Pikes Peak Regional Building Department

2880 International Circle
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80910

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 4, 2026 – Wednesday – 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jason Leimkuhl, Mechanical Contractor A
Vice Chair Andy Baturevich, Structural Engineer
Andy Sanchez, Building Contractor A, B, or C
Mike Finkbiner, Building Contractor D or E
Brian Braaten, Electrical Contractor
Mick Emmerson, Master Plumber
Tom Lysne, Architect

RBD STAFF: Roger Lovell, Regional Building Official
Virjinia Koultchitzka, Regional Building Attorney
Jay Eenhuis, Deputy Building Official – Plans
Whitney Hendrian, Chief Mechanical Inspector
Shelby Erickson, Chief Electrical Inspector

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Welton, Deputy Building Official – Inspections

PROCEEDINGS:

The Technical Committee meeting was conducted in a hybrid forum, allowing Committee members, Department staff, and the public to attend in person at the Pikes Peak Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80910, Hearing Room on the upper level, or virtually through Microsoft Town Hall. Sufficient and timely access to the public to observe the meeting was made available at: https://www.pprbd.org/Information/Boards.

Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) was present notwithstanding CSFD's communication in writing that, based on provisions of the International Fire Code, no exceptions were taken to the applicable variance requests as listed on the agenda except for Item 5.c). CSFD representative Mark Stanwood confirmed his virtual attendance for discussion on Item 5.c).

1. **CALL TO ORDER: DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Chair Jason Leimkuhl called the Technical Committee meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. **CONSIDERATION OF OCTOBER 7, 2026, TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Andy Sanchez to **APPROVE** the October 7, 2026, Technical Committee meeting minutes, as written; seconded by Brian Braaten; the motion carried

unanimously.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no items on the Consent Calendar

4. ITEMS CALLED OFF CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no items called off the Consent Calendar.

5. VARIANCE REQUESTS

a) 1875 Democracy Point, Colorado Springs, Permit Q04657, Christine Mueller, Baxter Construction Company, LLC, requests a variance to Section 621.4, International Fuel Gas Code, 2021 Edition, based on Item 3 of RBC111.2.3, Pikes Peak Regional Building Code, 2023 Edition, to install a listed, unvented natural gas decorative fireplace in an open lobby area of an A occupancy, where prohibited.

Christine Mueller appeared virtually alongside project architect Tyler Carr and MEP engineer Faisal Elhalis. Mr. Elhalis described the request to install an unvented gas fireplace heater (European Home Model HVF-42, ASNI Z21.11 listed) in the first floor open lobby area of a new hotel as a decorative item, noting it eliminates the need for exterior venting. In addition to the substantial natural and mechanical continuous ventilation provided in the space, life safety features proposed include a factory-integrated Oxygen Depletion Sensor (ODS) to automatically shut off the pilot flame if oxygen levels drop, an external carbon monoxide (CO) sensor set to trigger an audible alarm at 30 parts per million, physical warning signage, and specific training of hotel staff in the event an alarm is triggered.

Jay Eenhuis referenced the code section prohibiting this installation, noting that unvented room heaters are prohibited in Group A, E, and I occupancies per Section 621.4 of the 2021 International Fuel Gas Code. Whitney Hendrian confirmed that inspections revealed the unit is listed per ANSI Z21.11 as an unvented room heater. Committee members expressed concern regarding reliance on manual staff reaction to alarms over time and the lack of an automatic shut-off tied to the CO sensor. Mark Humphrey, a local mechanical contractor, spoke as a member of the public, noting that similar local projects (such as the library at the Broadmoor) successfully wired CO monitors directly into the unit's ignition system to automatically shut off gas.

Following discussion, the applicant requested to continue this item to allow the design team to explore a redesign of the safety controls to include an automatic shut-off tied to the CO sensor.

A motion was made by Andy Sanchez to **CONTINUE** this variance request to the December Technical Committee meeting to allow the applicant to revise the design; seconded by Mike Finkbiner; the motion carried unanimously.

b) 17325 Caribou Dr., Colorado Springs, Lloyd Smith, property owner, requests a variance, prior to permit issuance, to Section G2434.1, International Residential Code, 2021 Edition, based on Item 3 of RBC111.2.3, Pikes Peak Regional Building Code, 2023 Edition, to allow an indoor vented decorative gas fireplace with ANSI Z21.50 certificate to be installed in an outdoor, covered and protected space.

Committee member Andy Sanchez recused himself from this agenda item due to a historical working relationship conflict. A quorum was maintained.

Lloyd Smith appeared in person alongside project contractor James Velarde and fireplace contractor Mark Humphrey. Mr. Smith described the project as an outdoor living space addition featuring a replacement deck, new deck cover, and glass walls, housing a fully vented 75,000 BTU round gas fireplace. Mr. Velarde noted that the glass walls would enclose the space on two and a half of the four sides, leaving the remaining portion open to outdoor air, thus creating a protected area, but not fully enclosed. Mr. Smith confirmed that the photos submitted with this request were only examples and not photos of the specific model proposed at this project. Mr. Humphrey explained that outdoor fireplaces rated under ANSI Z21.97 cannot have a vent under current standards, which prompted the use of a decorative indoor unit (ANSI Z21.50) in a partially enclosed outdoor setting. Whitney Hendrian and Mr. Humphrey noted that while other manufacturers allow indoor units in weather-protected outdoor spaces meeting certain overhang clearances, the manufacturer of this specific vintage unit provides no such text. Mr. Eenhuis and Mr. Lovell clarified that an engineering evaluation letter from a licensed mechanical engineer specifically taking responsibility for the unit's outdoor application should be included as justification for the variance request.

A motion was made by Mike Finkbiner to **CONTINUE** this variance request to the December Technical Committee meeting to allow the applicant time to provide manufacturer information and a mechanical engineer's evaluation letter; seconded by Tom Lysne; the motion carried unanimously.

c) 2601 Pegasus Dr., Colorado Springs, Permit Q54593, Shawn Howard, Task Enterprises LLC, requests a variance to Section R328.2, International Residential Code, 2021 Edition, based on Item 2 of RBC111.2.3, Pikes Peak Regional Building Code, 2023 Edition, to allow installation of portable batteries without UL 9540 listing and label as an Energy Storage System (ESS), where UL 9540 listing is required.

Committee member Andy Sanchez rejoined the Technical Committee.

Sean Howard appeared virtually on behalf of the homeowner. Mr. Howard stated the proposed battery storage system is portable, on wheels, and intended for multi-use as an energy backup for a house, RV, and off-grid cabin, tied through a UL-listed Anker transfer switch. Jay Eenhuis provided the committee with the definition of Energy Storage System (ESS) from the 2021 International Residential Code (IRC) and the UL 9540 listing requirements for ESS products as noted in Sections R328.1 and R328.2 of the IRC. Mark Stanwood (CSFD) and Shelby Erickson (Chief Electrical Inspector) discussed code provisions regarding bi-directional current flow, utility charging integration, and whether permanent plugin integration functions as a permanent ESS rather than a portable generator. Mr. Howard discussed additional listings provided for the portable battery product proposed, including UL 1973 and UL 2743, which include the fire propagation testing needed for compliance with UL 9540.

Committee members inquired about the proposed location of the battery installation and the intended use of the batteries, to which Mr. Howard confirmed placement in the garage and periodic use as home backup power as well as portable power for an RV and an off-grid cabin. Mr. Howard stated this manufacturer does have permanent energy storage solutions that meet the UL 9540 listing but are using the same cells in both battery types, so no differences exist and both are inherently safe. Committee members noted that because UL 9540-rated portable alternatives exist from the same manufacturer, granting a variance without formal listing or manufacturer documentation presents compliance challenges.

A motion was made by Brian Braaten to **CONTINUE** this variance request to the December Technical Committee meeting to allow the applicant time to perform further research and communicate with the manufacturer regarding listing options; seconded by Mick Emerson; the motion carried unanimously.

d) 402 W. Van Buren St., Colorado Springs, Permit P70701, Beau Schneider, property owner, requests a variance to Section RBC303.4.9, Pikes Peak Regional Building Code, 2023 Edition, (the “Code”) based on Item 2 of RBC111.2.3 of the Code, to allow a soffit height of 5'-11" where a minimum height of 6’-4” is required.

Bo Schneider appeared in person alongside his stepfather, James Johnson. Mr. Schneider described the project as a basement bathroom installation where a soffit was built around existing ducting and plumbing. Mr. Johnson clarified that the low clearance point of 5 feet 11 inches is located next to the toilet area and does not obstruct the doorway or primary emergency egress paths. Committee members noted the need for clear photographic and dimensioned drawing verification to confirm safe egress path.

A motion was made by Andy Sanchez to **CONTINUE** this variance request to the December Technical Committee meeting to allow the applicant to submit clarifying photos

and dimensioned floor plans; seconded by Mike Finkbiner; the motion carried unanimously.

6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

a) 2027 Committee/Board/Commission Meeting Dates (Non-action item until January of 2027, when a schedule will be adopted in accordance with the requirements of the Colorado Sunshine Act of 1972, as amended.)

The proposed 2027 Committee/Board/Commission Meeting Dates schedule was shared with the Committee for review.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no New Business to discuss.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Andy Sanchez to **ADJOURN** the meeting, seconded by Mike Finkbiner.

The Technical Committee meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger N. Lovell
Regional Building Official

RNL/aje

Accommodations for the hearing impaired can be made upon request by providing a forty-eight (48) hour notice prior to the meeting. Please email delisa@pprbd.org or call (719) 327-2989.

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