

## Management of the Project - Article

# Construction Meetings - Minutes

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During the construction phase of a project, an architect is often engaged to provide varying field review services as part of the construction contract administration services of their contract – depending on the type of construction project delivery and terms of the contract with the client. Field review is covered in greater detail in the Canadian Handbook of Practice (CHOP), [Chapter 2.3.11.](#), Contract Administration – Field Functions. Field review often involves attendance at construction meetings or site meetings, which are an opportunity for the architect to establish a presence and communication between all the parties to the project. It is important that minutes of these meetings are kept in order to capture ideas, solutions, decisions and interpretations of the contract documents.

It may come as a surprise to some that there is no written rule as to who chairs and records the construction meeting minutes. It comes down to the requirements written within the contract documents, but the intent is to accurately record what was stated at construction meetings as far as questions, decisions, solutions and who is responsible for following up on the action items that are identified during each of the meetings.

There is one stream of thought that the contractor should chair and record all meeting minutes as part of their role as defined in the CCDC-2 contract; The *Contractor* shall have total control of the *Work* and shall effectively direct and supervise the *Work* so as to ensure conformity with the *Contract Documents*.

Another stream of thought is that the consultant should chair and record meeting minutes as they are neutral to the construction contract and act in the owner's best interest – thereby being perceived to be non-biased and in a better position to more accurately record meeting minutes.

Some institutional clients and government agencies choose to engage a project manager who is given the responsibility for chairing and recording meeting minutes. A developer or design-builder may prefer that they chair and record the meeting minutes for their own assurance that the project is being appropriately managed and recorded.

Any of the aforementioned scenarios for minute taking can exist on a project, depending on the project's size and complexity. **Which individual is responsible for chairing the meetings and recording the minutes depends on several varying factors; including the wording of the contract documents, the requirements spelled out by the client, and the type and purpose of the construction meeting. The architect should not assume responsibilities related to the "direction or supervision of the Work", and for this reason it is suggested that there are certain construction meetings that the architect should not chair, record or distribute the minutes for.**

If a client requests the scope of services of an architect to include chairing or recording minutes of construction meetings, that could be perceived as the consultant directing or supervising the construction activities or the workers - this should be discussed beforehand with the client prior to signing a contract to agree on an appropriate level of compensation for the liability the consultant may be assuming. Some consultants choose to avoid this potential for liability altogether and hold the contractor responsible for chairing and recording certain construction meetings, as is described below. Any requirement for the contractor to organize, chair and minute meetings should be described in Division 01 of the project specifications.

The importance of recording minutes of construction meetings becomes most obvious when a dispute arises, where direction or a decision that was made in a meeting is not appropriately recorded and this impacts the *Work*, construction schedule or costs. Whether it is the consultant, contractor or other assigned individual recording meeting minutes – it is important for the consultant to obtain a copy of all construction meeting minutes, thoroughly review the contents of each meeting minutes, promptly report any errors, omissions or incorrect statements, and keep a copy for record.

Below are seven types of meetings that may occur during the construction phase, with a brief description and a suggestion of attendees and responsibility for chairing and recording of meeting minutes.

### **1. Pre-Construction (Kick-off) Meeting**

- Held prior to the commencement of construction. Establishes the format for all subsequent construction progress meetings. Refer to the "Checklist: Suggested Agenda for the Pre-Construction Meeting" found in [Chapter 2.3.11](#) of the CHOP, and the "MoP – Pre-Construction Meeting Guide", and CCA Procedures – 1.4 Holding the Project Kick-off Meeting.
- Attended by the contractor, owner, consultant and representatives of the sub-consultants.
- The kick-off meeting is often chaired by the consultant acting as the administrator of the construction contract – even if it is specified that the general contractor is to chair and record all other construction meetings.

### **2. Construction Meetings**

- To communicate and coordinate with the construction participants, review construction progress, supplementary instructions such as Site Instructions, Change Orders, Change Directives and RFI's, discuss and resolve issues, exchange technical information and communicate the expectations of the contract documents.
- Attended by the contractor and sub-contractors with representation from the owner, consultant and representatives of the sub-consultants as needed, depending on the progress of construction.
- Chaired and recorded by the contractor, or as pre-determined by the contract documents. (It is suggested that this meeting be chaired and recorded by the contractor as it involves construction means and methods).

### 3. Project Team (Progress) Meetings

- Regular project team meetings that are held all the way through design and construction documents phases, often continue through the construction phase.
- Held bi-weekly or as determined depending on scope, size and complexity of the project. Can be held on site or at the consultant's or client's office. These meetings are used to review the project schedule, progress of the *Work*, progress claims and changes to the contract documents.
- This meeting may be held immediately following the construction progress meetings. It is suggested that separate meetings for these specific purposes be held, whether they are separate meetings on the same date, or on a separate date.
- Attended by the owner, consultant and representatives of the sub-consultants as needed, depending on the progress of construction. (Contractors or major trades may be invited at times).
- Chaired and recorded by the consultant, or whoever the chair of project team meetings is normally.

### 4. Contractor and Sub-Contractor Meetings

- Held at the construction site by the contractor to coordinate the work and to solve problems.
- Attended by the contractor's site superintendent and / or foreman, and the affected sub-trades. These meetings are not typically attended by the owner, consultant, or sub-consultants, but may at the request of the contractor, include the consultant's field representative and sub-consultants from time to time as deemed necessary
- Chaired and recorded by the general contractor.

### 5. Pre-Installation Meetings

- Typically held at the construction site prior to the commencement of a specified task to establish level of quality for acceptance of items such as concrete, masonry, windows, roofing, millwork or finishes to draw special attention to installation details and often specific testing requirements. These meetings are typically specified in their respective specification section.
- Attended by the contractor's site superintendent and / or foreperson, consultant and / or the consultant's field representative and the affected sub-trades.
- Chaired and recorded by more than one party. The architect often records these meetings as a General Review or Site Meeting Report specifically to record agreements on installation details.

### 6. Project Close-Out Meeting

- Held on site around the time of substantial performance of the project to discuss procedures and requirements for the completion of the project, including cleaning, deficiencies, systems demonstrations, commissioning and operating and maintenance manual requirements. Refer to the latest version of the joint publication by the OAA-OGCA titled ["A Guide to Project Closeout Procedures"](#).
- Attended by the contractor, owner or owner's representative, consultant, and representatives of the consulting team.
- Chaired and recorded by either the contractor, consultant or owner – as pre-determined by the contract documents.

## 7. One-Year Project Warranty Meeting

- Held on site prior to the expiry of the construction warranty date which is typically one year following the date of substantial performance (or following registration for condominium projects) to review any warranty issues that have been identified during the first year of operation of the building / project.
- Attended by the contractor, owner, building operator and consultant, and representatives of the sub-consultants as needed.
- Chaired and recorded by either the contractor, consultant or owner - as pre-determined by the contract documents.

No matter who the contract documents stipulate will be responsible for chairing and recording the various meeting minutes, it is important that general guidelines are followed to ensure appropriate recording of the construction progress and activities and decisions that are made throughout the duration of the project.

It is also advisable that there be one person assigned to chair the meetings and another to record the minutes, as it is difficult to both chair the meeting and make notations for preparation of the minutes. Some general guidelines to follow for properly chairing and recording minutes of construction meetings include:

- Establish who is chairing and recording minutes for the meetings.
- Establish and agree to a format for the minutes and a timeframe for which minutes are to be distributed following a meeting.
- Establish an agenda for the meeting(s) - often previous meeting minutes are used as the subsequent meeting agenda.
- Record discussions that involve direction, decisions, problems and solutions, and who is responsible for taking action on any of the items.
- Invite participants to identify any errors or omissions in any minutes and note and correct errors and omissions that are identified in any minutes on subsequent meeting minutes.
- Establish how minutes are to be transmitted (electronically, facsimile, by mail) and who is responsible for distribution and to whom.
- Distribute minutes as soon as possible following a meeting to provide participants ample time to review and respond to action items, preferably within 48 hours of the meeting.
- Thoroughly read and review minutes when distributed, particularly if you are not the author.

### **Additional References:**

Canadian Handbook of Practice for Architects (CHOP), [Chapter 2.3, Management of the Project](#), pp 6, 7.

CCA Procedures: 1.4 Holding the Project Kick-off Meeting.

CCA Procedures: 2.1 Attending Site Meetings.

CSC - Construction Contract Administration Learning Manual

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*These articles do not represent OAA policy or guidance but rather are based on the opinions and experiences of members of the OAA and are prepared for the benefit of the profession at large.*

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