



## Northeast Region Construction Specifications Institute BOARD REPORT

**DATE:** January 15, 2021  
**TO:** Northeast Region Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Steve VanDyke

**SUBJECT:** Report of Worcester County Chapter

### A. Report Summary

1. Worcester struggled with the uncertainty of when the Governor would lift the mandatory shut-down of businesses state-wide due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite little activity over the Spring and Summer, we were able to generally retain membership and found creative ways to provide educational programs within the boundaries of the social distancing protocols without resorting to on-line programs.

### B. The Report

1. Summary of activities since last report:

Being new to the Board, I checked the Region website to see what was reported in the last report from my chapter and found that most current reports posted on the website were from the Fall of FY19, dated September 2018. It is beyond the scope of this report to update 2-1/4 years of activity, but to summarize January – December of 2020:

- In January we held a “Mock-Bid” competition which we originally derived from the Portland, Oregon chapter. Teams form and are given a partially completed spreadsheet (the “bid form”), and a moderator distributes pre-printed “quotations” from subs and vendors. Teams must evaluate the quotes to determine which is the lowest eligible and responsible bid and use that to complete the bid form. From time to time, pre-printed “addenda” are distributed to keep teams on their toes. After a winner is declared, contractors in the group usually give an informal roundtable about bid day. The interactive nature of the game makes this program well-attended.
- February’s program was on the design of Cannabis facilities, since Massachusetts recently legalized its recreational sale. The State has a regulatory agency that sets the standards for facilities and decides who gets licenses. The program was presented by an Architect, a Lawyer and Operator of a facility, to give a well-rounded perspective of the nuances of the design, permitting and licensing of this type of facility. No free samples were given out.
- In March, the Governor forced a mandatory shutdown of the State, which extended until May. No programs were held between March and July, which included the cancellation of our annual Summer Social (baseball game) and our scholarship Golf Tournament fundraiser. Despite cancelling the Golf Tournament, many sponsors donated regardless, and we were able to give away several scholarships.

- For August, we resumed educational programs by hosting a building tour of the South High School which was under construction. The ability to have an “outdoor” program made distancing easy, and the event drew several new faces to the group. Pizza was ordered for after the tour and boxed individually at the pizza shop to alleviate fears of sharing contact with food. Overall, the program was very successful and we’re planning a post-completion follow up tour.
- September’s program was the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Architectural Scavenger Hunt, where like the Amazing Race teams solve clues to find destinations of architectural and historical significance in the city, travel there to take a photo and race back to the start. After all teams return, the presenter gives a powerpoint presentation recapping the destinations and their importance. This program was well-attended despite the pandemic, partly due to it being a familiar event and partly due to being mostly outdoors.
- The October program was presented by our Region President Len A., on the topic of exterior envelope water resistance. Unlike the prior two, this event was held entirely indoors, but within a room that had an occupant load of 125, making it very easy to social distance. This program had a couple of new faces in attendance.
- In November, a State Building Inspector spoke to the group about Massachusetts’ rules regarding Controlled Construction and when a licensed design professional is required. The State Inspector, who is above the local inspectors in terms of hierarchy made for a great presenter due to his knowledge of the regulatory portion of the code, and for the ability to ask questions directly to an AHJ.
- By December, COVID-19 cases were rising following the Thanksgiving holiday, so our Audacious Christmas Yankee Swap was cancelled.

## 2. Status of current programs:

In the last week of December, the Governor reinstated restrictions on the size of groups in Massachusetts, reducing them from 25 to 10. At the time of writing, it remains to be seen whether this will force the cancellation of the January program or not. The tentative upcoming schedule of programs is:

- January: Cpt. Tom Bull of Worcester Fire will discuss how WFD attacks a fire, and how that informs where designers should locate firefighting components like hydrants, FDC’s, FACP’s, annunciators and beacons. Cpt. Bull, and other members of WFD, are frequent attendees at our programs. We are trying to talk them into the controlled burn of a building as part of the program, to demonstrate concepts...
- February: ATC Associates will present “HAZMAT 101”, discussing what typical hazardous materials may be found in buildings, and what the laws are regarding the need to test for them and their proper removal and disposal.
- March: TBD
- April: Revisit South High for another building tour, this time, close to completion and occupancy while the existing South High is prepared for demolition.

- May: In-situ testing of envelopes for water penetration. This will be a live demo of the ASTM test method, on two mock-up walls with different cladding. We are in the process of partnering with the Voke school to have the walls built by the students and having them attend the program to understand how workmanship affects performance.
3. Problem areas: Engagement of members in light of the shut-down has been the biggest problem for us. As a Board, we opted out of hosting virtual programs, because they were plentifully offered throughout the industry and people were feeling “Zoomed Out”. Despite losing the ability to network and socialize, our membership has stayed largely the same, with most expiring members renewing their membership. Those who did not, typically lost their job, or their employer stopped covering the costs.
  4. Success stories: We’re encouraged by the attendance numbers we saw at programs despite the fear of interaction, and attribute that to a combination of outdoor programs and indoor programs with ample spaces to spread out. Many new folks have attended, some of which have attended multiple meetings, and we hope to convert them to members.

### **C. Chapter Leadership Roster**

#### 1. Chapter Officers

- President: Marty Helly
- Vice President: Peter Caruso
- Secretary: Mike Sheehan
- Treasurer: Mike Lapomardo
- Director: Neil Dixon
- Director: Robert Gutmann
- Immediate Past President: Steve VanDyke

#### 2. Chapter Committee Chairs

- Orientation and Program Committees: Marty Helly
- Membership, Nominating and Academic Affairs Committees: Steve VanDyke
- Technical Committee: Mike Lapomardo and Robert Gutmann
- Professional Development Committee: Peter Caruso
- Certification Committee: Neil Dixon
- Awards Committee: Mike Sheehan

#### 3. Chapter Nominating Committee Appointee: Steve VanDyke

**Respectfully submitted;**

Steve VanDyke, Immediate Past President, Worcester County Chapter

**END OF REPORT**

CC: Region Secretary