

Sumter City-County Planning Commission

March 26, 2014

OA-14-02/OA-14-03, Outside Storage/Displays (City/County)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant: Planning Staff

Request: City: Request to amend Article 3, Section T, 3.t.3.d and Article 5, Section C, 5.c.8 regulating outside storage and outside display of products, goods and/or merchandise in the commercial, industrial, and agricultural districts.

County: Request to amend Article 3, Section V, 3.v.3.d and Article 5, Section C, 5.c.8 regulating outside storage and outside display of products, goods and/or merchandise in the commercial, industrial, and agricultural districts.

II. BACKGROUND

The overall appearance and aesthetic appeal of Sumter's primary corridors has been a primary focus of Zoning Enforcement efforts over the last several years. A major contributing factor to the appearance of the community is outdoor storage and outdoor display of merchandise. Two sections of the Zoning Ordinance address outdoor storage and display—the Highway Corridor Protection District (HCPD) Design review standards and temporary use regulations.

Current HCPD regulations expressly address outdoor sales lots and open storage as follows:

d. Outdoor sales lots and open storage areas of commercial or industrial projects shall not be permitted, unless adequately screened or removed from public view; Car Dealerships and mobile home sales lots are expressly excluded from this provision, but nevertheless shall meet all the requirements for landscaping and buffering...

While outside storage is also addressed in Article 5, Section 5.c.8.

5.c.8. Outside Storage: *No outside storage (which shall include in its meaning “outside display”) shall be permitted in a PO district. Outside storage of merchandise which is for sale, exclusive of non-useable merchandise i.e., salvage or junk, shall be permitted in NC, LC, GC districts. Outside storage shall be permitted in LI and HI districts provided that*

such storage is located behind the principal structure. However, outside storage where allowed by district regulations may not be permitted in any bufferyards or parking areas.

Although the community has standards in place to regulate outdoor display and storage as outlined above, enforcement of these standards has been liberalized over time. It is time to revisit these regulations to refocus and refine the community standards to better address outdoor storage and display, while providing regulations that handle these two issues in a more equitable manner.

In researching proposed changes to the regulations, Staff reviewed ordinances from the following communities and organizations:

- City of Charleston
- North Charleston
- Camden
- City of Aiken
- Florence County
- Darlington
- Conway
- City of Columbia
- City of Beaufort
- City of Manning
- Nelson County, North Carolina
- Pflugerville, Texas
- Louisiana Land Use Toolkit

One of the greatest shortcomings in our current language is that outdoor storage and display are not clearly defined. Guidance for placement and screening is very limited with no expressly required review criteria. The proposed language defines outdoor storage and outdoor display while providing finite review and placement criteria. New regulations seek to clearly address the issues of clutter while proving a review mechanism.

It should be noted that there are multiple non-conforming sites throughout the community that will be directly affected by these proposed revisions. Consideration should be given to adding a sunset provision to the regulations that will give notice to those existing non-compliant businesses, giving them a reasonable amount of time to come into compliance with the new regulations. Based on review of other jurisdictions, the most liberal timeframe for compliance was one year from adoption of the regulations with some communities providing as little as 90 days.

III. DRAFT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

See attached

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION – MARCH 26, 2014

The Sumter City-County Planning Commission at its meeting on Wednesday, March 26, 2014 took no action on this request pending further research and input from stakeholders.