



**OCONEE COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

415 S. Pine St. Room 212 | Walhalla, SC 29691
864.638.4218
OconeeSC.com

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mike Johnson, At-Large
Teresa Spicer, District 1
Joe Fravel, District 4
Mickey Haney, At-Large

David Nix, District 2
Brit Adams, District 3
Jake Marcengill, District 5

AGENDA

6:00 pm, Monday, February 3, 2025
Council Chambers - Oconee County 415 S Pine St, Walhalla SC 29691

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of minutes from January 6, 2025
5. Election of Officers
6. Public Comment for *Non-Agenda Items* (4 minutes per person)
7. Commission Member Comments
8. Discussion regarding the Scenic Highway Ordinance and potential changes or amendments.
 - a. Public Comment
 - b. Discussion/ vote
9. Adjourn



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COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mike Johnson, Chairman, At-Large	David Nix, Vice Chair, District 2
Teresa Spicer, District 1	Brit Adams, District 3
Joshua Owens, District 4 - Absent	Gary Gaulin, District 5
Mickey Haney, At-Large	

STAFF

James Coley
Elise Dunaway

MINUTES

6:00 pm, Monday, January 6, 2025
Council Chambers - Oconee County 415 S. Pine St, Walhalla SC 29691

1. Call to Order – Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Invocation was led by Mr. Root.
3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Johnson.
4. Approval of minutes from December 2, 2024 – Mr. Adams made a motion to approve the minutes; Seconded by Mr. Gaulin. Approved Unanimously.
5. Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items (4 minutes per person): N/A
6. Commission Member Comments:
Mr. Johnson thanked the audience for attending the meeting.
Mr. Gaulin wished everyone a great year ahead.
7. Staff Comments: N/A
8. Discussion regarding the Scenic Highway Ordinance and potential changes or amendments.
 - a. Public Comment
Mr. Tom Markovich voiced his opinion regarding the scenic highway ordinance and small area rezoning.

Mr. Mark Torres voiced his support regarding the Scenic Highway Ordinance and Keep Oconee Beautiful Association (KOBA).
 - b. Discussion/ vote
Mr. Nix made a motion to add a provision to notify the public, to strike the second sentence in paragraph A, and to rewrite item C to reflect all persons owning a contiguous property to the proposed designated scenic highway; Seconded by

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Mr. Johnson Approved Unanimously.

9. Discussion regarding road name changing procedures and the role of Planning Commission.

a. Public Comment

Mr. Tom Markovich voiced his opinion on road name changes and how they can financially impact individuals.

b. Discussion

Discussion among members and Mr. Coley.

10. Adjourn – the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

**ARTICLE III. A PROGRAM TO DESIGNATE OCONEE COUNTY'S SCENIC HIGHWAYS;
ESTABLISHED¹**

Sec. 26-151. Oconee County scenic highways.

Highways located within Oconee County, South Carolina and found to be of special value to the citizens may be designated as scenic highways pursuant to the rules, regulations, and criteria set forth below.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

Sec. 26-152. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning.

Highway means all those roads, streets and highways within the federal, state or Oconee County highway system.

Intrinsic qualities means those significant tangible and intangible resources found within a scenic corridor that are known to be distinct within the region. "Intrinsic qualities" include:

- (1) *Scenic*: The composition of features that are regionally representative, associative or inspirational. These features are memorable, distinct, visually impressive, and continuous across the view.
- (2) *Historic*: Landscapes and structures that educate and stir an appreciation for the legacy of Oconee County's past.
- (3) *Cultural*: Activities or objects that represent unique and distinctive expressions of community life, customs or traditional ways and identify a place, region or culture.
- (4) *Recreational*: Passive and active leisure activities directly dependent on the scenic qualities of the area and usually associated with outdoor recreation as we seek to refresh and renew our spirits.
- (5) *Natural*: Relatively undisturbed and visually pleasing natural areas and/or ecologically sensitive landscapes representing natural occurrences including landforms, water, vegetation and wildlife characteristics.
- (6) *Archaeological*: Sites, artifacts or structures recognized by the scientific or academic communities as being representative of past human life and activities.

Scenic highway means a highway or segment of a highway receiving a designation as such pursuant to the provisions contained in this article and based on it deserving such recognition due to scenic vistas, cultural or historical significance, or other criteria specified by county council. All scenic highways shall be divided into two route categories:

¹Editor's note(s)—Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), adopted Sept. 19, 2017, amended art. III in its entirety to read as herein set out. Former art. III, §§ 26-151—26-157, pertained to similar subject matter, and derived from Ord. No. 2007-21, §§ I—V, App. A, App. B, adopted Oct. 21, 2008.

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- (1) Highways with limited development visible from the highway, yet still retaining special characteristics worthy of preservation, shall be designated a category I scenic highway.
 - (2) Highways with little or no development visible from the highway lying outside primary growth areas, shall be designated a category II scenic highway.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

Sec. 26-153. Designation process.

- (a) Applications shall be submitted in writing to the planning department by a sponsoring organization agency (see section 25-154(B)), or by a property owner or group of property owners whose property is contiguous to the proposed scenic highway.
- (b) All persons or entities owning property that is contiguous to the right-of-way of the proposed scenic highway must sign the application for designation as a scenic highway.
- (c) Upon receipt of an application for the designation of a highway as a scenic highway, the planning director, or their designee, shall forward the application to the staff liaison for the planning commission, who shall then place review of the application on the next appropriate planning commission agenda for consideration.
Notice of the date, time, and nature of the planning commission's meeting to consider the application for designation as a scenic highway shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. Additionally, signs measuring at least nine (9) square feet and noting that consideration of an application for designation of the subject highway as a scenic highway, and containing contact information for the planning commission's staff liaison, shall be posted at the beginning and end of the proposed scenic highway and at increments of no less than one mile along the length of the proposed scenic highway. These signs shall remain in place until county council takes final action on the application, as provided for herein.
- (d) The planning commission shall review applications for compliance with the criteria for designating a scenic highway established in this article (see section 26-156, appendix B). Upon completion of the review, the planning commission shall by vote determine a recommendation regarding the designation of the subject highway. The planning commission's recommendation shall be forwarded to county council. In the event county council determines the proposed highway merits designation as a scenic highway, it shall so indicate its decision by ordinance. Prior to enactment of such ordinance, county council shall hold a public hearing on the question of the proposed scenic highway designation. Notice of the public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county at least fifteen (15) days prior to the subject meeting, and written notice containing all pertinent information related to the public hearing shall be sent by first class mail to the owner of each parcel that is contiguous to the proposed scenic highway at least fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing. For the purposes of this section, the name and address of the owner of the parcel shall be as listed on the tax records maintained by the county tax assessor.
- (~~e~~) Any highway proposed for designation as a scenic highway that is rejected for designation by county council, may not be proposed again for a period of one year from the date of publication of the decision.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017; Ord. No. 2019-10, § 1(Exh. A), 3-5-2019)

Sec. 26-154. Regulations.

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person other than the owner, owner's agent, or other individual with the full knowledge and consent of the owner of a property situated along the right-of-way of a designated and

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properly identified scenic highway to dig, pull up, gather, remove, cut, maim, break, or injure in any way a public or private property, to include any injury done by fires intentionally set, and to include any injury done to any wild, cultivated, or ornamental plants, shrubs, and trees. These provisions shall not apply where the acts hereby prohibited are done by or under the instructions of county or state authorities lawfully in charge of such public roads, highways or lands, or by a utility in the lawful pursuit of installation or maintenance of their facilities. Violation of this provision of this article shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.00.

- (b) The sponsoring organization or ~~property owner(s) group~~ submitting an application to the county for designation of a highway as a scenic highway shall be responsible for the removal of trash along the portion of the highway so designated as a scenic highway no fewer than three times each year. Permits and/or required notifications related to any and all activities inside a right-of-way shall be the responsibility of the sponsoring organization or ~~property owner(s) group~~. Any individual taking part in trash removal duties, or any other activities related to the standards of this article, shall comply with any and all standards and practices utilized by the entity responsible for maintenance of the highway.
- (c) A member of the county staff shall be designated by the county administrator to review the status of all county designated scenic highways every two years. In the event it is determined that a route fails to meet the criteria established in this article, a report shall be made to the planning commission, which shall recommend a course of action to county council. Such recommendations include, but are not limited to, reclassification to a lower category and/or redesignation.
- (d) Regulations contained in this section shall apply equally to both category I and category II scenic highways; however, category II scenic highways shall receive preference in the pursuit of funding to be utilized in maintaining and enhancing the intrinsic values leading to their designation.
- (e) ~~All county rules and regulations concerning scenic highways shall apply immediately to a nominated highway until a determination is made as to whether or not the highway shall be designated a scenic highway. A~~ determination of this issue must be made within six months of the county receiving an application.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

Sec. 26-155. Appendix A.

A scenic highway corridor management plan shall include the following components:

- (1) A detailed description of the section of the highway to be designated, including two or more of the intrinsic qualities as defined in this article; a specification as to how the highway in question fits the criteria; an identification of any problem areas that may impact the scenic highway designation.
- (2) A marked map clearly indicating the section of the highway the applicant is proposing for designation.
- (3) Photographs or videos of areas which the applicant considers to be of intrinsic value or significance.
- (4) Letters of support from citizens, businesses, civic groups, and other organizations.
- (5) A maintenance plan outlining proposed litter collection activities.
- (6) Any additional proposed actions intended to enhance and maintain the highway if ~~awarded~~ designated a scenic highway.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

Sec. 26-156. Appendix B.

Criteria for designating a highway as a scenic highway.

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- (a) The planning commission shall consider the following in determining whether a highway should be designated as a scenic highway.
- (1) Intrinsic qualities (as defined by this article).
 - (2) Additional amenities and support (such as but not limited to):
 - a. Hospitality features.
 - b. Length of route.
 - c. General support for proposed route.
 - d. Financial commitment.
 - e. Role in regional/statewide strategy.
 - f. Protective easements, zoning overlays, or other land use restrictions.
 - (3) Features negatively impacting the scenic qualities of the highway, (such as but not limited to):
 - a. Junkyards/litter.
 - b. Dilapidated/unattractive structures.
 - c. Excessive advertising.
 - d. Heavy traffic uses.
 - e. Mining/lumbering scars.
 - f. Heavy industry.
 - g. Parallel and visible utilities along highway.
 - h. Landfills/other pollutants visible from route.
 - (4) Feasibility of maintenance plan and responsibilities.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)