Plans or Poor Plans

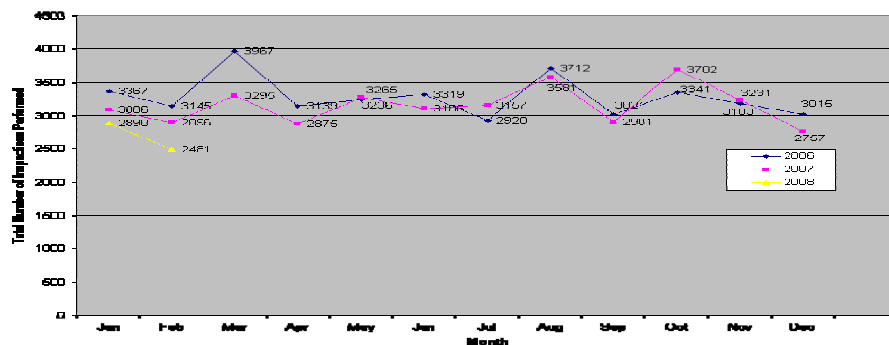
Building plans are a form of communication just like the spoken word. It is impossible too accurately convey and review technical information such as construction without illustrations. City of Norfolk has a policy for plan quality. Meet that standard.



### Look beyond your Design

Often an applicant has given their project so much thought that they assume that everyone can interpret their illustrations as they do. Building plans should be complete enough using standard drafting nomenclature that no additional verbal commentary is necessary to build by. Imagine that you've won the lottery and are going on a World Cruise and out of touch. You give the builder plans for a dream home. It is what you want to walk into when you get back. You won't be able to communicate regularly and 'interpret' what the drawings really intend. That is the level of detail needed in a set of construction drawings. Be thorough. If in doubt, draw the detail exactly the way you want it.

Total Inspections Performed by Month for a Three Year Period

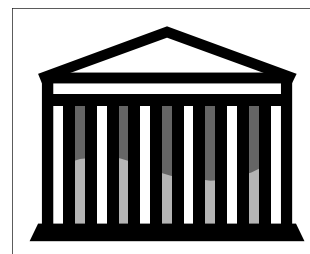


## INSPECTIONS SHOW MARGINAL INCREASE

Requests for all Inspections have marginally increased during the month of January compared to last month. This year, for January, there were 2,890 permits for all type of construction activity. This compared to 2,757 during the month of December, 2007. This represents a 5% increase from last month while still lower than the same time period during the previous five years. The increase is regarded as a positive sign that the 'correction' has bottomed out and a general rise in construction is beginning.

Normally, January dips in Inspections following a trend of reduced permits during the month of January compared to last month. This year, for January, there were 2,890 permits for all type of construction activity. This compared to 2,757 during the month of December, 2007. This represents a 5% increase from last month while still lower than the same time period during the previous five years. The increase is regarded as a positive sign that the 'correction' has bottomed out and a general rise in construction is beginning.

all categories including permits. Permits declined from 949 in January to a three-year low of 855, a number that was almost 30% lower than the same time period in 2007. Revenue in February indicated a corresponding decline. \$94,448 received during this time period was 34% less than 2007 and half that in 2006.



Permits for December at 949, up 12% from December

**ZONING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)**

- Provide reasonable protection against encroachment upon military bases, military installations and military airports and their adjacent safety areas, excluding armories operated by the Virginia National Guard.

Actual Zoning powers "given" to municipalities generally come from §15.2-2280 (or as established by their Charters in some cases and establishes power over uses, structures, and areas of use.

- Uses: The use of land, buildings, structures and other premises for agricultural, business, industrial, residential, flood plain and other specific uses.
- Physical characteristics of structures: The size, height, area, bulk, location, erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, mainte-

nance, razing, or removal of structures.

- Areas of Use: The areas and dimensions of land, water, and air space to be occupied by buildings, structures and uses and of courts, yards, and other open spaces to be left unoccupied by uses and structures, including variations in the sizes of lots based on whether a public or community water supply or sewer system is available and used.
- Excavation: The excavation or mining of soil or other natural resources.

Reference: "Virginia Zoning Officials (VAZO) Certification Program Manual," Kamptner, Greg, Zoning Law for the Virginia Zoning Official, July 26, 2007.

This ends up being a mouthful but at least gives an insight to what the Virginia General Assembly states that what Zoning does and what it is.

**FOIA Requests Increase  
By Deborah Mapp**

Although the housing market is declining, the requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has increased in our Division/Department.

*Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)* - Means the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C.552. *Information* - Means any knowledge that can be communicated or documentary material, regardless of its physical form or characteristics that is owned by, produced by or for, or is under the control of the U. S. Government.

*Office Procedures:* All Customers to complete a FOIA request form and mail, carry or fax (664-4201) the request to our City Attorney's Office (CAO), 10th Floor, City Hall for approval to release the information requested. A file number is assigned, and the CAO will forward the approved request to our office. Information is searched and gathered (if any exist) and is returned to the CAO within 5-7 days. The CAO notifies the requestor when the information is ready to be picked up *from their* office. The customer pays 10¢ per informational sheet copied and \$1 or \$5 per sheet for copies of plans. Search time is \$25 an hour.

**VBCOA is a Chapter of ICC**



[www.vbcoa.org](http://www.vbcoa.org)

**ICC Mission and Vision**

**Vision:** Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of people by creating better buildings and safer communities.

**Mission:** Providing the highest quality codes, standards, products, and services for all concerned with the safety and performance of the built environment.

**VBCOA Announces Positions**

VBCOA announced the updated officers and Region Chair positions. They are as follows:

- President: John Glover
- 1st VP Lynn Underwood
- 2nd VP Jim Collins
- Sgt Arms Joel Baker
- Region I Stan Massie
- Region II Cathy Cook
- Region III Bill Butler & Kevin Kline
- Region IV Dave Ansell & Paul Snyder
- Region V Sean Farrell
- Region VI Rodger Slate & Dallas Johnson
- Region VII Steve Daum & Harold Stills
- Region VIII Vernell Woods

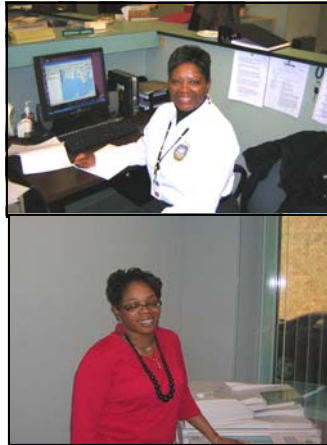
New committee chairs were announced. They are as follows:

- Awards Bill Butler
- BHCD Eric Mays
- Education Roger Robertson
- IBC Justin Biller
- IRC Ellis McKinney
- Legislation Rick/Julie Walton/Dave Duffie
- Membership Homer McCoy
- Nominations Cheri Hainer
- Past Pres. Guy Tomberlin
- Plumbing/Mech Mike Clift
- Property Maintenance Ralston McInnis
- Public Info John Walsh
- Time/Place Kris Bridges
- Web Mgr Richard Ritter
- DPOR Michael Redifer
- Region 7 Rick Witt
- BCAAC Roger Robertson

**NEW ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR**

The City of Norfolk, Department of Planning and Community Development, Division of Building Construction Services officially welcomes Sr. Codes Inspector Deborah Harris (Upper Center) aboard. Inspector Harris' career as an electrical inspector began in the City of Portsmouth, Virginia in 1982. She has been employed as an electrical inspector for the City of Norfolk since December 2007. Deborah is a certified master electrician. She is married with 3 children and a graduate of Craddock High School in Portsmouth, Va.

Welcome to our City Insp. Harris!



**OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF**

Theresa Riddick (Bottom Center) (Abacus Temp Service) is now assigned to work in our main lobby at GMB. Theresa is known for the prompt service she provides our customers as they enter the lobby with questions and concerns about permit applications. Ms. Riddick uses H T E as needed and keeps our bulletin board looking great. She is to be commended for using her professional customer service skills to satisfy the external and internal customers in our office. Theresa and her 9 yr. old daughter, Breanca, reside in Norfolk. Theresa's hobbies include shopping, hairstyling and cooking. Thank you Theresa!

**STAFF RECEIVE NOTE OF APPRECIATION FROM CITY MANAGER**



Three staff members receive a note of appreciation and thank you from the City Manager for performing their jobs well and for bringing credit to all public service employees. Zondra Williams (Support Technician), Art Morris (Sr. Codes Inspector) and Shirley Core (Permit Technician) were highly recognized by a Norfolk citizen for exhibiting extraordinary patience and noteworthy courtesy by listening and answering all of the customer's questions with respect and professional concern. Collectively, their professionalism and expertise has made the City of Norfolk a nicer place to reside.

Congratulations is in order to each them for a "job well done."

**City of Norfolk  
Building Safety Division  
Department of Planning and  
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**We're on the Web:**  
[www.norfolk.gov/  
planning](http://www.norfolk.gov/planning)

**Policy Highlights**

The City of Norfolk has developed policies that delineate methods of conducting business or clarifies acceptable methods of meeting the intent of complex building code issues. These are on our website and available for review. This issue will focus on . This policy may be downloaded from the City's website:

[http://www.norfolk.gov/Planning/Policies\\_BCS.asp](http://www.norfolk.gov/Planning/Policies_BCS.asp)

Planning and Community Development Departmental Vision

To integrate the best ideas from all segments of the community with innovative planning techniques in order to create a holistic framework for a vibrant and diverse community to live, work and play.

Planning and Community Development Departmental Mission

To apply the highest quality planning and reflect regulatory principles to preserve, protect and enhance Norfolk's developed and natural environments.

Division Mission:

Building Safety

**DHCD News:**

The 2006 edition of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code and its related regulations will be published in the Virginia Register on March 17<sup>th</sup> for a 30-day public comment period. The effective date for the 2006 VUSBC will be May 1, 2008.

As a milestone in the 35-year history of our statewide building code, ICC will publish the Virginia Codes, which will incorporate the respective ICC model code and Virginia's administrative provisions and technical amendments. The Virginia Codes may be ordered directly from ICC and should be available for purchase by beginning in May; pre-orders are accepted and orders may be submitted one month prior to release of the publications. As previously announced, during this first transition cycle to the ICC publications, Virginia will continue to provide the pamphlet versions of the Virginia Codes and Regulations similarly to the past code cycles.

ICC, on behalf of Virginia, will host a free subscription to the Virginia eCodes. Additionally, several staff of the DHCD Division of Building & Fire Regulation recently returned from the 2009 ICC code change hearings where over 2,200 code changes were considered. The hearing schedule ran from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm or later for a two-week period. Virginia's Department of Corrections was successful with 11 of their 16 code changes submitted. Virginia's Department of Social Services also attended to gain perspective regarding the inter-relationship of the building and fire codes with the state licensure regulations as well as the code development process with the physical facility needs. Other highlights, just to name a few, include the approval of an energy saving and cost measure on the testing of ventilation ducts for leakage, the approval of more stringent sprinkler requirements under the International Existing Building des for the three-year cycle, accessed through the ICC website at [www.eCodes.biz](http://www.eCodes.biz); however, the direct web link address to the Virginia eCodes is currently under construction. The DHCD website will also continue to provide a downloadable link to the 2006 USBC and the Related Regulations.

The related DHCD code update training will begin in May and run through early Fall 2008. The training program will incorporate interactive web-based telecasts to several community colleges, thereby minimizing the travel time for our code officials and technical assistants. The main contact number for DHCD is (804) 371-7150. Website address: [www.dhcd.virginia.gov](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov)

**Code Corner:**

Q: Is it the intent of the 2003 International Building Code to permit special inspections to be performed by the architect or engineer of record for a project?

A: Typically the services of the architect and engineer of record are retained by the owners of the project and serve to protect the interests of the owners. In such scenarios, the architect and engineer also have an interest to further the strength, safety and durability of their own designs, but this is not in conflict with the interests of the owners. In fact, as the architect and engineer of record are inherently much more familiar with their own designs and design intents than an independent party may be, they are often better equipped to perform special inspections. Note that the architect or engineer of record have nothing to gain financially or otherwise by compromising the building details, so there is no conflict of interest. Therefore, under these conditions, the architects or engineer of record may be the best choice to perform special inspections.

However, if the architect or engineer is directly employed by a design/build firm, or is being retained by the contractor rather than the owners, the architect's or engineer's first allegiance may be to the design/build firm or general contractor, and the interests of the owners and the general public may be compromised in the interest of financial gain for the design/build firm or contractor. This may lead to structural and safety compromises which may potentially affect not only the building owners, but also the building occupants. In such cases the architect and engineer of record should not be approved to perform special inspections.

If you have a question for this section, e-mail it to: [Lynn.underwood@norfolk.gov](mailto:Lynn.underwood@norfolk.gov)

## APPROVED CODE CHANGES IN USBC

Virginia's Building Code, known as the Uniform Statewide Building Code, or USBC, is a State regulation which incorporates by reference model codes of the International Code Council. Currently the USBC is being updated to reference the 2006 edition of these I Codes. The following represent proposed changes that are expected to be made.

- Administrative Code Changes 103.5 Reconstruction, alteration or repair—Exception #2 added “Reconstructed decks, balconies, porches and similar structures located 30 inches or more above grade shall meet the current code provisions for structural loading capacity, connections and structural attachment. This requirement excludes handrails and guardrails.”

Continuing Ed. Requirements—New language added - Bldg. Officials, Code Officials and Tech. Assistants “shall attend 16 hrs every two yrs of continuing ed. And periodic training courses approved or required by DHCD. Additional continuing

- education hours shall not be required if more than one certificate is held.”

- 107.2 Code Academy Fee Levy—New sentenced inserted - The foregoing levy shall remain effective until July 1, 2009, after which time the fee levy shall be increased to 2%.”

- Technical Code Changes - 310.1 Residential Group R- or R-5 if: Non-proprietor occupied, 3 stories, 10 occupants, smoke alarms - Proprietor occupied, 3 stories, 5 guest rooms, smoke alarms

- The ICC Ad Hoc Committee has worked diligently for several years to improve the Wall Bracing requirements. The Committee Members from Va. have produced the Va. EZ Read version, which incorporates the latest

Information in ICC's 2007 Supplement and the 2009 Code Change Proposals from the ICC Ad Hoc Committee

- 310.6 Unvented Attic Assemblies—This incorporates provi-

sion from the 2007 Supplement into the VUSBC/2006. This change is linked to the installation of spray foam insulation products (i.e., icynene insulation) in unvented attics as.407.8 Emergency Power Systems in Facilities

- Licensed by Dept. of Health— Federal and State licensing requires any 1-2 facility (i.e. hospital, nursing home, and hospice) to provide emergency power to medical life support equipment, operating, recovery, intensive care, emergency rooms, fire detection and alarm systems. This adds the requirement to the VUSBC.

- 903.2.1.2 Group A-2 Automatic Sprinkler Systems—Night Club definition added to be consistent with SFPC: “public assembly that provides exhibition, performance or other forms of entertainment; serves alcoholic beverages; and provides music and space for dancing. The fire area has an occupant load of 100 or more in night clubs or 300 or more in other A-2 occupancies; or”

- 2701.1.3 Emergency Generators in Assisted Living Facilities—Generators installed to comply with regulations for assisted living facilities licensed by the Virginia Dept of Social Services shall

- 2901.1.1 Nonmetallic Sanitary Sewer Piping—Locatable Non-metallic sanitary sewer discharging to public systems shall be locatable with installation of minimum 18 AWG copper tracer wire, or equivalent. The tracer wire will be installed within 12 inches of the sewer pipe within the same trench. The new adop-



tion of the U.S.B.C. is expected to be adopted no later than May, 2008. There will be a one year period within which a designer will be allowed to use either the 2003 or 2006 edition. After May, 2009, the 2006 edition is mandatory.