



Construction Trades Board
Department of Planning, Housing, and Zoning

MINUTES

July 3, 2025

8:30 a.m.

Video recordings of the Construction Trades Board meetings are available online based on the availability of the internet and posted at the County YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@kentcountygovernment2757>.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Victor Shepard called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. Due to lack of quorum, the Board conducted an informal discussion with no official votes taken.

Attendance

Board Members Present: Victor Shepard (Chair), Jason Pinder, Dave Eason, and Erin Zierfuss

Staff Present: Mike O'Neil, Billy Dwyer, Craig Busick, Tyler Arnold, and William Mackey

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Deferred due to lack of quorum. Chair Shepard continued to facilitate the meeting informally.

ACTION ITEMS

Adoption of Minutes from October 3, 2024: Deferred due to lack of quorum.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Introduction of Members

Board members introduced themselves and their businesses:

- **Victor Shepard (Chair):** Owner of Smart Tech Electrical since 1990, partnered with Sunrise Solar since 2018. Serves residential and small commercial clients in Kent and Queen Anne's counties.

- **Jason Pinder:** Started his business in 2022, located beside the tire store in the former Price Rental building. Employs 14 people, focusing 80% on HVAC and 20% on plumbing. Has partnership with Rick Connor from Denton.
- **Dave Eason:** Owner of DND Contracting with 9 field employees. Has been in construction in Kent County and Rock Hall for 35 years. Active in community service, including 49 years in fire service and serving as Chester Town fire company president for 6 years.
- **Erin Zierfuss:** Operates a design business in the former Chesapeake Bank branch next to H&R Block. Opened in September 2024 and has completed two projects. Works extensively with local trades contractors.

Discussion of the Board's Role

Bill Mackey explained the Board's purpose as an advisory body to provide expertise to the County on construction trades matters. The Board will help identify emerging issues, advise on policy changes, and facilitate communication between the trades community and County government. Craig Busick emphasized the importance of staying ahead of State legislation changes that affect local trades.

Board Composition and Future Appointments

Discussion revealed the intended Board composition: two electricians, two plumbers, two HVAC professionals, one general contractor, and one design professional. The Board currently needs two additional members to reach full capacity of seven members. County Commissioners will make future appointments, possibly with Board input upon request.

Meeting Schedule

The Board agreed to meet quarterly on the first Thursday of each quarter (January, April, July, October) at 8:30 AM, continuing the previous electrical Board's schedule.

HVAC Registration Discussion

Significant discussion occurred regarding requiring HVAC contractors to register with the County, similar to electricians and plumbers. Currently, HVAC work requires State licensing and MDIA inspection but no County registration. Board members expressed support for this requirement to ensure all contractors operate on equal footing and to address concerns about out-of-State contractors working in the County without proper oversight.

Technology and Process Improvements

Erin Zierfuss discussed implementing visual tracking systems and QR codes for construction sites to improve communication and decision tracking among trades.

STAFF REPORTS

Construction Trades Board Legislation

Mike O'Neil distributed the enabling legislation for the Board and offered to email it to members. He noted that various trade-specific chapters in County Code may need updating and invited Board members' input on necessary revisions.

Historical Context

Staff explained that Kent County is one of only three counties in Maryland with special legislative authority for plumbing regulations. The Board previously conducted testing for master electricians.

Registration and Permitting Process

Discussion covered the County's current system where electricians and plumbers must register with the County and obtain inspections, while HVAC work goes directly through MDIA for inspection only. The streamlined process was praised by Board members as more efficient than neighboring Counties.

Policy Changes

Bill Mackey noted that the County recently discontinued allowing homeowners to perform their own electrical and plumbing work, now requiring licensed professionals for all such work.

Key Takeaways and Action Items

1. **HVAC Registration:** Will be added to the next agenda for formal discussion and potential action when a quorum is present.
2. **Board Composition:** Staff will work with County Commissioners to identify and appoint two additional members.
3. **Communication:** Mike O'Neil will establish an email chain for Board communications and send meeting materials electronically.
4. **Next Meeting:** Scheduled for first Thursday in October, on October 2, 2025, at 8:30 AM.

ADJOURN

The informal meeting concluded with positive feedback from all attendees about the collaborative discussion and plans for future formal meetings.

Please note 95% of this document was created by Claude III Sonnet from Anthropic with a transcript from YouTube.