



**BUILDING DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
2018 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
APRIL 16, 2019**

2018 BDC ACTIVITY FOCUS

The following is a summary of significant activities impacting the design and construction community on which the Building Development Commission and the Code Enforcement Department have focused on from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. Further details on each of these follows:

- 1. Building with our Veterans**
 - 2. Code Heroes**
 - 3. Affordable Housing**
 - 4. 2018 North Carolina State Building Code Change**
 - 5. FY19 Budget Proposal**
 - 6. Code Enforcement Annual Report**
 - 7. UDSC – Unified Development Service Committee**
 - 8. Technology**
 - 9. BDC New Board Members**
 - 10. 2018 NC Fire Code Fee Ordinance Changes**
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1. BUILDING WITH OUR VETERANS

On October 20th, 2015, the County Manager and BDC, announced a new program designed to offer a career path for veterans interested in construction. "Building with our Veterans" is a joint effort by Central Piedmont Community College, the Veterans' Services Office of Mecklenburg County, Community Support Services, and Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement.

The 'Building with our Veterans' program, is very successful and continues to maintain strong momentum. 'Building with our Veterans' received national recognition in 2018 and is becoming a national model. This program will help Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement meet the need for more code officials.

Three candidates served apprenticeships in 2018. The Department is providing a growth path for new "trainee" positions, focusing on residential construction. Code Enforcement, along with the BDC, will continue to evaluate the success of the program, focusing on growth and attracting new candidates.

2. CODE HEROS

Each year, Code Enforcement recognizes a few off our customers that go above-and-beyond in their dedication to life safety through code compliant, sustainable building and development to ensure a safe and thriving community. This year, Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement's 2018 Code Heroes are:

- ***Little Diversified Architectural Consulting***; for sustained commitment to pursuing code compliance in design decisions.
- ***McCormick Custom Construction***; for sustained commitment to code compliant building and inspection readiness.
- ***Meritage Homes — Mirabella Team***; for commitment to inspection readiness and code compliance in the Mirabella communities.

3. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

During 2018, Mecklenburg County worked with industry, design professionals, developers, and contractors to understand the challenges and to become more aware of the service tools and process incentives needed to support affordable housing. Mecklenburg County is committed to creating an economically diverse community, which is why we offer benefits and incentives to increase the supply of affordable housing, to include affordable rentals and affordable purchase of units; making affordable housing less expensive to build and passing those savings on to the renter or buyer.

Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement created a financial benefit for permitting, plan review and inspections service fees for affordable housing. To facilitate these projects through collaboration on the entire construction process, and issuance of a final Certificate of Occupancy.

Benefits are offered to builders of affordable housing by Mecklenburg County, in association with the Mecklenburg County Building Development Commission (BDC) has created adjustments to the fee ordinance which provides a reduction in fees for multifamily housing.

The focus is on VA-constructed housing, with R-2 occupancies (structures with more than two sleeping or dwelling units), that are no more than three (3) stories.

The affordable housing discount is \$78 per square foot; a reduction of \$20 per square foot for required permitting fees. Standard permitting fees are currently \$98 per square foot. What does that mean for the customer? A reduction of the total construction cost and reduced permitting fees. For more information about how this works, please see the link below.
<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Tools/Publications/Documents/BVDCalc.pdf>

Mecklenburg County offers and encourages a highly collaborative plan review and construction process. Focused design, development and review services, enhance continuous development of affordable housing to include; a plan review team just for affordable housing projects with a Code Enforcement project manager to oversee the process.

For architects and engineers who are "superior performers" in our A/E Pass Rate Incentive Program are provided the following benefits:

- Priority Review
- Review Schedule Preference Consideration
- Conditional Permitting
- Team Plan Review Services (Inspections and Plans Reviewers)

For information about our A/E Pass Rate Incentive program, please see the link below.
<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/PlanReview/Pages/AEPassFailRate.aspx>

Code Enforcement offers free preliminary review services for affordable housing projects; whereas, typical projects receive one free preliminary review and are charged for additional preliminary reviews thereafter.

Mecklenburg County has a designated Code Enforcement project manager and inspection team to ensure continuous communication throughout the entire inspections process. This team works with the contractor to maintain continuity of the project

An assigned inspection team allows the contractor to advise the inspector of changes to the design, timeline, or other schedule changes that may affect the close-out/delivery date for the project. Our staff members understand the special circumstances that may surround the funding for an affordable housing project and prioritize helping our customers comply with the terms of that funding whenever possible.

General contractors that are high-level performers and pass 90% or more of all inspections, could receive a refund of 1% to 10% on a given permit, as part of a Mecklenburg County incentive program for high performing general contractors. Please see the below link for more information about this program.

<https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/CodeEnforcement/Documents/PassRateIncentivePrgDes.pdf>

There is no application process or special path of entry to take part in these benefits and programs. All qualifying affordable housing projects may participate in the program.

4. 2018 NORTH CAROLINA STATE BUILDING CODE CHANGE

On July 13th all customers were notified of the 2018 North Carolina State Building Code Change and their effective change dates. The 2018 NC Building, Residential (Single Family), Existing Building, Energy, Fire Prevention, Mechanical, Plumbing, and Fuel Gas Codes had a transition period which began July 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. The absolute cutoff date, established by the BCC, for use of the 2012 NC State Building Code family, was December 31, 2018.

Professionals closely monitored their project designs and switched to the new 2018 NC State Building Code family appropriately, as compliance was essential. Plans for new commercial projects, residential projects, master plan projects, and renovation up-fits (encompassing 20,000 sf or more), were submitted by August 31st and smaller commercial plans were submitted no later than October 1, 2018. Customers carefully monitored their project timelines if their project required a second or subsequent review cycle to ensure the project did not linger. While state law required the Department issue code compliant permits, the burden was on the owner teams to estimate the permit issuance date.

5. FY19 BUDGET PROPOSAL

In February 2018, the Department began work with the BDC, developing the FY19 budget proposal. This effort concluded in the BDC March 20, 2018 meeting, when the FY19 budget expense and revenue proposal was reviewed and accepted unanimously by a formal vote of the BDC members. In this process, the BDC Budget Subcommittee worked with department leadership addressing many budget related issues, including plan review and inspection service demands for FY19, the assessment of short and long-term technology initiatives and development necessary to support the Department.

6. CODE ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

Code Enforcement is pleased to present its reimagined 2018 [annual report](#). We hope our customers will benefit from reading about the work we are doing to partner with the industry in building a safe and thriving community (available now on [MeckPermit.com](#)).

7. UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT SERVICE COMMITTEE (UDSC)

The UDSC completed their work plan in 2018 and began on the 2019 work plan. A few of the many initiatives addressed by the Committee were technology, sharing ideas for city streamlining of horizontal and vertical work, and sharing ideas about how work is processed.

Many of these items emphasized a “big picture” when working to tie all pieces together. Such as video conferencing; an initiative to be placed in the 2019 budget, customer service and streamlined services.

It was agreed that in FY19, primary focus will be placed on Holds, EPM/EPS, AE-GC Task Force Initiatives, Affordable Housing, OnSchedule modeler; among other technological enhancements.

The single portal is still a major concept, but more important is the single source entry where information (plans and permits) can be filtered and directed to those service lines for submission and view by all customers holding the correct credentials.

The UDSC work plan requires parties to engage the project manager and design team early, to build collaboration and identify issues early on in the project through preliminary review meeting and exit meetings. Also, the inspection team is assigned by region, to help work with design teams and determine code specifics, managing timelines and required inspections.

A joint meeting held by the UDSC in March 2018, included the Building Development Commission and DSTAC, the City's Development Services Technical Advisory Committee. During this meeting the groups discussed the UDSC first quarter work plan and updated all on the progress made by the UDSC.

The UDSC team is very appreciative of everyone's time and response to work plan initiatives and the progress made in such a short period of time. The primary goal is to stream line the process for industry. A lot of hard work has been accomplished by members, with more work to complete. With comprehensive strategies being developed through shared initiatives; we are very encouraged by the team's progress to date.

8. TECHNOLOGY – EPM/EPR ENHANCEMENTS

In 2018 the BOCC approved monies for the EPM/EPR enhancements. Accela, the selected vendor reviewed all systems we have in place. Code Enforcement put together a team of 18 staff and 4 leadership staff members to review all overlapping processes and move them seamlessly into one system.

The statement of work covers a high-level concept and defined a step by step process to include partner agencies. Industry members reviewed the process, supported by the Building Development Commission, and attended web permit focus groups, residential focus groups and commercial focus groups.

Our goal is to provide our customers with a better customer service experience when conducting business with Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement and Mecklenburg County Land Development.

9. BDC NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The following BDC Board members were nominated and voted in by the BOCC in 2018:

- **Zeke Acosta**, representing the Charlotte Heating and Air Contractors Association
- **Brandon Brown**, representing the Public
- **Elizabeth Frere**, representing the NC Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects
- **Aaron Moody**, BDC Chair, representing the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

10. 2018 NC FIRE CODE FEE ORDINANCE CHANGES

In June 2017, the North Carolina Department of Insurance (NCDOI), along with the North Carolina Building Code Council (NCBCC), approved the new 2018 North Carolina Building Code. The changes approved by the NCBCC now require additional permit issuance to specific uses and functions within the 2018 North Carolina Fire Code as listed below:

- Mortar Fuel Dispensing
- Membrane Structures, Tents and Stages (400 sf or greater)
- Carbon Dioxide System (Beverage Dispensing)
- Repair Garages and Motor Fuel-Dispensing Facilities
- Soar Photovoltaic Power
- Smoke Control or Smoke Exhausted System Installed
- Gates and Barricades Across Fire Apparatus Roads

The Building Development Commission (BDC) reviewed all suggested changes and approved these items on November 20, 2018, per the requirements of the 2018 North Carolina State Fire Code.