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# News Release

## Building Trades Board discusses possible tree trimming license

*Class D license proposal planned for March; KOMA presentation also given*

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (January 19, 2017) — The Arkansas City Building Trades Advisory Board on Thursday night discussed possibly creating a new Class D license for local tree trimming contractors.

This is the same class of license given to “handymen” and other types of contractors who do not engage in structural changes to buildings. Anyone applying for such a license has to pay a \$150 fee.

If the proposal is approved, a tree trimmer would have to present proof of insurance in the amount of \$300,000, but no specialized testing would be required. Permits would be required on individual jobs.

Neighborhood Services Superintendent Richard Brown said many people have requested the licensing to protect homeowners who otherwise might pull a permit themselves and take on the liability.

Homeowners trimming trees in their own yards would not have to seek a license or a permit, he said, because their homeowners insurance would pay for any damages. It is only for commercial work.

Based on board instructions, staff will present a formal licensing proposal at the March 16 meeting.

### Open meetings

Thursday night’s meeting began with a presentation by City Attorney Tamara Niles on the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA) and Kansas Open Records Act, specifically tailored to the board’s needs.

Unlike most other City advisory boards, the Building Trades Board occasionally exercises quasi-judicial functions, and Niles explained that KOMA doesn’t always apply in those situations.

Still, just to stay transparent, she urged the board members to avoid going into executive sessions unless absolutely necessary to protect someone’s personal reputation or financial information.

**For immediate release**

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The board recently had to utilize this exception when weighing complaints against a local contractor.

**In other business Thursday, the board:**

- Unanimously approved the minutes of the Dec. 19, 2016, special meeting.
- Discussed some administrative adjustments to the length of three board members' terms.
- Voted 6-0 to designate Terice Watts as board secretary.
- Discussed with Brown what to do in future situations that require the suspension of a license.

Board chair Carl Bowman and vice chair Brian Lawrence were absent, so Dave Billings, who serves as chair of the Public Building Commission, ran the meeting. Leonard Mumford also was absent.

**In other business Dec. 19, 2016, the board:**

- Discussed whether to allow online Continuing Education Units for contractors. They decided to allow six hours online per year, but they must be approved by the International Code Council.
- Discussed whether to reciprocate CEUs from the State of Oklahoma. These only are accepted if they are ICC regulated, but Oklahoma does not reciprocate by allowing Kansas CEUs.

**About the Building Trades Advisory Board**

The Building Trades Board was established for the purpose of establishing criteria for licensing and regulating persons, firms or corporations desiring to engage in any of the defined building trades.

It also serves as a review board to which decisions of the code enforcement official may be appealed by citizens. If the board rules against them, they can appeal its decisions in district court.

The board has specific membership requirements to ensure representative cross-sections of trades:

- Two members must be electricians, and one of them must be a master electrician. The current electrical members are Mark Bartlett, of Bartlett Electric, and Brian Mayfield, of Mayfield Electric.
- Two members must be plumbers, and one of them must be a master plumber. The current plumbing representatives are Billings, of Billings Plumbing, and Bowman, of Bowman's Plumbing, Heating & Air, who has served as chairman of the board for several years.

- Two members must be general contractors doing business in Arkansas City. Those members are Mumford, of Mumford Contracting, and Randy Smith, of Randy Smith Construction.
- Two members must represent heating, air-conditioning or refrigeration contractors. The current HVAC members are Lawrence, of Ark City Service, and Ken Miller, of Tickel Refrigeration.
- One member must be a citizen or “layman” familiar with the requirements of the Arkansas City building code. This position currently is held by Chris Rains, of Ace Construction.

All nine terms are for two years each. The Arkansas City fire-EMS chief and code enforcement official both serve as ex officio members of the board without voting privileges.

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