

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## STAFF REPORT

### Growth Management Department



<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	January 3, 2024
<b>PROJECT:</b>	Discussion Regarding Amendments to the Town of Bluffton's Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23, Unified Development Ordinance Related to Contributing Resources and Architectural Standards in Old Town Bluffton Historic District, Specifically Article 3 –Sec. 3.18 (Certificate of Appropriateness-Historic District), Sec. 3.19 (Site Feature-Historic District Permit) and Sec. 3.25 (Designation of Contributing Resources); Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.15 (Old Town Bluffton Historic District); and, certain terms in Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretations, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms).
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Charlotte Moore, AICP Principal Planner

**REQUEST:** Discussion to seek input regarding potential amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) relating to contributing resources and architectural standards in Old Town Bluffton Historic District. For UDO amendments, the HPC serves in an informal advisory capacity to the Planning Commission and Town Council. As such, no votes will be taken on these amendments.

**HISTORY:** These amendments were previously discussed by the HPC on March 1, 2023, recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on April 26, 2023 with a couple of modifications, approved by Town Council on first reading (July 11, 2023), and subsequently withdrawn by Town Council at the public hearing/final reading held on September 12, 2023.

Given lengthy discussion regarding some of the Old Town Bluffton Historic District preservation and parking-related amendments at the public hearing, it was determined that further discussion at a joint Town Council-Planning Commission meeting in January, 2024 might be in order. This resulted in the amendments being withdrawn rather than continued. With additional information since the public hearing, as well as a joint Town Council-Planning Commission meeting held earlier this year to discuss these same amendments (among others), it was determined that a joint meeting would be unnecessary. Town staff has made some minor additional amendments, including minor reformatting.

**BACKGROUND:** From time to time, amendments to the UDO are necessary to address insufficient procedural processes and standards that are inadequate or that may allow development that is inconsistent with Old Town Bluffton's traditional development. To address this, amendments to the following sections are proposed:

Article 3 – Sec. 3.18: Certificate of Appropriateness – Historic District and Sec. 3.25: Designation of a Contributing Resource;

Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.15: Old Town Bluffton Historic District and Sec. 5.15.8.F. (et al): Carriage House Building Form, Sheds & Garden Structures; and,

Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretations, Sec. 9.2: Terms.

Procedurally, amendments are proposed to provide for a process to remove the “contributing” status for a contributing resource to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. Additionally, amendments are proposed to provide processes to potentially relocate and demolish contributing and non-contributing structures within the district.

Amendments are also proposed to revise front build-to zones for certain building types on the Neighborhood Center-HD and Neighborhood Core-HD districts, to add or update definitions, and correct typos.

In addition, changes to standards for gardens structures, sheds and carriage houses are proposed. Presently, the UDO is silent regarding accessory structures that are between 121 square feet and 249 square feet. Any accessory structure less than 121 square feet is a “garden structure,” and any accessory structure greater than 249 square feet is a “carriage house” building type (which could be a stand-alone accessory dwelling, garage, or combination thereof). The amendments are proposed to close this gap, including providing necessary definitions. Amendments to the Carriage House building type are also proposed to update the characteristics of this building type.

**SUMMARY:** Town Staff will present this item for discussion only. Input from the Historic Preservation Commission will inform the recommendation to the Planning Commission.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed Amendments