

NEW JERSEY NOISE CONTROL COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 9, 2009
MINUTES (JUNE 15, 2009 DRAFT)

NCC Attendees: J. Lepis (Chairman), J. Kapferer (Vice Chairman), D. Triggs (DEP), R. Hauser (m - DOL), A. Schmidt (m), J. Feder, T. Pitcherello (m – DCA), N. Dotti (m), M. Klewin (m), S. Szulecki, E. Zwerling (Rutgers).

Demo Assistance: William Finan

Pre Meeting Discussion on Noise Meters

While waiting for members to arrive, not part of formal meeting, there was an interesting discussion of inexpensive available noise meters. A \$150 meter offered by Xtech is advertised as having Level 2 capability. However, there were questions as to whether the meter truly met Level 2 measurement requirements. Two issues surfaced: 1) the certification and tracability to known standards for meters of this type; 2) deviation of from the specs at frequency extremes common for inexpensive meters. (1) is key; without this, the inexpensive meters cannot be treated as Level 2. It is unlikely that the \$150 Xtech meter meets level 2 standards. Level 2 meters distributed by Eric Zwerling for the noise criteria demo cost in the vicinity of \$1000.

Administrative

The meeting was held at the Operator Training Center because of the planned demo of C weighted threshold standards. The draft minutes to the March 12, 2009 meeting were reviewed and adopted.

Emergency Generators for Cellular Towers

Verizon had cancelled their proposed attendance at the meeting. Verizon had stated that they could meet the 65 decibel requirement with smaller generators, but preferred to use a noisier 60KW version. A company named Kohler offers three sound protection enclosures, the most protective of which would quiet the generator to 55 decibels at 23 feet. *[Do I have this right?]* That might be insufficient to protect residents in a densely populated area, or protect top floor residents from generators on the roofs of buildings. Some members offered the view that there might be better enclosures than those offered by Kohler, and that Verizon had not yet demonstrated hardship in meeting the 65 decibel requirement. Offering Verizon relief from this requirement would set bad precedent.

C Weighted Threshold Standards for Amplified Music Within Buildings

As a highlight of the meeting, Chairman Lepis and Eric Zwerling had prepared a demonstration of music and background noise levels so that the group could evaluate possible thresholds for amplified music in buildings. Because some music has a heavy bass component, it was speculated that a C weighted scale might be more effective in setting and enforcing standards. (Data distributed subsequent to the meeting by Norm Dotti call

this into question.) A disco type public address system was set up by Mr. Finan in the next room, with music representative of what might be heard at a disco. Sound meters were calibrated and distributed to each member of the NCC. The first step was to measure the background noise levels, which typically measured about 38 decibels - A weighted and 60 decibels - C weighted. Low frequency heating/ventilation system noise appeared to be the primary background source. The author (Feder) was surprised at the high C level room background measurement result, since the room seemed relatively quiet when no one was talking or moving around. Mr. Finan then turned on the disco music at various levels and allowed NCC members to record the C weighted measurement results at slow meter response setting. The test music had a periodic pronounced bass “thump.” A key result was that at 6 decibels and even at 3 decibels above background, the “thump” was quite pronounced and disturbing. It was unclear that anyone in the group regarded even the 3 decibel threshold limit as providing adequate protection. Consensus was that a 3 decibel threshold was what should be chosen for proposed regulation. Subsequent to the meeting Norm Dotti distributed data that he had collected on his Larson Davis sound level meter, showing both the C weighted and A weighted measurements across the time frame of the exercise. It was surprising that there was not a decisive difference when comparing C weighted and A weighted sound levels against background in terms of being able to determine when the music was playing.

From the standpoint of demonstrating to the group the effect of various thresholds, the experiment was a great success. However, there was discussion of the relative ineffectiveness of the measurement technique in decisively discriminating an objectionable situation (music playing) from one that was not. Very likely, the short duration “thump” gets averaged over the quiet periods so that the average energy is little different than the background. Possibly some method of measuring the recurrent peak sound levels might provide yield more effective discrimination.

Model Noise Ordinance

The last portion of the meeting was devoted to review of the draft Model Ordinance starting with Section VII on “Restricted Uses and Activities” and focusing on comments by Mr. Zwerling, who was attend a subsequent meeting. Among the topics discussed were terminology for muffler and sound abatement devices and exceptions to accommodate sound notifications for the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

NEXT MEETING

Mr. Triggs indicated the necessity of completing Model Ordinance before breaking for the summer. It was decided that the NCC would to try to hold another meeting in June if possible. Email discussion subsequent to the meeting has attempted to settle on a date around June 23, but this has not been finalized. Meetings will be suspended for July and August. The next formally scheduled meeting is on September 8, 2009.

Respectfully submitted:

Jerome Feder