

ORDINANCE NO. 2024 – 04

TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON'S MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 23, UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE, ARTICLE 5 – DESIGN STANDARDS, SEC. 5.4 (WETLANDS) AND SEC. 5.10 (STORMWATER); AND ARTICLE 9 – DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION, SEC. 9.2 (DEFINED TERMS)

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton desires to improve the general safety, welfare, health and properties of the citizens of the Town of Bluffton; and,

WHEREAS, to establish the necessary provisions to accomplish the above, the Town of Bluffton has authority to enact resolutions, ordinances, regulations, and procedures pursuant to South Carolina Code of Laws 1976, Section 5-7-30; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton's Town Code and Ordinances provide guidance and requirements for development within the Town of Bluffton through regulations set forth to protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the Town's citizens, as espoused through the provisions of the Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan and as authorized by the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, Title 6, Chapter 29 of the Code of Laws for South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton Town Council adopted the aforementioned standards, which are known as the Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 23 of the Code of Ordinances for the Town of Bluffton, South Carolina on October 11, 2011 through Ordinance 2011-15; and

WHEREAS, the Unified Development Ordinance unifies the subdivision, land use, development/design regulations, as well as the Old Town Bluffton Historic District Code into a single set of integrated, updated, and streamlined standards; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council shall from time to time examine ordinances to ensure that they are properly regarded, enforced, sufficient and satisfactory to the needs of the community and can further suggest changes as deemed appropriate; and,

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2023-24 ("Strategic Plan") serves as a road map for activities and initiatives to implement the Town's Vision and Mission Statement to ensure that Bluffton is poised to capitalize on opportunities that advance key goals, which includes amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance to support these goals; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton Town Council desires to amend the Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.4 (Wetlands) and Sec. 5.10 (Stormwater); and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretation, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms) to provide a 25-foot buffer adjacent to wetlands.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, in accordance with the foregoing, the Town hereby amends the Code of Ordinances for the Town of Bluffton, Chapter 23, Unified Development Ordinance as follows:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. The Town of Bluffton hereby amends the Code Ordinances for the Town Of Bluffton, South Carolina by adopting and incorporating certain amendments to Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, including amendments to the following sections: Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.4 (Wetlands) and Sec. 5.10 (Stormwater); and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretation, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms) as shown on Exhibit A attached hereto and fully incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2. REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

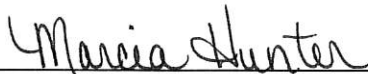
SECTION 3. ORDINANCE IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT. This entire Ordinance shall take full force and effect upon adoption.

DONE, RATIFIED AND ENACTED this 14th day of May, 2024.

This Ordinance was read and passed at first reading on **April 9, 2024**.




Larry C. Toomer, Mayor
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

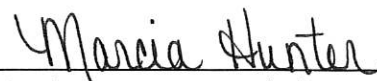


Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

A public hearing was held on this Ordinance on **May 14, 2024**.



Larry C. Toomer, Mayor
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina



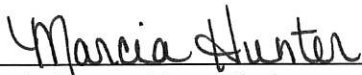
Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina



This Ordinance was passed at second reading held on **May 14, 2024.**



Larry C. Toomer, Mayor
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina



Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina



EXHIBIT A

Sec. 5.4 Natural Resources: Wetlands

No provisions of this Ordinance shall be construed to relieve the Applicant or Property Owner from the requirement to obtain permits from the United States Army Corps of Engineers and/or the State of South Carolina, as applicable, prior to the commencement of any land disturbance activity within the boundaries of a wetland or wetland buffer. See Section 5.10.7 for specific wetland buffer requirements.

Sec. 5.10. Stormwater

Sec. 5.10.1 – 5.10.6.

No changes.

Sec. 5.10.7. ~~Violations, Enforcement, and Penalties~~ Wetland Buffer

~~The Town is authorized to enforce the provisions of this Article as described in Article 8, Penalties and Enforcement. Any action or inaction that violates the provisions of this Article or Design Manual requirements shall be subject to enforcement actions. Any such action or inaction that is continuous with respect to time is deemed to be a public nuisance and may be abated by injunctive or other equitable relief.~~ This Section shall apply to all building, development, redevelopment, and site alteration on any land located on or immediately adjacent to any wetlands as shown on: (a) the National Wetlands Inventory Map; (b) a wetland exhibit prepared by and certified as accurate by a professional environmental consultant, which shall be dated within twelve (12) months of the date of the application; or, (c) a set of drawings sealed by a South Carolina Registered Land Surveyor, which shall be dated within twelve (12) months of the date of the application. No provisions of this Ordinance shall be construed to relieve the Applicant or Property Owner from the provisions of Section 5.4.

A wetland buffer shall be established for all building, development, redevelopment, or site alteration when the land on which the action is adjacent to wetlands.

Wetland Buffers shall comply with the following:

- A. For any land disturbance activity, a 25-foot minimum undisturbed buffer shall be established adjacent to a wetland unless a larger buffer is required by OCRM. The buffer shall be measured from the edge of the wetland.
- B. All vegetation within the wetland buffer shall be retained, including but not limited to groundcover, shrubs and trees.
- C. Utilities shall not be located within the wetland buffer; provided, however, the UDO Administrator shall have the discretion to approve encroachments into the wetland and/or wetland buffer if the applicant provides reasonable evidence that any impacts to the buffer and/or wetland have been avoided or minimized to the fullest extent practicable.

Sec. 5.10.8 – Violations, Enforcement, and Penalties

The Town is authorized to enforce the provisions of this Article as described in Article 8, Penalties and Enforcement. Any action or inaction that violates the provisions of this Article or Design Manual requirements shall be subject to enforcement actions. Any such action or inaction that is continuous with respect to time is deemed to be a public nuisance and may be abated by injunctive or other equitable relief.

Sec. 9.2 Defined Terms

Wetlands: Any areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.