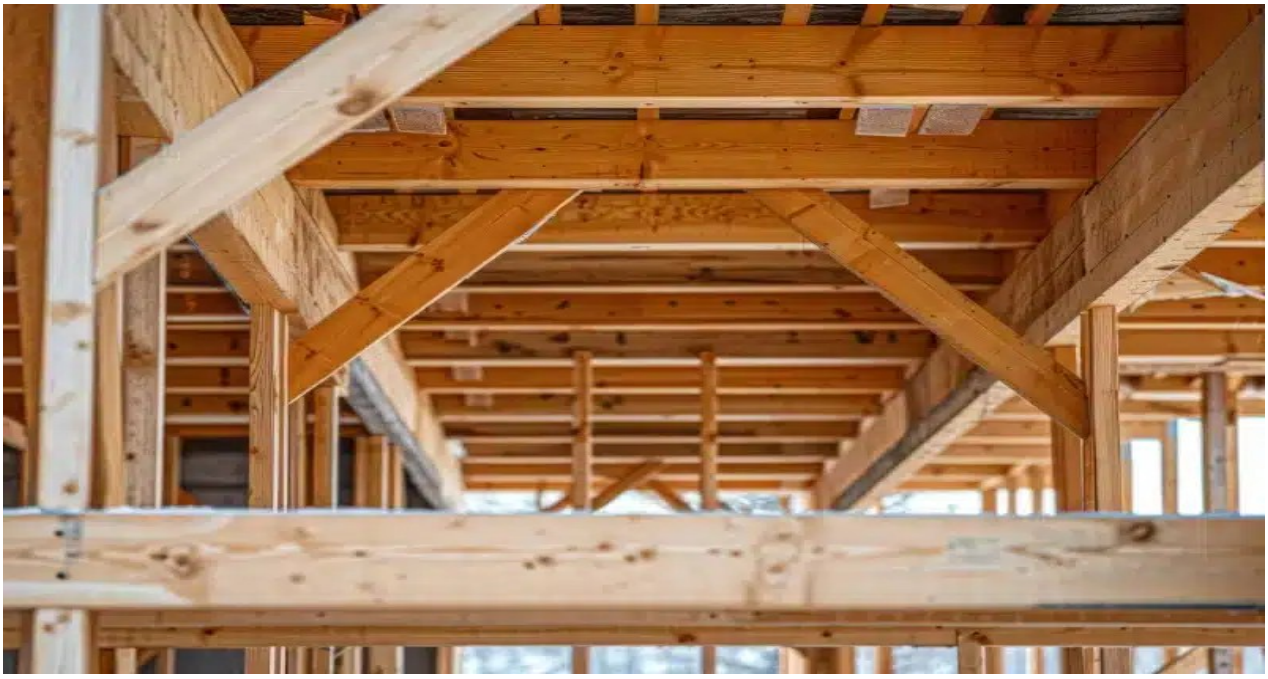


J&A Deck & Fence Explains Permit Checks for Three-Season Sunroom Conversions

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GERMANTOWN, MD - October 29, 2026 -
Montgomery County's October discussion of its public permitting dashboard highlights important considerations for Germantown-area homeowners planning three-season sunroom conversions. Before enclosing an existing deck or porch, homeowners need to understand the structural, zoning, and permitting requirements that may affect the project. J&A Deck & Fence highlights these considerations as part of the planning process for residential sunroom conversions.

The county's Department of Permitting Services (DPS) highlighted the dashboard in a podcast episode announced in October. The dashboard is updated daily and shows average permit-issuance times and how long a project spends at different stages of review. It can help a homeowner plan, but it cannot tell whether a specific conversion will be approved or how long that individual permit will take. The county's dashboard announcement explains what the tool does.

One of the first considerations is whether the existing structure can support the proposed room. Montgomery

County's sunroom checklist calls for drawings of the existing and proposed foundation, footing dimensions, floor and roof framing, and connections between the sunroom and house. It also asks whether the room will be conditioned or thermally isolated, with applicable energy-compliance information. A set of deck drawings may not answer those questions when a roof, walls, and glazing are being added.

The county?s typical deck details explicitly state that decks built using those plans are not approved for future porch roofs or other additions or modifications. This does not mean every deck must be replaced before adding a sunroom. However, the original deck approval alone does not confirm that its footings, framing, and connections can support the proposed enclosure. Both the new design and the existing structure must be evaluated together.

The next check is where the room would sit on the lot. County zoning guidance permits certain open or covered porches and decks to project into required setbacks, but it excludes screened-in porches from that particular allowance. Enclosing an open deck can therefore change the setback question even when the new room stays within the old deck's outline. Lot coverage, the property's zoning district, and any separate homeowner association rules also need attention. A county permit does not settle a private association's requirements.

There is a second reason not to treat an enclosure like a routine deck job. In an October 15 bulletin, DPS announced that residential Fast Lane appointments for eligible projects would begin November 4. Its existing Fast Track list includes certain single-level decks and limited alterations that do not involve a load-bearing wall. The same guidance sends complex designs and structural modifications through regular review. The new appointment program is not a blanket same-day path for three-season sunrooms, and the county must assess the actual scope before a homeowner relies on it.

For homeowners, the permitting process should begin before selecting windows or finished flooring. Important considerations include whether the original deck was designed to support a future roof, whether its footings and connections are documented, and whether the proposed room will be heated or separated from the conditioned areas of the house. The location of new walls and steps in relation to property boundaries also affects the planning process. These details help determine which drawings and county reviews may be required. Even when a conversion retains the existing footprint, it can introduce new structural and zoning considerations.

These are live questions in the local market, not a claim that county rules changed this month. Montgomery County's public permit data includes an October application in nearby Gaithersburg describing a proposed sunroom on an existing deck. The application was still listed as open when reviewed. It is not an approved design, a J&A project, or evidence of a trend; it simply shows the kind of proposed work for which the county needs to see the actual plans.

J&A's sunroom information describes three-season rooms and screened-porch conversions among the company's services. Before an existing outdoor space is treated as ready for enclosure, homeowners can gather its old plans, sketch the proposed room, and ask Montgomery County DPS to confirm the permit classification, zoning treatment, and review path. Neither a previous deck permit nor an average shown on the dashboard replaces that project-specific check.

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