

# Media Release



**bluffton**  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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For More Information:

Debbie Szpanka  
Public Information Officer  
Town of Bluffton  
20 Bridge Street  
Bluffton, South Carolina 29910  
(Office) 843.706.4534  
(Cell): 843.540.2274  
(Email): [dszpanka@townofbluffton.com](mailto:dszpanka@townofbluffton.com)

PUBLIC/POLITICAL REMINDER: Permitting/Permission/Removal of Political Signs in the Town of Bluffton  
& Unincorporated Beaufort County

As the political season begins, please see below the parameters of where political signs can be placed. Please be mindful the Town of Bluffton and unincorporated Beaufort County have different ordinances which pertain to sign placement.

**Town of Bluffton Political Sign Regulations:**

If signs are placed within **Town of Bluffton** limits, they **DO NOT require a permit** provided the restrictions below are met from Section 5.13.10.C of the Unified Development Ordinance, a copy of which is provided as Attachment 1. Also, Section 6-98 of the Code of Ordinances for the Town of Bluffton, a copy of which is provided as Attachment 2, specifies political signs are not allowed in public right-of-ways unless permitted by the Town Manager. In this regard, the following shall apply:

1. Unless otherwise allowed, signs shall not be located on public property or in the public rights-of-way and must be confined wholly to placement on private property, with permission of the property owner;
2. The Town Manager has authorized the placement of political signs on public property at the following locations:
  - a. Landscaped corners at Bluffton's Four Way Stop;
  - b. Buckwalter Place Blvd (Publix Shopping Center) median beyond the entryway sign to Buckwalter Place; and
  - c. North/West corner of intersection at May River Road and Buckwalter Parkway (i.e. Adjacent to Barton's Run neighborhood).
3. Signs shall not be placed earlier than 60 days prior to the election or referendum to which they apply;
4. Signs shall be removed within five days after the election or referendum to which they apply;
5. Signs for candidates in a runoff election may be maintained until the final election to which the signs apply; and
6. Signs shall not exceed six square feet in area per sign face, 12 square feet in total sign area, and shall not exceed a height of four feet.



## **Unincorporated Beaufort County Political Sign Regulations:**

If signs are going to be placed outside of Town of Bluffton limits in unincorporated **Beaufort County** they **DO require a permit** through the County offices and must adhere to the following regulations found in the Beaufort County Community Development Code Section 5.6.60, a copy of which is provided as Attachment 3. The major points of Beaufort County political-sign regulations are as follows:

1. A sign permit fee of \$5.00 is required which is a flat fee for any and all signs a candidate wants to place. This single permit will allow each candidate to post an unlimited number of signs;
2. On private property along major corridors, freestanding political signs must be no closer than ten (10) feet from the highway right-of-way. Major corridors are US 21, US 17, US 278, SC 170, SC 802, SC 280, SC 46, SC 116, and SC 163. Sign placement on other roads may be placed on property lines.
3. Political signs may be displayed or erected at any time within an election year; and
4. All political signs must be removed within 48 hours after the election.

## **Determining Town Boundary and Public Right-of-Ways:**

Two main questions staff receives regarding political signage are, “How do I know if a property is in the Town of Bluffton or not?” and “How do I know where the public right-of-way is?”

Below is a link to the Town of Bluffton Zoning Map that will help you determine if the property is located within the Town of Bluffton or not. If the property is in an area that is gray in color it is not in the Town of Bluffton and subject to Beaufort County rules. All other properties are in the Town of Bluffton.

<http://www.townofbluffton.us/gallery/PublicGallery/PDF/zoningmap.pdf>

While the only exact way to identify the location of public right-of-way is to find a marker or use a property survey, a general rule of thumb is that the property on the house side of a sidewalk or bike path is located outside of the public right-of-way. If a sidewalk or bike path does not exist look for utility lines and ditches and walk three steps past the utility or ditch towards the house side. Generally this location is outside the public right-of-way.

If you are unsure if the property in question is the jurisdiction of the Town of Bluffton or unincorporated Beaufort County, please free feel to call the Town of Bluffton’s public information office at 843.706.4534.

Both the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County Code Enforcement Officers may confiscate a political sign if it is placed in a public right-of-way. In the event this occurs please call either the Town of Bluffton at (843) 706-4522 or Beaufort County at (843) 255-2066 and you may be able to retrieve your sign.