

ORDINANCE No. 2026-_____

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 13 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE
TOWN OF BLUFFTON, CHAPTER 13 – PUBLIC PROPERTY, ARTICLE II. PUBLIC PARK,
DOCK AND BOAT LANDING RULES, SEC. 13-37. GENERAL PROHIBITIONS AND A NEW
SECTION TO INCLUDE DOCK RULES FOR THE
NEW RIVERSIDE TRAIL**

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton (“Town”) desires to improve the general safety, welfare, health and properties of the citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton Town Council shall from time to time examine ordinances to ensure that they are properly regarded, enforced, sufficient and satisfactory to the needs of the community and can further suggest amendments as they deem appropriate; and

WHEREAS, changes in technology, trends and public use shall require review of Town’s rules and regulations, particularly as they relate to public property; and

WHEREAS, the Town invests in parks, docks, and public spaces through improvements and capital projects and the addition of a dock at the New Riverside Linear Trail necessitates the establishment of rules for its safe and orderly use; and

WHEREAS, the safety of the public requires that persons be prohibited from jumping from, climbing on, or attaching unauthorized items to docks and public structures; and,

WHEREAS, for the reasons stated above, the Town Council desires to amend Chapter 13 of the Town Code to establish regulations for the dock at the New Riverside Linear Trail and to expand on general prohibitions related to all public property, and other matters related thereto, and as shown in “Exhibit A” attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Amendment.** That Chapter 13 of the Town Code is amended to establish a new section as shown in “Exhibit A” and amend Sec. 13-37, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
2. **Severability.** If any section, phrase, sentence, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.
3. **Repeal.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this Ordinance, or inconsistent with its provisions, are hereby repealed or superseded to the extent necessary to give this Ordinance full force and effect.
4. **Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall be effective immediately upon its adoption by the Town Council of the Town of Bluffton, South Carolina.

DONE, RATIFIED and ENACTED this _____ day of _____, 2026.

This Ordinance was read and passed at first reading on August, 11, 2026.

Larry C. Toomer, *Mayor*
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

Marcia Hunter, *Town Clerk*
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

This Ordinance was read and passed at Second reading on _____, _____, 2026.

Larry C. Toomer, *Mayor*
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

Marcia Hunter, *Town Clerk*
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

EXHIBIT A

Chapter 13 – Public Property**Article II – Public Park, Dock and Boat Landing Rules****Sec. 13-37. - General prohibitions.**

The following prohibited activities apply to all public parks, docks and boat landings. Further restriction of these activities may vary by property as noted in subsequent paragraphs of this article.

- (1) *Camping*. No overnight camping of any type shall be permitted.
- (2) *Litter*. Littering is prohibited per [Section 22-43](#). All garbage, other solid waste, trash or offensive matter must be disposed of in receptacles designated for such use. When such receptacles are full, patrons must remove items from the premises upon exiting.
- (3) *Alcohol*. The possession of an open container and/or the consumption of alcohol is prohibited except as permitted in [Chapter 22](#), Article IV.
- (4) *Solicitation*. It is prohibited that any person or group of persons sells, solicits sales or offers distribution of any merchandise, handbill or pamphlet unless otherwise approved in writing by the Town Manager.
- (5) *Fireworks*. The discharge of fireworks is prohibited except as provided for in [Chapter 14](#), Article IV.
- (6) *Fires*. Fires are not permitted. Exceptions to this prohibition are only allowed in accordance with [Section 13-10](#) and [Chapter 14](#).
- (7) *Weapons*. Possession, discharging or brandishing a firearm or other weapon is prohibited, with the exception of law enforcement personnel in the normal course of duty.
- (8) *Hunting*. Hunting is strictly prohibited.
- (9) *Pets*. Pets must be under restraint at all times and in full compliance with [Chapter 4](#). Pet waste must be picked up and disposed of in pet waste containers.
- (10) *Parking*. Motorized vehicles and parking are allowed only in designated areas.
- (11) *Structural alterations*. No person or agency shall build, maintain, extend or make structural alterations to any Town park, dock or boat landing without first obtaining a written permit to do so from the Town Manager.
- (12) *Dock and Related Infrastructure Safety*. The following activities are prohibited at all Town docks, piers, floating docks, gangways, walkways, and associated dock structures:
 - (a) Jumping or Diving. No person shall jump, dive, or otherwise launch themselves from any Town dock, pier, floating dock, gangway, walkway, railing, piling, or any other dock structure into the water or onto any surface below.
 - (b) Climbing. No person shall climb on, over, or upon any railing, piling, support structure, roof, canopy, or any other structural component of a Town dock, pier, floating dock, gangway, or walkway, except for the normal and intended use of stairs, ramps and gangways provided for pedestrian access.
 - (c) Unauthorized Attachment. No person shall tie, fasten, attach, hang, or affix any rope, line, chain, cable, sign, banner, lock, or any other object or material to any Town dock, pier, floating dock, gangway, walkway, railing, piling, or any other structure, except for the purpose of securing a vessel to the dock in accordance to all other provisions and unless approved by the Town Manager. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, the attachment of hammocks, swings, fishing rod holders, crab traps, signage, decorations, flotation devices for recreational purposes, or personal property of any kind.
- (13) *Bicycles, electronic bicycles (e-bikes) and other motorized mobility devices*.
 - (a) Operation on grass, turf, and unpermitted areas. No person shall ride, operate, or propel any bicycle, electronic bicycle (e-bike), or similar wheeled personal conveyance on any grass, lawn, landscaped area, or any other area within a Town park, dock, or boat landing that is not specifically designated for such use by paved pathway, trail, or posted signage. This prohibition applies to all bicycles, whether manually powered or electrically assisted, including but not limited to pedal-assist e-bikes and throttle-operated e-bikes.

(b) Prohibition in buildings. No person shall bring, wheel, carry, or store any bicycle, electronic bicycle (e-bike), or similar wheeled personal conveyance into or within any Town-owned or Town-operated building, facility, or enclosed structure, including but not limited to community centers, restrooms, pavilions, and other enclosed public facilities. This prohibition does not apply to mobility devices used by persons with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(c) Designated parking. Where bicycle racks or designated bicycle parking areas are provided, bicycles and e-bikes shall be parked or stored only in such designated areas.

Sec. 13-XXX . New River Linear Trail Dock.

- (1) Hours. Open for public use from sunrise to sunset. Occupying the dock after sunset and prior to sunrise is prohibited.
- (2) Docking. No docking of boats, barges, kayaks, jet skis, wave runners, paddleboards or other recreational or commercial vessel is allowed at the New River Linear Trail dock.
- (3) Smoking. Smoking, as defined in [Section 18-159](#) is prohibited. All provisions of [Chapter 18, Article VII](#) shall apply, to include penalties as set forth in [Section 18-165](#) which shall prevail over [Section 13-49](#).
- (4) Prohibited Uses. The dock shall not be used as a point of commerce, rental or sale of kayaks, paddleboards, wave runners or any other recreational water vehicle or apparatus.
- (5) Alcohol. The possession of an open container and/or the consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited.
- (6) Fishing. Fishing is allowed from the New River Linear Trail dock as long as it does not interfere with the docking of watercraft, or the loading and unloading of passengers. Boaters shall have priority of use of the New River Linear Trail dock.
- (7) Obstruction of the Dock. It is unlawful to obstruct the dock. Any vessel, vehicle, or other object which obstructs any of the facilities or the access to them may be removed entirely at the risk and expense of the owner.
- (8) Emergency Vehicles. Emergency vehicles shall have priority over all other vehicles at all Town docks, landings and piers.
- (9) Motor Vehicles on Dock. Motorized vehicles are prohibited on the New River Linear Trail dock and walkways with the exception of American Disabilities Act-compliant motorized wheel chairs or Town or Utility Company vehicles as approved by the Town Manager
- (10) Skateboards and Bicycles. Skateboarding, rollerblading, roller skating, use of manually or electronic powered scooters and bicycles shall not be permitted on docks, landings, piers and walkways.
- (11) Fireworks. The discharge of fireworks is strictly prohibited.
- (12) Litter. Littering is prohibited per [Section 22-43](#). All garbage, other solid waste, trash or offensive matter must be disposed of in receptacles designated for such use. When such receptacles are full, patrons must remove items from the premises upon exiting.
- (13) Damages. Any damage to the floating or main dock by a vessel or person shall be paid for by the owner or the responsible person. Such payment shall be the actual amount of the damage and paid to the Town.
- (14) Pets. Pets must be under restraint at all times and in full compliance with [Chapter 4](#). Pet waste must be picked up and disposed of in pet waste containers.