

Media Release



bluffton
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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Town Amends Mobile Vending Ordinance, Implements Food Truck Guidelines

Town Council amended its mobile vending ordinance with a second and final reading on February 14. This amended ordinance provides business-friendly guidelines and direction for food truck owners and other mobile vendors to allow them to operate within Town limits. It is inclusive of all mobile vending including food trucks, pushcarts, ice cream trucks, agricultural/seafood sales and non-food mobile vendors. Private catering and mobile vending at special events are unaffected by the changes to the ordinance.

Food trucks, along with other mobile food vending, is a trending business segment. Examining the issue of mobile vending, with particular emphasis on the consideration of food trucks, was an action agenda item in the Town's 2017-18 Strategic Action Plan.

Amending the ordinance was necessary to accommodate the operation of food trucks in the Town. The amendments to the plan came as a result of significant public input. A public workshop was held in August, followed with a public forum in September. Input from these meetings resulted in Town staff members incorporating input and constructing parameters regarding allowed locations, times of operation, mandatory spacing from existing restaurants and hours of operations.

"Town leaders and staff members have spent months listening to proponents and critics of mobile vending and we are pleased with this ordinance. It provides for health and safety provisions for our residents, honors our brick and mortar business owners while welcoming another industry niche into our marketplace," Mayor Lisa Sulka said.

Food trucks and other mobile vending businesses are allowed to operate on private, commercial property with permission from the property owner from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. However, food trucks and mobile vendors are not permitted to operate in the Historic District, within 200 feet of a restaurant, on a single-family lot, within a public right-of-way, or in any location that would impede pedestrian or vehicle traffic.

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The Town's Director of Growth Management Heather Colin said she expects mobile vendors will be operating in Bluffton very shortly. Town staff is already prepared to process applications for licensing and permitting.

"If a vendor has his or her paperwork and application ready, it should only take a day or two to process the required licenses," Colin said. "As always, if a business owner has questions or needs assistance with the process, they can call our staff at 843-706-4592 for answers. Our staff is here to guide them through the process."