

Sumter City-County Planning Commission

September 24, 2025

OA-25-05, Special Event Facilities (City)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant: City of Sumter

Request: Amend *Article 3, Exhibit 3-5; Article 5.b.1.i.; Article 5.b.2.; Article 5.b.3., and Article 10.b.1* to modify the zoning districts that special event facilities can be established in, to require special exception of approval for zoning districts where special event facilities can be established, to establish more robust use specific criteria for special design facilities, and to modify the definition of special event facility.

II. BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of this Ordinance Amendment is to address the need for more stringent zoning requirements for special event facility uses. Special event facilities are defined as a commercial facility rented to individuals, groups, or organizations that are used to host gatherings such as weddings, receptions, business meetings, galas, networking events, and conferences. Special event facilities are intended to cater to a significant diversity of individuals, groups, and organizations on a contractual basis, with such individuals, groups, and organizations holding unique events on an irregular basis only. Special event facilities are not intended for space to hold night club type events open to the general public.

Special event facilities are not a new topic for city discussion. This issue was brought to council as an Ordinance Amendment in 2021 under Case# OA-21-06. This amendment made special event facilities a conditional use subject to multiple use specific conditions aimed at the submission of critical business details, including a facility floor plan, the type and number of events anticipated, the hours of operation, on-site manager contact information, building capacity rating, etc. This amendment was adopted on November 2, 2021, with the intent of addressing external impacts associated with this business type.

Staff have applied the 2021 amendment requirements to multiple applications for special event facilities with mixed results, with the operations of some special event facilities (at times) more in alignment with the description of a night club. This has required increased enforcement attention from multiple city departments. Staff have also observed an increase in the number of special event facility inquiries over the last several years and have concerns about associated land use impacts. This proposed amendment would make establishing special event venues subject to a more robust review and public hearing process, as well as stringent siting requirements aimed at mitigating external impacts.

The City of Sumter currently has 7 licensed special event facilities. These facilities are listed below:

| Facility Name | Address |
|--|--------------------|
| O'Donnell House | 120 E. Liberty St. |
| Silver Spoon | 670 W. Liberty St. |
| Events on Broad (approved 2025) | 741 Broad St. |
| Infinity Event Center (approved 2024) | 921 Carolina Ave. |
| Canty Entertainment Services (Cantey Center) | 627 Manning Ave. |
| La Piazza (approved 2025) | 35 N. Main St. |
| Venue 118, LLC | 118 S. Main St. |

Proposed Text Amendment

A strike-through of the proposed text amendment is included with this report as Exhibit 1. The proposed amendments impact the following sections:

1. Amend Article 3, Exhibit 3-5. To remove special event facilities from the LC & AC districts, and to change this use from a conditional use to a special exception use in the GC, CBD, and LI-W districts. Special exception uses require approval by the Sumter City-County Zoning Board of Appeals (BOA) after a duly noticed public hearing.
2. Delete (and reserve for future use) Article 5.b.1.i. This section contains the current conditional requirements for special event facilities. As special exception approval is being required for special event facilities, the use specific criteria is being shifted to Article 5.b.3.
3. Amend Article 5.b.2. to include special event facilities (as defined in Article 10.b.1.) as an identified certain hazardous and/or potentially disruptive land development requiring approval by the BOA.
4. Amend Article 5.b.3. to include the following special design criteria for special event facilities, as follows:
 - **Separation:** This use shall not be within 300 feet (measured in a straight line from structure to structure) of a residential use, church, school or public playground on a separately platted parcel. New requirement
 - **Screening:** A six foot high fence that is a visual screen will be installed to separate this use from residential uses, where such residential uses are directly adjacent to the property or site containing the use. New requirement
 - **On-Site Manager:** An on-site manager shall be present and available for the duration of all events occurring at the facility. Updated contact information shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator anytime the on-site manager's contact information changes. Current requirement

- **Parking:** All parking shall be contained on-site with 1 parking space for every 4 occupants, with maximum occupancy determined via applicable building or fire codes used to determine the maximum total number of occupants. New requirement
 - **Hours of Operation:** Special event facilities shall only operate between the hours of 6:00 am to 11:00 pm. This does not include event set-up and clean-up activities. New requirement
 - **Insurance:** Valid liability insurance covering the special event facility activities is required for the Owner, Property Management Company, or any other entity. New requirement
 - **On Premise Sale/Consumption of Alcohol:** Disclosure of plans for on-premises sale and consumption of alcohol, including the responsible party(s) securing necessary SC Dept. of Revenue licensing and the type of licensing being sought. New requirement
 - **Compliance Inspections:** Inspections for compliance with the requirements of this section, for compliance with additional approval conditions placed on the property by the Sumter City-County Zoning Board of Appeals, and for compliance with any other applicable City Codes may be performed by the City of Sumter if deemed necessary and with 24-hour notice to the business owner and/or property owner/property manager. New requirement
 - **Operational Plan Required:** An operational plan shall be submitted describing generally how the facility will operate. Substantive changes to the operational plan shall require additional approval. The operational plan shall include, at a minimum, the following items: Current requirement
 - A site plan illustrating proposed uses, structures, drive aisles, access points, and off-street parking;
 - Maximum capacity of the facility, based on applicable building and fire codes;
 - Contact information for the on-site facility manager;
 - Types of events anticipated/marketed;
 - Anticipated annual number of events;
 - Duration of time that the facility will be operational (seasonal or year-round) and daily hours of operation.
 - A solid waste management plan indicating how solid waste will be disposed of and managed.
5. Amend Article 8, Exhibit 8-12 to require that 1 off-street parking space for every 4 occupants (with total occupant # determined by Building and/or Fire Codes) be provided for special

event facilities, and that parking requirements for outdoor event spaces be addressed on a site specific basis. New requirement

6. Amend Article 10.b.1. to revise the definition of special event facility, as follows:

- **Special Event Facility:** A commercial facility rented to individuals, groups, or organizations, and used to host gatherings such as, but not limited to, weddings, receptions, meetings, galas, networking events, and conferences. Special Events Facilities cater to a significant diversity of individuals, groups, and organizations on a contractual basis, with such individuals, groups, and organizations holding unique events on an irregular basis only. Such individuals, groups, and organizations contracting to rent the facility may provide alcoholic beverages for guests in accordance with state law. Land uses better described under the definitions for bottle club, night club, or drinking place are not Special Event Facilities.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this request.

These Ordinance changes will help promote public health and safety by ensuring that a full review and proper process is in place to address true special event facility uses. A more stringent special exception process is recommended due to the potential for negative external impacts associated with this use.

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION – September 24, 2025

Exhibit 1

**OA-25-06, Special Event Facility
Requirements Update (City)**

**Ordinance Amendment
Strike-Thru**

Amend Article 3, Exhibit 3-5 as follows:

Exhibit 3-5: Permitted Uses in All Zoning Districts

Key: P: Permitted Use – C: Conditional Use – S: Special Exception Use

**Asterisk denotes conditions listed in "Notes" column applies only in the specified zoning district where asterisk is present.*

| NAICS Code | NAICS Description | R-15 | R-9 | R-6 | GR | RMF | PO | NC | LC | GC | CBD | LI-W | HI | AC | CP | Notes | NAICS (2 Digit) |
|------------|---|------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|------------|------------|------------|----|----|----|---|-----------------|
| 81299 | Special Event Facilities (as defined in Article 10.b.1) | | | | | | | | € | <u>S</u> € | <u>S</u> € | <u>S</u> € | | € | | Ref. to Article 5 Subject to Definition in Article 10.b.1. | |

Delete and Reserve Article 5.b.1.i as follows:

i. ~~Special Event Facilities (NAICS 81299): The following conditions apply to all Event Venues for conditional use approval:~~

a. ~~An on-site manager shall be present and available for the duration of all events occurring at the venue. Updated contact information shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator any time the on-site manager's contact information changes.~~

b. ~~An operation plan shall be submitted with the conditional use application describing generally how the facility will operate. Substantive changes to the operational plan shall require additional Zoning Administrator approval. The operational plan shall include, at a minimum, the following items:~~

i. ~~Maximum capacity of the facility, based on building and fire code;~~

ii. ~~Contact information for the on-site facility manager;~~

iii. ~~Types of events anticipated/marketed;~~

iv. ~~Anticipated annual number of events;~~

v. ~~How solid waste will be disposed of;~~

vi. ~~A floor plan of the facility showing the square footage and use of each room;~~

vii. ~~A plot plan showing building footprint, property lines, parking areas, delineated outdoor event space (if applicable). A formal site plan submission may be required by the Zoning Administrator.~~

c. ~~Vehicular access to the site shall be adequate in terms of width, vertical clearance, and construction to support emergency vehicles in accordance with applicable Fire Code, as determined by the Sumter City County Fire Inspector.~~

RESERVED

Amend Article 5.b.2 as follows:

5.b.2. Enumeration of Certain Hazardous and/or Potentially Disruptive Land Development Activities: Per *Article 5.a.1.c.*, the following uses shall be reviewed by the Sumter City-County Board of Appeals, and if approved, shall be classified as a permitted special exception:

- a. Stockyards, poultry houses, commercial kennels, slaughterhouses, and animal auction houses (NAICS 112112, 1123, 11299, 3116, or 4245);
- b. Mining and extraction operations (NAICS 212);
- c. Telecommunications Towers (NAICS 517);
- d. Sewerage Treatment Plants (NAICS 221);
- e. Electric Substations (NAICS 221);
- f. Jails & Correctional Facilities (NAICS 561210 or 92214);
- g. Hazardous Waste and Nuclear Waste Transfer, Storage, and Treatment and/or Disposal Sites (NAICS 5621 or 5622);
- h. Resource Recovery Facilities, Solid Waste Storage and Transfer Facilities, Waste Tire and Treatment Sites, Composting Facilities, Manned Convenience Centers and Incinerators (NAICS 5629);
- i. Sanitary Landfills and Inert Dump Sites (NAICS 5621 or 5622);
- j. Recyclable Material Merchant Wholesalers (NAICS 423930);

k. Drinking Places/Bottle Club/Night Clubs (NAICS 7224);

~~k.~~l. Special Event Facilities

~~l.~~m. Liquor Stores (NAICS 44532);

~~m.~~n. Tattoo Parlors (NAICS 81299);

~~n.~~o. Used Motor Vehicle Parts Merchant Wholesalers, Junkyards (NAICS 42314);

~~o-p.~~ Vehicular race and testing tracks (NAICS 711212);

~~p-q.~~ Amusements and Recreations (not classified). This includes but is not limited to Bingo Parlors, Pool Halls, and pistol, rifle, or skeet shooting range (NAICS 7132 or 7139);

~~q-r.~~ Bed and Breakfast Inns (NAICS 721191);

~~r-s.~~ Security & commodity brokers; insurance carriers & agents; real estate; employment agencies; legal services; accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, and payroll services, tutoring services & adult education; architectural, engineering, and related services or specialized design services (NAICS 523, 524, 525, 531, 5411, 5412, 5413, 5414, or 5419)

Add Special Event Facility Special Design Review Requirements to Article 5.b.3 as follows:

5.b.3. Special Design Review Criteria for Applicable Items in *Article 5.b.2*: Due to the unusual nature of some of the operations associated herein, the following shall be required of the development and/or included in any review process:

m. Special Event Facilities

1. **Separation:** This use shall not be within 300 feet (measured in a straight line from structure to structure) of a residential use, church, school or public playground on a separately platted parcel.
2. **Screening:** A six foot high fence that is a visual screen will be installed to separate this use from residential uses, where such residential uses are directly adjacent to the property or site containing the use.
3. **On-Site Manager:** An on-site manager shall be present and available for the duration of all events occurring at the facility. Updated contact information shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator anytime the on-site manager's contact information changes.
4. **Parking:** All parking shall be contained on-site with 1 parking space for every 4 occupants, with maximum occupancy determined via applicable building or fire codes used to determine the maximum total number of occupants.
5. **Hours of Operation:** Special event facilities shall only operate between the hours of 6:00 am to 11:00 pm., not to include event set-up and clean-up activities.
6. **Insurance:** Valid liability insurance covering the special event facility activities is required for the Owner, Property Management Company, or any other entity.
7. **On Premise Sale/Consumption of Alcohol:** Disclosure of plans for on-premises sale and consumption of alcohol, including the responsible party(s) securing necessary SC Dept. of Revenue licensing and the type of licensing being sought.
8. **Compliance Inspections:** Inspections for compliance with the requirements of this section, for compliance with additional approval condition placed on the property by the Sumter City-County Zoning Board of Appeals, and for compliance with any other applicable City Codes may be performed by the City of Sumter if deemed necessary and with 24-hour notice to the business owner and/or property owner/property manager.

9. **Operational Plan Required:** An operational plan shall be submitted describing generally how the facility will operate. Substantive changes to the operational plan shall require additional approval. The operation plan shall include, at a minimum, the following items:

- a. A site plan illustrating proposed uses, structures, drive aisles, access points, and off-street parking;
- b. Maximum capacity of the facility, based on applicable building and fire codes;
- c. Contact information for the on-site facility manager;
- d. Types of events anticipated/marketed;
- e. Anticipated annual number of events;
- f. Duration of time that the facility will be operation (seasonal or year-round) and daily hours of operation.
- a-g. A solid waste management plan indicating how solid waste will be disposed of and managed.

Adjust section numbers for remaining Article 5.b.3. uses – Liquor Stores, Bingo Parlor/Pool Hall, Jails/Correction Facilities, Bed & Breakfast Inns, Financial & Real Estate, Sewerage Treatment Plants, Electric Substations, Mobile Produce Sales

Amend Article 8, Exhibit 8-12 as follows:

| RETAIL TRADE | |
|---|---|
| Building Materials, Hardware, Mobile Home Dealers, Retail Nurseries | 1 per 350 sq. ft. GFA |
| General Merchandise Stores, Food & Convenience Stores | 1 per 250 sq. ft. GFA |
| Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, Home Furnishings | 1 per 350 sq. ft. GFA |
| Eating Placing, Drinking Places, Bottle Clubs, Night Clubs | 1.2 per 100 sq. ft. GFA |
| Special Event Facilities | <p>1.2 per 100 sq. ft. of rentable building area (excluding area for storage, bathrooms, administrative office space, and kitchen space) or by individual review if outdoor space is the primary events area</p> <p><u>1 space for every 4 occupants, with total number of occupants determined by Building and/or Fire Codes.</u></p> <p><u>Individual review required if outdoor space is the primary events area.</u></p> |

Amend Article 10.b.1 as follows:

Special Event Facility~~ies~~: A commercial facility rented to individuals, groups, or organizations~~s~~, and used to host gatherings such as, but not limited to, weddings, receptions, meetings, galas, networking events, and conferences. Special Events Facilities cater to a significant diversity of individuals, groups, and organizations on a contractual basis, with such individuals, groups, and organizations holding unique events on an irregular basis only. Such individuals, groups, and organizations contracting to rent the facility may provide alcoholic beverages for guests in accordance with state law. ~~This definition does not include~~Land uses better described under the definitions for bottle clubs~~s~~, night clubs~~s~~, or drinking place are not Special Event Facility~~ies~~.