



OCONEE COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
415 S. Pine St. Walhalla, SC 29691
864.638.4218
OconeeSC.com
planninginfo@oconeesc.com

COMMISSION MEMBERS

David Nix, District 2
Teresa Spicer, District 1
Joe Fravel, District 4
Mike Johnson, At-Large

Mickey Haney, At- Large
Brit Adams, District 3
Jake Marcengill, District 5

STAFF

DeAnn Hester, Planning Director

MINUTES

6:00 pm, Monday May 4th, 2026
Oconee County Council Chambers

1. Call to Order – Chairman Nix called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Invocation was led by Mr. Johnson.
3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Marcengill.
4. Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items (4 minutes per person): Mr. Karl Dieter addressed the Commission regarding the proposed Greenhouse Development LLC development along the Keowee River. Mr. Dieter requested that the Commission recommend implementation of a 100-foot riparian buffer adjacent to the Army Corps of Engineers property to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and scenic resources. Mr. Dieter submitted written comments and supporting materials for the record.
5. Commission Member Comments: Chairman Nix welcomed DeAnn Hester as Oconee County's new Planning Director.
6. Staff Comments: Ms. Hester advised the Commission that County Attorney Rob Chumley was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Hester also stated that the minutes for the March 6th, 2026 meeting would be presented for consideration at the next meeting.
7. Appointment of Secretary: Britt Adams made a motion to appoint DeAnn Hester as Secretary to the Planning Commission. Seconded by Mr. Johnson and approved unanimously.
8. Approval of Minutes: John Farvel made a motion to approve the April , 2026 minutes; Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved unanimously.

The meeting will be broadcasted live on the County's YouTube channel, which can be found on the County's website at www.oconeesc.com.

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9. Discussion regarding Chapter 38 of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances

a. Public Comment

Mr. Perry Conner addressed the Commission regarding proposed Chapter 38 revisions. Mr. Conner expressed concerns regarding proposed changes that would limit County Council's authority to initiate zoning actions, eliminate planning district zoning procedures, and remove opportunities for citizen-initiated zoning petitions. He encouraged the Commission to preserve these tools as mechanisms for growth management and public participation.

Mr. Tom Markovich addressed the Commission and recommended that use-related provisions currently contained in Chapter 32 be incorporated into Chapter 38. Mr. Markovich also commented on complaint procedures, zoning district boundaries, and the treatment of railroad rights-of-way.

b. Discussion/Vote

Staff explained that all building permits currently receive zoning review and that site plans are required, although the level of detail varies depending upon project complexity.

The Commission discussed language authorizing permit requirements to be waived and the importance of ensuring consistent application of the ordinance.

Mrs. Hester accepted an action item to research whether permit requirements had historically been waived under this section and to provide examples, if any, at a future meeting.

The Commission also discussed the provision authorizing staff to request additional information necessary for site plan review. Discussion included examples such as traffic studies, utility information, arborist reports, drainage information, and other site-specific documentation. No formal action was taken, and the item was deferred for future review.

Section 38-2.7 – The Commission discussed complaint procedures and the requirement that complainants reside within the same planning district as the alleged violation.

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Staff advised that complaints are investigated regardless of the complainant's planning district and that the residency requirement had not been enforced in practice.

Mr. Johnson made a motion that references to "days" throughout Chapters 26, 32, and 38 be clarified as "business days." Seconded by Mr. Haney and approved unanimously.

Mr. Haney made a motion to remove the sentence, "Complainants must reside within the same planning district in which the potential violation lies." Seconded by Mr. Johnson and approved unanimously.

Section 38-2.4(6) – Mrs. Hester requested clarification regarding language requiring approved as-built plans prior to authorizing permanent utility connections. Staff noted that the provision had not been uniformly enforced and could create a financial hardship for property owners.

Commission discussion focused on the circumstances under which as-built surveys may be appropriate.

At the Commission's request, Mr. Markovich addressed the Commission and noted that Certificates of Occupancy had historically satisfied utility requirements without requiring as-built surveys.

Mr. Johnson agreed to develop proposed language addressing this section for future consideration.

Mr. Haney made a motion for a five-minute recess. Seconded and approved unanimously.

Following the recess, the meeting reconvened and resumed discussion of Chapter 38.

Section 38-2.9 – The Commission discussed the need to ensure consistency between Chapter 38 penalty provisions and the language adopted in Chapters 26 and 32.

Mrs. Hester accepted an action item to identify the corresponding language from Chapters 26 and 32 and present it at a future meeting.

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Section 38-4.2 – The Commission discussed the terminology "altering," "expanding," and "changing," and the need for clear definitions to ensure consistent interpretation and enforcement.

Discussion included distinctions between physical modifications to structures and changes in use, including examples involving non-conforming structures, accessibility improvements, and changes in occupancy.

At the Commission's request, Mr. Markovich provided additional comments regarding changes in use versus structural alterations.

The Commission directed the County Attorney to provide recommendations regarding definitions and the application of the phrase "strictly construed."

Mr. Haney made a motion to revise Section 38-4.2 by deleting Item No. 1 and incorporating the language into the introductory paragraph of the section. Seconded by Mr. Johnson and approved unanimously.

Mr. Haney made a motion to revise Item No. 4 to specify that special exceptions are granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals, consistent with Item No. 5. Seconded by Chairman Nix and approved unanimously.

10. Adjourn – The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:45pm.