



# MINUTES

## PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

August 19, 2025

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. James, Chair, District IV

Mr. Mize, District III

Mr. Hart, District V

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met at 4:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, Oconee Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all members present, as well as County Administrator Amanda F. Brock, County Attorney David Root, and Jennifer C. Adams, Clerk to Council, present.

Staff Present: Phil Shirley / PRT Director

**Press** Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [[www.oconeesc.com/council](http://www.oconeesc.com/council)]. In addition, it was made available [*upon request*] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Press Present: Dick Mangrum / 101.7 WGOG

### **Call to Order**

Mr. James called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

### **Moment of Silence**

Mr. James asked for a moment of silence prior to the invocation.

### **Invocation**

Mr. Root, County Attorney, gave the invocation.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Hart led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Hart offered a reminder of several topics discussed at the April 01, 2025 Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting, noting he believes these topics need further discussion and review.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 3 - 0, to approve the April 01, 2025 minutes as presented.

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## **Discussion & Action Regarding the Following Items**

### **Discussion regarding tourism in Oconee County**

Mr. James started the discussion with several questions related to tourism advertisement and return on investment from PRT advertisement efforts, along with a request of hard data related to tax revenue from tourism.

Mr. Mize then inquired if the County ever solicited surveys.

Ms. Brock noted that while we do have the option of surveys, the County has never performed one in the past.

Mr. Phil Shirley, PRT Director, stated that they typically do not perform localized surveys but PRT does have the ability to digitally track different aspects of tourism, further noting he is able to provide the Committee with off-the-cuff information related to Mr. James' previous questions related to tourism and bring back hard data at a future meeting.

Mr. Shirley noted that all advertising cost related to tourism is currently funded by ATAX State and local collections and went on to provide an overview of the yearly PRT marketing plan, how that marketing plan is devised, the County tourist market and digital tourism tracking.

Mr. Hart inquired if the recently purchased Chau Ram Park property has been utilized to allow more visitors and if the property offered by Duke Power has been acquired to increase the camping spaces at High Falls County Park.

Mr. Shirley informed the Committee that a master plan is needed for the newly acquired Chau Ram Park property and that task is on his short-list to begin, then went on to note that discussions with Duke Energy will begin, related to their property offer to High Falls County Park, once funds are available for a build-out on an additional campground.

As requested by Ms. Brock, Mr. Phil Shirley provided additional detailed information related to public tourism advertising and also noted to Mr. James that advertising money can be used toward sponsorships for recreation and tournament events within the County.

Mr. Hart suggested that the magazine that advertises Oconee County waterfalls and trails should be delivered to adjoining states welcome centers.

Mr. Shirley noted that this magazine is put together by his staff and a local partner, and a new edition is actually coming out this month that will be distributed to every welcome center within South Carolina and to strategic partners outside the state, as well.

Mr. Mize inquire about shoreline management as it relates to erosion from lake wake.

Mr. Shirley noted the County is responsible for shoreline management of any shoreline owned by the County and provided details related to recent shoreline management projects at High Falls and South Cove County Park.

Ms. Brock informed the committee that ATAX money also covers electricity, seasonal staff and maintenance for all three County parks.

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Mr. Shirley also noted that PRT grant funding is completely paid for through ATAX collections.

Ms. Brock provided historical comments related to tourism within the County.

Mr. Shirley went on to provide details related to lodging compliance software that PRT utilizes and how it is able to capture short-term rental properties within the County to ensure they are compliant with local accommodation tax regulations.

Mr. Hart suggested that Mr. Shirley utilize Clemson University students to help create a master plan for Chau Ram Park.

Mr. Shirley noted Clemson University students have been utilized in the past to help with three different master plans.

**Adjourn:**

Mr. Hart made a motion to adjourn, approved unanimously, at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Jennifer C. Adams  
Clerk to Council

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