

May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry “Emmett” McCracken Jr. Council Chambers, 20
Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

July 23, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rogers called the meeting to order at 3:02PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Vice Chair Al Stokes

Chair Stan Rogers

Jessie White

Chris Kehrer

Larry Toomer

ABSENT

Chris Shoemaker

Amber Kuehn

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Adoption of April 23, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion to adopt the April 23, 2026, meeting minutes made by Mrs. White, Seconded by Vice Chair Stokes.

Voting Yea: Chair Rogers, Kehrer, Toomer

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Lawton (52 Oyster St), commented on the ongoing bicycle and pedestrian path project between Bluffton and Alljoy Road, requesting additional water quality information for areas near stormwater outfalls and South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) shellfish monitoring stations in the May River. Mr. Lawton expressed interest in continued water quality monitoring during construction and anticipated environmental benefits from the BJWSA septic-to-sewer conversion project that just commenced. Town Staff clarified that the bicycle and pedestrian path project is outside the Town's jurisdiction and explained the differences between the Town's water quality monitoring program and the SCDES shellfish harvesting monitoring program, including the locations and parameters monitored.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. WAPAC Strategic Plan Priorities for FY27-FY28 - Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

Mrs. Lewis summarized the Town's FY27–FY28 Strategic Plan, noting that the new two-year planning cycle began July 1. She reviewed how the Town's Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan, and departmental work plans align, highlighting that watershed management initiatives primarily support the strategic focus area of protecting the May River and Surrounding Rivers and Watersheds. She also noted that all seven WAPAC priorities were adopted by Town Council as part of the a Strategic Plan.

Mrs. Lewis then opened the floor to questions The committee discussed drought impacts on water quality monitoring, stormwater management, and irrigation demands, and emphasized the importance of evaluating Action Plan projects before implementation.

Ms. Lewis announced that McCormick Taylor, Inc. will present to the committee in October to review the May River Watershed Action Plan stormwater modeling work.

2. Election of Officers - Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

In accordance with the committee charter, Mrs. Lewis reminded committee members that the Chair and Vice Chair positions must be elected every July or as soon thereafter as possible. Chair Rogers and Vice Chair Stokes announced that they would be willing to step down from their respective positions to allow other members the opportunity to serve.

A motion was made to elect Chris Kehrer to the Chair position by Mayor Toomer, Seconded by Mrs. White.

Voting Yea: Vice Chair Stokes, Chair Rogers, Kehrer

A motion was made to elect Jessie White to the Vice Chair position by Mayor Toomer, Seconded by Mr. Kehrer.

Voting Yea: Vice Chair Stokes, Chair Rogers, White

The remaining committee members will continue to serve as members-at-large. Staff noted that the new officer appointments will take effect at the October meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Proposed Ordinance to Amend the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.10 (Stormwater); and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretation, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms) Update - Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

Mrs. Lewis provided a verbal update on the details of a Proposed Ordinance to amend the Town of Bluffton's Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.4 (Wetlands) and Sec. 5.10 (Stormwater); and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretation, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms).

It was noted that the ordinance has already passed first reading and is scheduled for second reading before Town Council on August 11. Mrs. Lewis encouraged committee members to attend the Town Council meeting if interested and confirmed that the meeting agenda and supporting packet will be distributed approximately seven days in advance. Staff will share the agenda link with the committee once it is available.

2. Beautification Committee Storm Drain Marking Program Update – Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

Mrs. Lewis provided an update on the Storm Drain Marking Program. Our winning designs by local middle and high school students will be installed on storm drain inlets across Bluffton's Historic District. Artwork features messages encouraging proper disposal of litter and pollution prevention. Staff noted that the installations will be promoted through the Town's website, social media, and a press release once completed.

VII. DISCUSSION

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 3:57 PM made by Mayor Toomer, Seconded by Mr. Kehrer.

Voting Yea: Vice Chair Stokes, Chair Rogers, White.

NEXT MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2026