



Planning Commission Meeting

Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry "Emmett" McCracken Jr. Council Chambers,
20 Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

AGENDA

This meeting can be viewed live on [BCTV](#), on Sparklight Channel 9 and 417 or on Spectrum Channel 1304.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. NOTICE REGARDING ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Commission will not hear new items after 9:30 p.m. unless authorized by a majority vote of the Commission Members present. Items which have not been heard before 9:30 p.m. may be continued to the next regular meeting or a special meeting date as determined by the Commission Members.

IV. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

[1.](#) May 27, 2026 Minutes

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

[1.](#) **Unified Development Ordinance Amendments (Public Hearing):** Consideration of an Ordinance for Certain Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 3 (Application Process) – Sec. 3.18 (Certificate of Appropriateness-Historic District) and Sec. 3.19 (Site Feature-Historic District Permit) as it Relates to Demolition of Non-Contributing Structures in Old Town Bluffton Historic District (Staff - Charlotte Moore)

VIII. DISCUSSION

IX. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING DATE: Wednesday, July 22, 2026

“FOIA Compliance – Public notification of this meeting has been published and posted in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Bluffton policies.”

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Town of Bluffton will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. The Town of Bluffton Council Chambers are ADA compatible. Auditory accommodations are available. Any person requiring further accommodation should contact the Town of Bluffton ADA Coordinator at 843.706.4500 or adacoordinator@townofbluffton.com as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

Executive Session – The public body may vote to go into executive session for any item identified for action on the agenda.

**Please note that each member of the public may speak at one public comment session and a form must be filled out and given to the Town Clerk. To submit a public comment online, please click here:*

<https://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov/FormCenter/Town-15/Public-Comment-60>

Public comment is limited to 3 minutes per speaker.

Planning Commission Meeting

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry “Emmett” McCracken Jr. Council Chambers, 20
Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

May 27, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wetmore called the meeting to order at 6pm.

II. ROLL CALL

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. April 22, 2026 Minutes

Commissioner Grove made a motion to adopt the minutes as written.

Seconded by Commissioner Brock.

Voting Yea: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner Brock, Commissioner DePauw, Commissioner Grove, Commissioner Howard

All were in favor and the motion passed.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Unified Development Ordinance Amendments (Public Hearing):** Consideration of Amendments to the Town of Bluffton’s Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23, Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.10 Stormwater; and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretation, Sec. 9.2 Defined Terms. (Staff – Andrea Moreno)

Chairman Wetmore opened the public hearing. He asked for the first call for public comment.

Michael Hughes, 50 Park of Commerce Way, Savannah - Mr. Hughes shared his concerns in adding more regulations to wetlands.

Chairman Wetmore asked for the second and third call for public comment. There were no more public comments. The public hearing was closed.

Staff presented. The commissioners questioned how the amendments to the ordinance would affect properties within a Planned Unit Development (PUD). There were concerns regarding how the amendments would impact state issued stormwater permits. Discussion was had regarding the mapping tool being live and approval process for these amendments.

Commissioner DePauw made a motion to recommend approval to Town Council of Amendments to the Town of Bluffton’s Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23, Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.10 Stormwater; and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretation, Sec. 9.2 Defined Terms.

Seconded by Vice Chairman Flynn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner Brock, Commissioner

DePauw, Commissioner Grove

Voting Abstaining: Commissioner Howard

The motion passed, 5–0, with 1 abstention.

- 2. Beaufort Memorial Primary Care at May River Crossing (Certificate of Appropriateness - Highway Corridor Overlay District):** A request by Josie Abrams of Josie S. Abrams Architecture, on behalf of property owner Beaufort Memorial Hospital for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness - HCOD application. The project consists of the 5,000 SF single story medical office building with associated infrastructure. The property is zoned Jones Estate Planned Unit Development (PUD) and consists of approximately 1.38 acres identified by tax map number R610 036 000 3212 0000 located within the May River Crossing Master Plan. (COFA-02-26-020148) (Staff - Angie Castrillon)

Staff presented. The applicant was present. The commissioners discussed the colors being proposed and what would be used for the dumpster enclosure.

Commissioner Brock made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the following determinations:

1. The proposed LED lighting fixtures are an appropriate substitute for the lamp types permitted under ZDSO 90/3 Section 5.15.11(E)(2).
2. The proposed 'Aged Copper' accent color is appropriate under ZDSO 90/3 Section 5.15.9.

Seconded by Commissioner Howard.

Voting Yea: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner Brock, Commissioner DePauw, Commissioner Grove, Commissioner Howard

All were in favor and the motion passed.

- 3. Chipotle at May River Crossing (Certificate of Appropriateness - Highway Corridor Overlay District):** A request by Joshua Bookhout of Wilkus Architects, on behalf of property owner PBC Partners, LLC, for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness - HCOD application. The project consists of the construction of a single-story 2,385 SF restaurant with associated infrastructure. The property is within the Jones Estate Planned Unit Development (PUD) consists of 1.51 acres identified by tax map number R610 036 000 3211 0000 within the May River Crossing Master Plan. (COFA-02-26-020127) (Staff - Angie Castrillon)

Commissioner Brock recused himself.

Staff presented. The applicant was present. Discussion was had regarding the symmetry of the windows on elevation facing HWY 170. The commissioners expressed an interest in wanting to see more greenery along the west side of May River Crossing Road.

Commissioner Grove made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. Revise the drive-through window to be more symmetrical by aligning the right transom with the window below and matching the right-side window/panel treatment to the left/corresponding storefront condition, while accommodating required equipment (air curtain/heater element).

2. Revise the landscape plan to add a landscaped screening along the west side of May River Crossing Road on the portion of the lot across the road to provide additional buffering. Such revision shall be approved administratively by Town Staff.

and the following determinations:

1. The proposed LED lighting fixtures are an appropriate substitute for the lamp types permitted under ZDSO 90/3 Section 5.15.11(E)(2).

Seconded by Vice Chairman Flynn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner DePauw, Commissioner Grove, Commissioner Howard

All were in favor and the motion passed.

- 4. New Riverside Village Parcel 4B-3C (Development Plan):** A request by Griffin Savedge of Thomas and Hutton on behalf of property owner S70 Royce Group, LLC for approval of a Preliminary Development Plan application. The project consists of the construction of two (2) two-story commercial buildings totaling 20,000 SF with associated infrastructure. The property is within the New Riverside Planned Unit Development (PUD) consists of 2.35 acres identified by tax map number R610 036 000 3702 0000 within the New Riverside Village Master Plan at the intersection of New Riverside Village Way and Parkside Commons. (DP-03-26-020155) (Staff - Dan Frazier)

Commissioner Brock returned to the dais.

Staff presented. The applicant was present. The Commission requested clarification on the square footage. Concerns were raised about the proposed tree removals, and there was discussion about reconfiguring the site to preserve three (3) live oak trees.

Vice Chairman Flynn made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. Reconfigure the parking areas and drive aisles to save the three (3) Live Oak trees (13" 16", 19" DBH) located in the northern portion of the property. Such reconfiguration may be approved administratively by Town Staff. If one or more of these trees cannot be preserved and must be removed, the Preliminary Development Plan must return to Planning Commission for review and approval.
2. A Tree Risk Assessment and rating for the subject trees referenced in condition #1 shall be provided for Town Staff review.

Seconded by Commissioner Brock.

Voting Yea: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner Brock, Commissioner DePauw, Commissioner Grove, Commissioner Howard

All were in favor and the motion passed.

- 5. Maiden Lane Development (Development Plan):** A request by Nathan Sturre of Sturre Engineering, on behalf of property owner Hinton Vacation Properties for approval of a Preliminary Development Plan application. The project consists of nine (9) single-family residential lots with common open area and associated infrastructure. The properties are zoned Neighborhood General - Historic District (NG-HD) and consist of 3.58 acres identified by

tax map numbers R610 039 00A 0042 0000 and R610 039 00A 042A 0000 located south of Bruin Road west of Pritchard Street. (DP-03-26-020162) (Staff - Dan Frazier)

Staff presented. The applicant was present. The commission discussed the approval process for obtaining building permits and how trees designated for preservation would be identified. Commissioners also expressed concerns about the maintenance of Maiden Lane in relation to the proposed development.

Commissioner Howard made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. That all of those trees identified on the site plan submitted as significant trees be saved — with "trees saved" noted on the development plans — so that they cannot be removed in the future.

Seconded by Vice Chairman Flynn.

Commissioner Howard made a motion to amend the conditions for clarification purposes to:

1. The Significant Trees (as defined by UDO Section 5.3) identified on the approved Preliminary Development Plan site plan, located outside of the Volunteer Way right-of-way, shall be preserved and designated as trees to be saved on all subsequent development plans.

Seconded by Commissioner Grove.

Voting Yea to amend the motion: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner Brock, Commissioner DePauw, Commissioner Grove, Commissioner Howard

Voting Yea to the amended motion: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner Brock, Commissioner DePauw, Commissioner Grove, Commissioner Howard

All were in favor and the motion passed.

VII. DISCUSSION

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Grove made a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by Vice Chairman Flynn.

Voting Yea: Chairman Wetmore, Vice Chairman Flynn, Commissioner Brock, Commissioner DePauw, Commissioner Grove, Commissioner Howard

All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:36pm.

PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT
Growth Management Department



MEETING DATE:	June 24, 2026
PROJECT:	Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 3 (Application Process) – Sec. 3.18 (Certificate of Appropriateness-Historic District) and Sec. 3.19 (Site Feature-Historic District Permit) as it Relates to Demolition of Non-Contributing Structures in Old Town Bluffton Historic District
PROJECT MANAGER:	Charlotte L. Moore, AICP Principal Planner

INTRODUCTION: As set forth in Section 3.5.2 of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), “an application for a UDO Text Amendment may be initiated by a Town of Bluffton property owner, Town Council, Planning Commission, or the UDO Administrator when public necessity, convenience, State or Federal law, general welfare, new research, or published recommendations on zoning and land development justifies such action.”

REQUEST: The UDO Administrator requests that the Planning Commission recommend approval to Town Council of a Text Amendment to the following UDO sections:

Article 3 (Application Process) – Sec. 3.18 (Certificate of Appropriateness-Historic District) and Sec. 3.19 (Site Feature-Historic District Permit) as it Relates to Demolition of Non-Contributing Structures in Old Town Bluffton Historic District

BACKGROUND: In 2024, the Town amended the UDO to add or refine processes and review criteria for the relocation and demolition of structures within Old Town Bluffton Historic District. This amendment distinguished contributing and non-contributing structures. Those that are contributing add to the “historic associations [and] architectural qualities...that relate to the documented significance of Old Town Bluffton Historic District” and have a higher standard of review.

The 2024 amendment changed the demolition review criteria to be less stringent for non-contributing structures than the criteria for contributing structures, but it maintained the Certificate of Appropriateness (COFA) application requirement, which is reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The intent was to provide an opportunity to possibly preserve structures that may qualify for contributing status that had not previously been identified. However, with the recent 2025 historic resources survey update, Town Staff is confident all structures that contribute to Old Town Historic District have been identified. Therefore, the process to demolish a non-contributing structure should not require a more lengthy and rigorous review by the HPC.

The proposed amendments would allow demolition of non-contributing structures to be reviewed by the UDO Administrator (or designee) through the Site Feature Permit application process. Town Staff can request information about the structure to document its history to have a more complete record of Old Town's development history. The review would be conducted within five business days as opposed the COFA process which requires a pre-application meeting, concept plan review by Historic Preservation Review Committee, and final plan review at a public Historic Preservation Committee meeting. The process for the relocation of non-contributing structures would not change as it is reviewed as new construction through the COFA process.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS: See Attachment 1 for proposed amendments.

REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS: When assessing an application for UDO Text Amendments, Town Council is required to consider the criteria set forth in UDO Section 3.5.3, Application Review Criteria. These criteria are provided below, followed by a Finding.

1. **Section 3.5.3.A.** Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan or, if conditions have changed since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, consistency with the overall intent of the Plan, recent development trends and the general character of the area.

Finding. The proposed amendment has no relationship to this criterion.

2. **Section 3.5.3.B.** Consistency with demographic changes, prevailing economic trends, and/or newly recognized best planning practices.

Finding. While not newly recognized, it is always a best practice to streamline the Town's review processes.

3. **Section 3.5.3.C.** Enhancement of the health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.

Finding. The proposed amendment has no relationship to this criterion.

4. **Section 3.5.3.D.** Impact of the proposed amendment on the provision of public services.

Finding. The proposed amendment has no relationship to this criterion.

5. **Section 3.5.3.E.** The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

Finding. The application complies with all applicable requirements of the Applications Manual.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS: As granted by the powers and duties set forth in Section 2.2.6.C.4 of the UDO, the Planning Commission has the authority to take the following actions with respect to this application:

1. Approval of the application as submitted;

2. Approval of the application with amendments; or
3. Denial of the application as submitted by the Applicant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: As submitted, Growth Management staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the proposed Text Amendments to Town Council.

NEXT STEPS

UDO Text Amendment Procedure	Date	Complete
Step 1. Planning Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation	June 24, 2026	✓
Step 2. Town Council – 1st Reading	July 14, 2026	✓
Step 3. Town Council Meeting – Second/Final Reading and Public Hearing	August 11, 2026	✓

ATTACHMENTS:

Attch1: Proposed Text Amendments

3.18 Certificate of Appropriateness – Historic District (HD)

3.18.5 Demolition

Proposed Change: *Demolition of non-contributing structure is proposed to be reviewed through the Site Feature Permit application (a Town Staff review) rather than a COFA application. A cross-reference to the Site Feature Permit section is proposed.*

A. Non-contributing Structures

~~The below items shall be provided by the Applicant and reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission in its consideration of a request for demolition of any structure, in whole or in part, in Old Town Bluffton Historic District that is not designated as a Contributing Resource:~~

- ~~1. The construction date, history of ownership, development, use(s), and the reason for the demolition request; and,~~
- ~~2. Compliance with all applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.~~

See Sec. 3.19, Site Feature-Historic District (HD) Permit.

B. Contributing Resources

The demolition of a Contributing Resource, either in whole or in part, is detrimental to the integrity and status of Old Town Bluffton Historic District and, where applicable, the Bluffton National Register Historic District, as significance of these districts is embodied by their contributing resources. Demolition of a Contributing Resource that is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, contributes to the Bluffton National Register Historic District, or that was designated as contributing to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District on or after June 19, 2007, shall not be permitted except in extraordinary circumstances and when all preservation alternatives have been exhausted.

1. The Historic Preservation Commission shall consider the following in its consideration of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness-HD for demolition, either in whole or in part:
 - a. The construction date, history of ownership, development, use(s), and other pertinent history of the Contributing Resource, and the reason for the request;
 - b. A report prepared by a State of South Carolina registered professional structural engineer with demonstrated experience in historic preservation detailing the structural soundness of the Contributing Resource supported by findings, including clear and convincing evidence that demolition is necessary, in whole or in part, to alleviate a threat to public health or public safety;
 - c. Evidence that demolition is required to avoid exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship upon the owner of the property and that no other reasonable alternatives to demolition exist, including but not limited to relocation. If exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship is claimed, evidence shall be provided to demonstrate that the applicant did not have the opportunity to discover the nature of the difficulty or undue hardship and that application of the standards would deprive the applicant of reasonable use and economic return on the property.

- d. Consistency with applicable principles set forth in the Old Town Bluffton Master Plan and Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan; and,
- e. Compliance with all applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

2. **Delay of Decision Regarding Demolition**

In considering the criteria for demolition, the Historic Preservation Commission may find that the preservation and protection of the Contributing Resource and the public interest will best be served by postponing a decision for a designated period not to exceed 180 days. During the period of postponement, the Historic Preservation Commission shall consider what alternatives to demolition may exist. Consideration by the Historic Preservation Commission shall include:

- a. Alternatives for preservation of the structure, either in whole or in part, including consultation with civic groups, interested private citizens, and other boards or agencies (both public and private); and,
- b. If other alternatives for preservation cannot be identified, including relocation, and the preservation of the Contributing Resource is clearly in the interest of the general welfare of the community, investigation of the potential of the Town to acquire the property.

3. **Effect of Approval**

- a. In granting a Certificate of Appropriateness-HD for demolition, the Historic Preservation Commission may impose such reasonable and additional conditions, which may include deconstruction of historic building components for re-use.
- b. The process for demolishing a Contributing Resource, including documentation to be provided, shall comply with demolition guidelines approved by Town Council.

3.19 Site Feature – Historic District (HD) Permit

3.19.2 Applicability

Proposed Change: *Demolition of a non-contributing structure/resource is added to the list of site feature items.*

A. Permit Required. A Site Feature - Historic District (HD) Permit is required for the following:

- 1. Sign, to include new signs, modifications to existing signs, or replacement of existing signs. Certain signs, as indicated in Sec. 5.13.3, are exempt from the Site-Feature-Historic District (HD) Permit requirement.
- 2. Modifications or improvements to site elements such as changes to parking lots, sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting;
- 3. Garden Structures and Sheds; as specified in Sec. 5.15.5;
- 4. Maintenance or repair of any features of an existing structure or building that do not alter such features or change the design, architectural character, or outward appearance, as determined by the UDO Administrator. Any replacement material shall be like-for-like, or an equivalent material that is approved by the UDO Administrator; and
- 5. Minor, non-structural exterior modifications to existing structures and buildings that do not alter the architectural character. Examples of such work include, but are not limited to, the addition of screens or balustrades to an existing porch, the addition of a deck without a roof, and accessibility improvements for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To

preserve the outward appearance of a building or structure, such work is discouraged on the principal façade.

6. Demolition of a non-contributing structure.

3.19.3 Application Review Criteria

Proposed Change: *Criteria for review of a proposed demolition is added. “Historic structures” is revised to “contributing resources” to capture buildings, structures, objects and sites.*

As applicable, the following shall be considered in reviewing an application for a Site Feature - Historic District (HD) Permit:

- A. Conformance with applicable provisions provided in *Article 5, Design Standards*;
- B. For signs, conformance with the following applicable provisions:
 - 1. Sec. 5.12, Lighting;
 - 2. Sec. 5.15.6.Q., Signs; and,
 - 3. Sec. 7.10, Nonconforming Signs;
- C. For ~~historic structures~~ Contributing Resources, in addition to the above and as applicable, conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- D. For demolition of non-contributing structures, the construction date, history of ownership and uses (if known), and property survey (if available). ~~Compliance with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.~~
- E. Compliance with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

3.19.4 Effect and Expiration of Approvals

Proposed Change: *Adds demolition as site feature action.*

- A. **Approval.** The issuance of a Site Feature – Historic District (HD) Permit shall authorize the Applicant to either install, modify, replace, or ~~replace~~ demolish the site feature as specified by the permit. When a Building Permit is required to install, modify, or replace a site feature, an approved Site Feature – Historic District (HD) Permit shall be provided at time of Building Permit application.