

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	October 14, 2025
PROJECT:	Proposed Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances to Include Regulations Addressing Abandoned and Derelict Boats in the Town's Waterways
PROJECT MANAGER:	Heather Colin, AICP, Assistant Town Manager

REQUEST: Request Town Council's approval of second and final reading of an Ordinance amending the Town's Code of Ordinances addressing abandoned, derelict, and sunken boats (vessels) in the Town's waterways.

No changes from First Reading.

BACKGROUND: On October 8, 2024 Town Council workshopped a draft proposed Ordinance. The consensus at the time was to bring back an Ordinance for first reading in conjunction with Beaufort County's consideration. Town Council approved First Reading on September 9, 2025. Town Council did ask staff to research any budgetary impacts to the Ordinance. As a follow up, staff met with Beaufort County staff, Town legal staff and SCDNR (South Carolina Department of Natural Resources). The process to enforce the Ordinance was outlined and it was stated that SCDNR would be responsible for the removal and budgetary impacts.

The Governor signed a revised State law concerning this topic on May 8, 2025. The law requires any local jurisdiction who so chooses to adopt a similar regulation to adopt the same exact Ordinance as the state with no other changes or revisions.

SUMMARY: The law was passed to improve the State's ability to identify and remove abandoned, derelict and sunken boats. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is working in cooperation with local jurisdictions to assist with the identification, education and enforcement of the law. The law and associated enforcement procedures are aimed at a state wide and regional concerted effort to address the issue.

The law creates a specific process for SCDNR and local authorities (if the Ordinance is adopted by the local authority) to remove boats left in the waterways and establishes a penalty for those convicted including fines and possible imprisonment.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Approve Second and Final Reading of the Proposed Ordinance
- Deny Second and Final Reading of the Proposed Ordinance
- Table Second and Final Reading of the Proposed Ordinance

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Ordinance
2. Proposed Motion