

GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

SHORT-TERM RENTALS AD HOC COMMITTEE

June 15, 2026

5:00 p.m.

Committee Meeting Room

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place, and agenda was posted online and on the bulletin board at County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and concerned citizens.

Committee Members Present:

Chairwoman Liz Seman
Frank Farmer
Alan Mitchell

Committee Members Absent:

Curt McGahhey
Dan Tripp

Others Present:

Rick Bradley, *Council District 26*
Garey Collins, *Council District 27*
John Holland, *Chairman, Planning Commission*

Staff Present:

Chris Antley, *County Attorney*
Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*
Terrence Galloway, *Information Systems*

Hesha Gamble, *Assistant County Administrator*
Josh Henderson, *Zoning Administrator, Via Zoom*

Call to Order:

Chairwoman Seman

Invocation:

Councilman Farmer

Item (3) Approval of Minutes

Action: Councilor Farmer moved to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2026, Regularly Called Short-Term Rentals Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

Item (4) Discussion / Creation of a Short-Term Rental Ordinance for the Unincorporated Areas of Greenville County

Chairwoman Seman stated the Committee had met several times, heard from various people, and reviewed data. A draft ordinance had been drafted, and she invited staff to introduce it.

County Attorney Antley stated staff reviewed the information and met with Codes and Josh Henderson from the Zoning Administration. They discussed implementation challenges and developed a primary focus: finding a mechanism to identify the people and businesses with STRs so the ordinance could be started from scratch. It was the best they could come up with at the current time. He stated it was consistent with peer counties, such as Charleston. He stated the Chief Codes Officer suggested using the word "license" instead of "permit" because it would fit within the software's parameters. If the committee was interested in a licensing mechanism, there would be an application process, and current or potential operators would have to go through it to legally operate an STR. A 60-day grace period was included; however, it could be longer or shorter. He stated it would serve as a segue into topics such as the Accommodations Tax. The next level would address issues such as age limits for renters and concerns about non-residents of Greenville County who own short-term rentals. That situation would need to be addressed in two ways: enforceability and practical problem-solving. For instance, if a problem arose that needed immediate attention, should there be a regulatory requirement that someone be local, within a 30-minute to an hour time frame, to assist.

Mr. Antley stated the ordinance included a criminal element, but it had not been fully sorted out. He stated many rentals would be operated through an LLC or some other corporate entity. They were unsure what that would look like in terms of criminal penalties. Mr. Antley stated a corporation could not be jailed, which was why the criminal vs. civil distinction had come up. They had used civil enforcement when they switched to new building and property maintenance codes. There had been very little compliance, as civil penalties were “not the stick”; spending 30 days at the Detention Center was “a bigger stick.” Mr. Antley stated before he spent time researching the best way to implement penalties, he needed more direction from the Committee. The ordinance had been thoroughly reviewed by Planning, Zoning, and Building Codes Enforcement; it had not been discussed with the Sheriff or the fire departments.

Chairwoman Seman thanked Mr. Antley and asked Ms. Gamble if she had anything to add.

Ms. Gamble stated she did not and that Mr. Antley had summarized the ordinance well. She added that Josh Henderson was on Zoom if the Committee had any zoning questions.

Chairwoman Seman asked whether Section 2 meant short-term rentals would be allowed in all residential zoning classifications.

Ms. Gamble confirmed that was correct. Short-term rentals would have to comply with the County’s Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Henderson stated the intent was to treat STRs essentially as single-family dwellings and to permit them in the same zoning districts as other single-family dwellings. He stated multi-family-type Airbnbs were a “different ballgame.”

Chairwoman Seman asked Mr. Henderson whether bed-and-breakfasts were allowed in any of the single-family zoning categories or were they considered commercial.

Mr. Henderson stated, according to the Zoning Ordinance, bed-and-breakfasts were treated as conditional uses in all residential zones except RM2 through RM20 and RMA. He stated they were permitted by right in the commercial zoning districts of NC through S-1, and that they had to meet conditions within the residential districts.

Chairwoman Seman asked whether the phrase “the rental or lease of a dwelling unit or any portion of a dwelling unit,” included in the definitions, meant someone would be allowed to rent a room under the ordinance.

Mr. Antley stated the phrase was left in, but he would need direction on what the Committee wanted to do. He stated there was difficulty in finding and enforcing the problem if it was an apartment over a garage.

Mr. Henderson stated his office received many calls about STRs. One situation involved homes where individual rooms were converted into separate units, with renters coming and going on a short-term basis. He stated he would like to steer away from that type of rental situation because it was more like a boarding house. If that was the “appetite of Council,” he would suggest pursuing those situations under a boarding house rather than short-term rentals.

Councilor Farmer stated he was in favor of renting out rooms if the owner actually lived in the home, as it could help reduce complaints about the dwelling.

Chairwoman Seman stated she understood what Mr. Henderson meant and having five or six different people renting individual rooms did not reflect the essence of what the Committee was trying to accomplish. She stated her next question came from the license portion of the proposed ordinance. Under the current wording, owners of short-term rentals had to hold both a business license and a short-term rental license.

Mr. Antley stated Greenville County required only a business registration, not a business license, and that section could be deleted as “overkill.” The intent was to identify where short-term rentals were located in the County so the Accommodations Tax could be pursued. Mr. Antley stated it was a dual requirement for enforcement as well. Other than nightclubs, he could not recall a time an ordinance had been used to stop something.

Mr. Henderson stated he wanted to explain the terminology and why they chose a license rather than a permit. He stated there was no annual requirement for a permit; that requirement fell under licenses. For example, a junkyard license required the owner to pay an annual fee.

Mr. Antley stated a business license could provide “an annual look-in,” allowing the County to track any changes that may have occurred on the property, such as a new owner. He stated they were trying to find a way to ensure the County’s knowledge did not become stale and to avoid the problem of determining who was responsible for paying the Accommodations Tax.

Chairwoman Seman asked whether the license application would be available online for completion and if everything should be spelled out in the application.

Ms. Gamble stated the process would be online and the County was setting up an online business registration. The online license application would be the next natural step.

Mr. Antley stated spelling everything out initially would be best. Changes could be made later if needed, and the ordinance could be revisited. He stated applicants would know upfront what they had to provide.

Chairwoman Seman stated her concern was if they wanted to change something, the Committee would have to bring the whole Ordinance back. She asked Mr. Antley to explain the language around “natural person” and whether it meant a real person rather than a “made-up name.”

Mr. Antley stated he struggled with the criminal misdemeanor aspect of the ordinance and added “natural person” so there was “a living, breathing human being” who could be criminally responsible, rather than an LLC. He stated he wanted it in there so as to not lose his train of thought and because he was not sure how big the criminal issue would be.

Chairwoman Seman stated Track One and Track Two needed to be explained in non-legal terminology. She liked the direction it was going and wanted to make it easy for people to understand. If someone from out of town rented a house, someone needed to be local for contact purposes.

Mr. Antley stated he understood, and the ordinance was still a first draft.

Councilor Farmer stated he agreed and the person could be anyone, from a cleaning service to the property manager, as long as they were local.

Chairwoman Seman stated her next question concerned Section 7, Fees. She asked whether staff had identified a reasonable fee.

Ms. Gamble stated they were open to suggestions. She stated the County had historically been reasonable with fees, so staff did not want to limit the Committee by setting a specific amount.

Mr. Antley stated they had compared the fees of other counties; however, he did not have that information with him. When setting other fees, it was important to remember things change over time, and a fee established years ago may no longer be appropriate given the value of the dollar.

Ms. Gamble stated the fee would be included in the County’s fee schedule; therefore, the Ordinance would not have to be changed if the fee changed.

Councilor Mitchell clarified the fee would not be part of the ordinance but would be included in the County’s fee schedule. He stated the fee could be set annually, as the market dictated.

Ms. Gamble stated that was correct and the County evaluated all fees annually.

Chairwoman Seman stated her next question concerned Section 10: Operating Standards, specifically the minimum age requirement. She asked whether it was the standard best practice in other counties for the license holder to retain a copy of the booking guest's valid government-issued photo ID for four years and make it available to the County upon request. Ms. Seman asked how the County would ensure the security of those records.

Mr. Antley stated the practice was not common across all the counties. He stated the statement was included in the draft ordinance and could be altered in the Committee. He stated the practice could be valuable in certain situations, including enforcement or in the event of a lawsuit. Mr. Antley stated he felt he had worked through some potential legal issues regarding setting the minimum age at 25. In terms of how long the County retained the information, four years may be excessive, but it could prove helpful for subsequent rentals where an ID did not match a previous ID for the alleged same individual.

Councilor Farmer asked whether Airbnb and VRBO retained renter identification information or required it.

Mr. Antley stated he did not know.

Chairwoman Seman stated she would add Mr. Farmer's question to the list for a later response. She stated her next question, also from Section 10: Operating Standards, concerning (D) Parking. There seemed to be a problem with renters taking up too much space on the street to park. She stated renters should be required to park in the driveway, or that parking on the street be limited to no more than two cars; she agreed with the language about not blocking access.

Mr. Antley stated there was an error in the sentence. It should read "all street parking related 'to' the use of the dwelling unit as a short-term rental is prohibited." He stated the intent was for at least two off-street parking spaces to be designated for the exclusive use of guests, and all guest vehicles must park in those spaces. All on-street parking related to the use of a short-term rental was prohibited, and no guest vehicles shall block access to adjacent properties, obstruct any public right-of-way, or violate any applicable parking regulation.

Councilor Mitchell asked about a situation in which a renter had a local guest visit, and the guest took one of the parking spots.

Mr. Antley stated he would need to research the issue further. Enforcement could become "awfully choppy" and would likely rely heavily on the Sheriff's Office. He stated he was not sure what everyone's appetite was for that level of engagement.

Councilor Farmer asked whether a parking table could be created to correlate house size with the number of parking spaces allowed.

Ms. Gamble stated it could be done but would require additional evaluation on the front end of the application process. She stated it had been looked at previously but had become overcomplicated, and they were trying to avoid that. She agreed it could be looked at more closely.

Mr. Henderson stated larger homes could accommodate more people and may require more parking spaces.

Chairwoman Seman asked Mr. Antley whether he needed any additional direction from the Committee on any topics.

Mr. Antley stated the enforcement mechanism was the area where he needed the most direction. He asked the Committee to consider the following:

- *A specified number of violations could result in the revocation of a license, similar to how Charleston handled the issue*
- *Graduated civil fines*
- *Omit the criminal aspect for now*

- *Pare the ordinance down to something much simpler, as it currently contained quite a bit of information*
- *Clarification regarding the parking issue*

Councilor Farmer stated he preferred to punish the actual perpetrators rather than the property owners. He stated the driver's license requirement would be helpful in that regard.

Chairwoman Seman stated she was leaning more toward civil rather than criminal because of enforceability. She stated they needed to clean up the "locally present responsible party piece," which seemed a bit confusing and cumbersome. Ms. Seman stated, in her opinion, property owners and short-term rental companies wanted good renters and would be well served by renting to good people. She stated there had to be penalties for violations.

Councilor Mitchell stated, as they were building on other resources, he would be interested in knowing whether any of the other counties would be willing to share their experiences with violations.

Mr. Antley stated he would speak with other County Attorneys and gather feedback. He stated one issue the Committee needed to address was that Mr. Henderson had only one employee overseeing zoning violations. Mr. Antley stated that person had other zoning violations requiring investigation. He stated if the County invoked administrative penalties, an appeal process would have to be put in place; it could be an internal appeal process, or the violators could be cited under state law. The other counties in the state with short-term rental ordinances were fully zoned, unlike Greenville County. Mr. Antley stated an internal appellate process was probably a "smart thing to have" to address violations.

Councilor Mitchell asked how the County would distinguish between a property owner being in violation and a renter being in violation.

Mr. Henderson stated in commercial businesses, the County would place both the property owner and the renter in violation. If the violation was not brought into compliance, the property owner would ultimately be charged because it was their property.

Mr. Antley stated it could encourage owners to vet renters and build relationships with their guests, so enforcement would not fall to the County. He stated a penalty was not included for the guests but could be added to show the Committee what that would look like.

Chairwoman Seman thanked everyone and stated the Committee would wait to hear from staff after they had a chance to revise the ordinance.

Item (5) **Adjournment**

Action: Councilor Farmer moved to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina McCaskill
Clerk to Council