GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

SHORT-TERM RENTALS AD HOC COMMITTEE
August 17, 2026
5:01 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 Councilor Farmer
Alan Mitchell

Committee Members Absent:

Curt McGahhey
Dan Tripp

Staff Present:

Chris Antley, *County Attorney*
Regina McCaskill, *Clerk to Council*
Terrence Galloway, *Information Systems*
Draper Carlile, *Planning Director*
Josh Henderson, *Zoning Administrator*

Call to Order: *Chairwoman Seman*

Invocation: *Councilor Farmer*

Item (3) ***Approval of Minutes***

Action: Councilor Farmer moved to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2026, 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 thanked staff and the committee members for their efforts in working through the process of developing the proposed ordinance under consideration.

County Attorney Chris Antley stated he still had a few housekeeping items to be discussed in order to clean up the language and to make sure all sections of the ordinance worked in unison. He suggested they discuss details such as stating an age limit and the licensing process. He also wanted to address parking, restrictions and citations. Mr. Antley felt if an officer were called out to enforce parking restrictions, they should be able to issue a citation to the title owner and/or whoever was using the vehicle. The last topic he wanted the Committee to discuss was the designated agent. Currently, they had chosen to require someone local who could deal with certain issues that may occur at the property in a short amount of time.

Councilor Mitchell asked if they should have a workshop to go through the ordinance more thoroughly. He stated the attorney was bringing up a lot of good points; things he would refer to as unfunded mandates. They were looking to create something, but the money was not there to make it happen, which resulted in an ordinance that did not have teeth.

Councilor Farmer stated he would like to make it a stakeholders' meeting, inviting Airbnb people to give the Committee their "two cents" on the matter.

Chairwoman Seman asked if the Committee felt comfortable with where they were in the development of the ordinance, so as to move it forward, or to at least start having public hearings. While she did not want to rush the process, she did not want them to become stalled to the point that nothing was moving forward.

Councilor Farmer asked if a person were renting one room, why would the property owner have to be physically present.

Mr. Antley stated that requirement was in Section 2. He referred to staff for an explanation.

Josh Henderson, Zoning Administrator, stated the County had encountered cases where someone had converted their house into a boarding house, and the rooms were rented individually. They would be renting to six or seven different people, much like a hotel. Staff felt it was important to incorporate that aspect into the ordinance to ensure it remained a single-family dwelling.

Councilor Farmer stated there were places like Judson Mill, where several units were Airbnbs and the owner did not live on-site.

Mr. Henderson stated the difference was that Judson Mill, and places like it, were apartment buildings. Each individual unit had its own separate dwelling unit. The definition of a dwelling unit was one or more rooms with a kitchen and sanitary facilities, used or designed as a place of residence. If individual rooms did not have those facilities, they were essentially rented out as bedrooms to persons who had to share all the remaining features of the house on a continuous basis. He stated this was not to be confused with a situation where four people had gone in together and signed a six-month lease stating they were going to live there for six months. The section applied to units with a continuous turnover of individuals and more resembled a hotel or motel atmosphere. At Judson Mill, persons signed a lease to live in a dwelling that provided all the facilities they needed within the walls of their unit.

Chairwoman Seman inquired if a mother-in-law suite in an attached garage would be fine.

Mr. Henderson stated if it were a garage attached to a house, and there was a room over the garage that had a bathroom, a child home from college could stay there, and it would be nothing more than a bedroom with a separate bathroom. If the same room were rented out as a dwelling unit, it would not meet the building code requirements for a dwelling unit because it did not provide a kitchen. If the owner installed a kitchen in the unit, then it would become a dwelling unit and could be offered as a short-term rental, even if it were over an attached garage.

Councilor Farmer asked what would be considered a violation, other than issues related to the registration process, parking, or repeated attempts to contact the owner or the agent about an ongoing problem.

Mr. Antley clarified that under the current draft, violations were strictly limited to the specified causes. He noted that, as written, the responsible person could choose to not answer a complaint call and it did not constitute a violation; however, the committee could insert language requiring owners or operators to promptly return calls. According to Mr. Antley, the defined violations included: failing to provide the required information to obtain a short-term rental registration; operating a short-term rental without a valid County registration; failing to renew the annual registration; renting property to individuals under the age of 21; failing to provide guests with a designated contact name, phone number, and required instructions; blocking the ingress or egress of another property (e.g., parking in front of a driveway). He stated non-compliance with any operating standard in Section 9 constituted a violation, raising the operational question of whether the ticket should be issued to the property owner or the renter. Finally, Mr. Antley stated civil infractions would

apply to providing misleading or false information on an application, or failing to submit necessary tax information to the Department of Revenue (DOR) or the County.

Councilor Farmer hypothetically asked, if someone living next to an Airbnb filed a complaint about a bear knocking over the trash, would that count as an infraction.

Mr. Antley stated there was nothing in the ordinance that would cover that scenario.

Councilor Farmer stated one of the questions he had been asked was how the ordinance handled long term rentals. Tenant rights in South Carolina made the process of dealing with complaints more difficult, and removed liability from the landlord to a significant degree. He asked if they should be more concerned about nuisance long-term renters. He was concerned the Zoning Board of Appeals seemed to have been given the latitude to make arbitrary determinations about health and safety, which could be based only on a neighbor's complaint. He asked if the zoning authorities based their determination of a violation on the existing Greenville County Business Registration Ordinance 4277, which listed the number of potential violations for businesses in general.

Mr. Antley stated, other than zoning restrictions that determined where long term rentals could be located, they were not regulated, other than by state law. The County's Business Registration Ordinance excluded enforcement of commercial functions, and defined commercial as offering a service for profit. If it was commercial, the business registration did not apply.

Councilor Farmer asked if a guest of a short-term rental was causing a nuisance, and the authorities issued a noise violation, would the citation go against the owner or the actual perpetrator.

Mr. Antley stated, currently, there was no noise-related violation within the confines of the ordinance. Without having the noise ordinance in front of him, he would presume the citation would be against the perpetrator. There were other ordinances, as well as state law, that dealt with people behaving in certain ways; it really came down enforcement. Mr. Antley stated they could put words on paper, but eventually it depended on the County's resources.

Chairwoman Seman inquired whether the County had the staff to enforce the ordinance, should the situation arise.

Mr. Henderson stated it was more than whether or not the County had the staff. There were enforcement officers who covered all the zoned areas of Greenville County; however, it depended on when the violations were occurring. The majority would most likely occur after hours. The County did not have the ability like the Sheriff's Office, to work all shifts and enforce ordinances that fell within its purview. By the time the codes officers received the complaint (next day or 48 hours later for weekends), it was possible the violators would be gone. He stated if they were not going to hold the platform or the property owner liable, how would they cite the people who were no longer staying in the rental.

Councilor Farmer inquired about an 18-year-old being able to own a short-term rental, but not stay in one.

Mr. Antley stated initially the intent was to capture a large spectrum of different things; however, that was too broad to capture. One of the concerns mentioned was the age of the renters, primarily because age predicted the occurrence of a "party situation." It was thought that a higher age restriction might curtail the potential for that to occur. If a person who was 18, or an adult, who owned property, there was nothing to stop them from doing what they wanted to do with their property. The rationale behind restricting the age of the renter was to avert noise, parties, and to encourage responsible renting of property.

Councilor Farmer stated there was a claim that the County, via the ordinance, had no business dictating what type structure could or could not be used as a short-term rental, if the structure type was allowed under the

LDRs or zoning and met the standards of the International Residential Code. They felt the ordinance should not attempt to override those standards, especially since many of the structures had already been approved for short-term rental use in the past and were widely approved around the world.

Mr. Antley stated short-term rental approval was the Ad Hoc Committee's focus. In the unincorporated portion of Greenville County, there was no mechanism to acquire short-term rental approval. From a staff standpoint, those structures had no permitting process or specific classification. That was what the language of the proposed ordinance was trying to capture. There had been individuals who were able to get building officials to approve non-traditional structures as dwelling units, which was the only requirement at the time.

Mr. Henderson stated, from a use standpoint rather than a business registration standpoint, zoning and building would look at it as a house; regardless of how it was rented, short-term or long-term, or whether it was an owner-occupied dwelling. It was a dwelling. They would always refer back to the definition of a dwelling in the zoning ordinance, which stated any building used exclusively for human habitation, including any permitted home occupation, but excluding hotels, motels, and rooming and boarding houses. They would have to be built under the International Residential Code as a dwelling, and meet the requirements of whatever that structure may be. Mr. Henderson stated they did not allow shipping containers to be used as a dwelling. They would allow someone to hire an architect to draft plans for submission to Greenville County for review. If a shipping container was converted so that it met the International Residential Code, then it would be allowed as a dwelling. As long as a house was built to meet the International Residential Code, it could be considered a dwelling; however, structures to be rented out would be determined by the proposed regulations, whether it be short-term or long-term.

Councilor Farmer asked about RVs and boats.

Mr. Henderson stated RVs were recreational vehicles, and could not be used for habitation in the zoned areas of Greenville County. They were allowed to be used for temporary habitation while on vacation. RVs could be stored on a person's property and be plugged into a power source, however that was the only utility they could be connected to. Mr. Henderson stated RVs could also be used for recreational purposes on the property, but not as a dwelling. In the unzoned areas, RVs were permitted as dwellings. The owner could acquire an RV setup permit, and be allowed to live in the RV indefinitely.

Mr. Antley stated that was the sort of issue that would need to be split out in the ordinance since it would cover both the zoned and unzoned areas of Greenville County. The definition would allow RVs in the unzoned areas, provided they met the requirements for permitting. Currently, the ordinance would exclude RVs from being used as a short-term rentals in the unzoned areas as well as in the zoned areas.

Councilor Farmer inquired about an independent appeal. If the Zoning Administrator were to deny, suspend, or revoke a registration, they would also be the decision maker in the administrative appeal. He asked if a denial, suspension, or revocation should be appealed to an independent hearing officer, board, or other county decision-maker who did not make the original decision.

Mr. Antley explained that was how the business registration enforcement operated. While the review process was occasionally outsourced to a third-party arbiter, the current ordinance was designed to route appeals to the Head of General Services or Mr. Kernell. Although handling all matters in-house was ideal, the County must balance providing a fair administrative review to avoid costly litigation or resolve reasonable misunderstandings, while considering staffing constraints. Finding an internal, independent reviewer without hiring additional personnel remained a difficult challenge.

In going back to the issue of what actions could be cited, Mr. Antley stated when considering guest conduct and its potential impact on neighboring properties, the proposed ordinance was a start toward addressing the issues created by short-term rentals. At some point, Council could revisit the matter and add further regulations as it deemed necessary.

Councilor Farmer stated he did not see any language in the draft that would hold the property owner liable for anything beyond failing to register, including language making the property owner liable for whatever their unruly guests were doing.

Mr. Antley stated the language provided for the parking issues could serve a dual purpose by holding the owner responsible for all of the renters' conduct. The question came down to how the County would reach the owner. While some owners may be close, even within the same community, other properties could be owned by a private equity group, or an LLC. It would have to be determined who would be the "warm body" the County would contact rather than the corporate shell. When the owner registered, they should be required to designate someone as their personal representative who could receive service of process, or service of summons on the owners' behalf, also allowing the County to have personal jurisdiction over that person to pay the fines. With civil fines, there was a revocation penalty, which was an attempt in the enforcement scheme to bring them in.

Chairwoman Seman stated she had two issues. One was the concern about the County's business registration ordinance. She asked whether it would be better to try to parallel track the short-term registration with the ordinance they currently had, as opposed to having to fix an issue on the back end. Her other concern was with the noise, where the County currently had an ordinance. She stated they had discussed relying on other tools/ordinances to help support the short-term rental ordinance. She asked how they could be used in relation to what they were considering.

Mr. Antley stated he had ideas on the matter, but felt they should be discussed in an executive session because they concerned how the County would handle the litigation.

Chairwoman Seman stated she would like to have the full committee present to weigh in on the proposed ordinance and felt there would be value in some additional work, especially if there was need for an executive session.

MOTION: Councilor Mitchell moved to hold the ordinance in Committee.

Motion as presented carried.

Chairwoman Seman stated she would work on finding a date for their next meeting. She wanted them to have a better sense of the other moving parts in relation to the other two ordinances mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: There being no further business, Councilor Farmer moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Regina McCaskill, Clerk to County Council