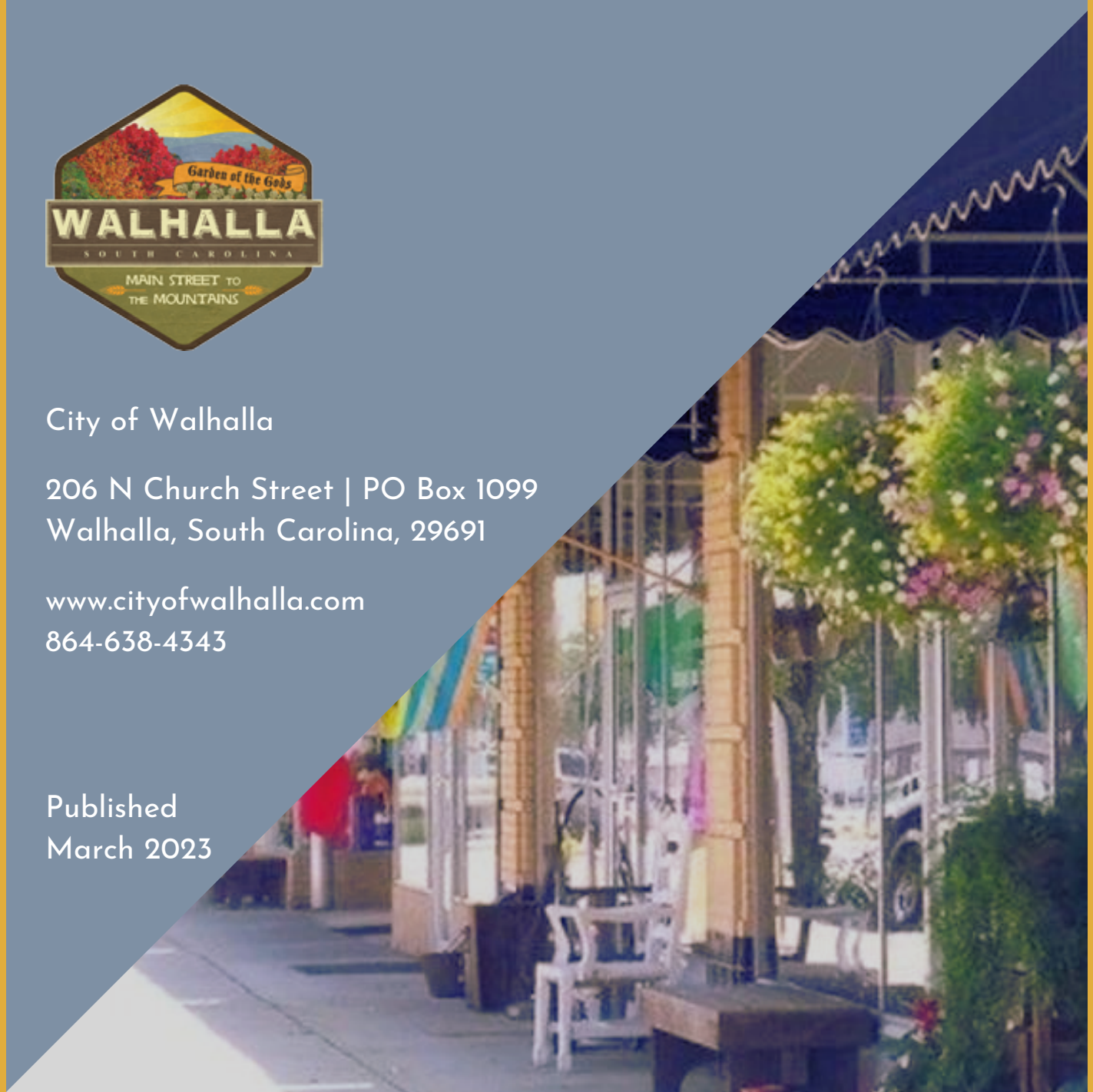
New Business Guide

Your guide to doing business in the City of Walhalla, SC



City of Walhalla

206 N Church Street | PO Box 1099
Walhalla, South Carolina, 29691

www.cityofwalhalla.com
864-638-4343

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Welcome to Walhalla

Welcome, to the Garden of The Gods that takes Main Street to the Mountains.

Thank you for considering the City of Walhalla for the location of your new business. The following guide is offered as a convenient tool for approaching sequential questions and issues, as you take your business from initial planning to the commencement of business activities.

While this guide covers most of the topics relevant to starting your business with us, there are many variables that might require additional attention. We, at the City, are prepared to answer your questions and to work with you every step of the way.

For those of you already familiar with the City of Walhalla, this guide serves as a checklist for addressing and completing the steps necessary to properly develop and license your business.

Through the City of Walhalla's Community Development Department, a liaison service is offered to assist you through the process of opening a new business in the City - do not hesitate to contact us. Also, the Main Street Walhalla program is an invaluable resource, as well.

We look forward to speaking with you and are here to help. Thanks again for considering the City of Walhalla.

Timothy B. Burton
City Administrator

Contents

New Business Checklist

Information and Incentives 5
Pre-Application Meeting 5
Zoning 5
Sewer Accessibility 6
Fire Inspection 6
Utility Service 6
Hospitality Tax 7
Signage 7
Business License 7
Grand Opening 7

City Departments

City Administration 8
Community Development 8
Fire Department 8
HTAX/Business License 8
Main Street Walhalla 8
Public Works 8
Water Department 8

Other Important Contacts

Blue Ridge Electric Coop 9
Duke Energy 9
Oconee County (Accommodations) 9
Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority 9
SC Business One Stop 9
SC Department of Commerce 9
SC DHEC 9
SC Department of Revenue 10
SC Secretary of State 10

Contents

Business Resources

Accommodations 11
Alcohol 11
Annexation 11
Business Names and Trademarks 11
Façade Grants 11
Food Industry 12
Food Trucks 12
Hospitality 12
Incorporation 12
Retail 12
Tobacco 12

New Business Checklist

Information and Incentives

For additional information about the Main Street Program, marketing and potential storefront properties, contact the Main Street Walhalla Director at (864) 638-4343, or visit www.mainstreetwalhalla.com.

The Walhalla City Council established the Economic Development Incentive Program in 2017. Contact the City Administrator for eligible projects and potential incentives, (864) 638-4343, or visit www.cityofwalhalla.com/departments/city-administration.

Pre-Application Meeting

The first step is to contact the Community Development office to discuss your project and schedule a pre-application meeting. Prior to submitting any permit applications or beginning any work, applicants must meet with the Community Development Team, including Community Development, Fire Marshal and Utilities Director to review the project, receive feedback and explain the approval process. Meetings are conducted at the proposed location. Call the Community Development office (864) 638-4343 or visit www.cityofwalhalla.com/departments/community-development.

Zoning

After the pre-application meeting has been held, applicants must file for a zoning permit. This is required for all new construction, structural additions/modifications or changes in business or use of the property. An approved zoning permit must be obtained prior to applying for building permits. The zoning permit will require contact information for the applicant and property owner (if renting), property information, description of the business/project and fee. The Community Development office will determine if the proposed use is permitted based on the property's zoning and inform the applicant of any design standards that may be applicable.

New Business Checklist

Sewer Accessibility

A sewer accessibility and equivalency form may be submitted at the same time as the zoning permit application. This form must be submitted at City Hall. The Water Department will forward it to the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA). The application includes property and business details, floor plan with seating layouts, plumbing plan and grease trap information, if applicable. OJRSA will evaluate the application and determine if additional impact fees are due. Applicants are encouraged to follow-up with OJRSA at info@ojrsa.org or (864) 972-3900 a week after submittal to discuss any additional requirements and/or arrange payment of any fees.

If you are proposing a food establishment, refer to OJRSA for their sewer use regulations.

Fire Inspection

Once all structural work has been completed and you are ready to occupy the space, schedule a fire inspection with the Fire Marshal. The Fire Marshal's approval is required before the connection of utilities or request for a business license. Call Walhalla Fire Department at (864) 638-4345 to schedule.

If you require temporary water service for renovation work, contact the Fire Marshal for approval.

Utility Connection

Once the Fire Marshal has given approval, you can apply for utility services with the City at City Hall. You will need a government issued ID, copy of lease/deed, copy of OJRSA approval and fee.

This is also the time to determine you business's sanitation needs. If roll carts or a dumpster will be require to accommodate your needs, this is the time to make those arrangements.

New Business Checklist

Hospitality Tax

If you are starting a business in the food industry, you will need to complete the city's form for Hospitality Taxes. The collection of a 2% hospitality tax was enacted by SC state law and city ordinance in 2012. This tax is collected on all prepared food and beverage and is used to promote tourism inside the City of Walhalla. Visit www.cityofwalhalla.com/hospitality-tax/.

Signage

A sign permit is required before a business may erect a sign. All signs must adhere to the City's Sign Regulations. If your business will be located in the Downtown Business District, the sign must meet the Downtown Design Guidelines. The permit application and supporting documentation is submitted to the Community Development office. The form includes property information, business information, type of sign, colors and materials of the sign, contractor's information and fee. For freestanding signs, you must provide scaled and sealed drawings with placement location, prepared by an engineer. Visit www.cityofwalhalla.com/departments/codes-and-zoning/.

Business License

All individuals and businesses operating within the municipal boundaries of the City of Walhalla is required to obtain an annual business license. Fees are based on the rate class associated with the North American Classification System (NAICS). Business license renewals may be conducted online. Visit www.cityofwalhalla.com/business-license/.

Grand Opening

Congratulations! You are now ready to officially open your business. You are encouraged to contact our Main Street Walhalla (MSW) office to schedule a ribbon cutting to announce your opening. Communicate your events and promotional opportunities with MSW to help spread the word. If you plan to hold a special event or grand opening, contact the Community Development office on special permissions for additional temporary signage to help you promote your opening or future event. Contact www.mainstreetwalhalla.com/ or www.cityofwalhalla.com/departments/codes-and-zoning/.

City Departments

City Administration
Timothy "Brandon" Burton, Administrator
864-638-4343
bburton@cityofwalhalla.com
www.cityofwalhalla.com

Community Development
Celia Myers, AICP, Manager
864-638-4343
cmyers@cityofwalhalla.com

Fire Department
Terry Sanford, Fire Marshal
864-638-4345
terrysanford@cityofwalhalla.com

HTAX/Business License
Shelly Murphree
864-638-4343
smurphree@cityofwalhalla.com
www.cityofwalhalla.com/business-license/
www.cityofwalhalla.com/hospitality-tax/

Main Street Walhalla
Catie Fisher, Director
864-977-0222
cfisher@cityofwalhalla.com
www.mainstreetwalhalla.com

Public Works
Russ Price, Director
864-638-4351
rprice@cityofwalhalla.com

Water Department
Scott Parris, Director
864-638-4343
sparris@cityofwalhalla.com

Other Important Contacts

Blue Ridge Electric Coop
800-240-3400
www.blueridge.coop/

Duke Energy
800-653-5307
www.duke-energy.com

Oconee County (Accommodations Tax)
864-638-4162
info@oconeesc.com
https://oconeesc.com/pay-taxes-home/accommodations-tax

Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA)
864-972-3900
info@ojrsa.org
www.ojrsa.org

SC Business One Stop
803-898-5690
scboshelp@scbos.sc.gov
https://scbos.sc.gov/

SC Department of Commerce
800-868-7232
info@sccommerce.com
https://www.sccommerce.com/

SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC)
864-638-4185
BEHS-Walhalla@dhec.sc.gov
https://scdhec.gov/ea-local-offices

Other Important Contacts

SC Department of Revenue

Accommodations Tax 803-898-5970
AccommodationsTax@dor.sc.gov
Alcohol Beverage License 803-898-5864
ABL@dor.sc.gov
Retail License 803-898-1350
RegistrationforTaxes@dor.sc.gov
Tobacco License 803-896-1970
TobaccoTax@dor.sc.gov
www.dor.sc.gov

SC Secretary of State

803-734-0629
https://businessfilings.sc.gov/businessfiling
www.sos.sc.gov

Business Resources

Accommodations

If your business rents accommodations, including vacation homes, for fewer than 90 consecutive days to the same customer, you must collect and remit a 2% accommodations tax in additional to the 5% sales tax to the SC Department of Revenue. If you provide accommodations for more than one week in any quarter of a calendar year, you will also need a SC Retail License. Visit www.dor.sc.gov.

Short-term rentals must register with Oconee County through the Online Payment Portal and Registration link; and collect and remit the local accommodations tax by the 20th of each month. Visit https://oconeesc.com/pay-taxes-home/accommodations-tax.

Alcohol

Businesses that sell or serve alcohol must obtain a permit from the South Carolina Department of Revenue's Alcohol Beverage Licensing section. Businesses that serve alcohol by the drink must also collect and remit a liquor by the drink tax. Call (803) 898-5864, or visit www.dor.sc.gov.

Annexation

Property owners of parcels contiguous to City limits may request an annexation by filing a petition signed by owners to the City Administrator. After Planning Commission's review, Council must pass an ordinance with two readings and a hearing to annex the property.

Business Names and Trademarks

Prior to publicizing and circulating the name of your business and/or logo, check its availability with the SC Secretary of State to assure it is not already in use in SC. To trademark your business's name, register it with the Secretary of State's Trademarks Division. Call (803) 734-0629, or visit www.sos.sc.gov.

Façade Grants

The Community Development Façade Grant is a reimbursement grant of up to 50% of the project with a maximum grant of $3,000 per property per twelve-month period. At this time, eligibility is limited to buildings or structures located within the Downtown Business District Overlay. Call 864-638-4343 or visit www.cityofwalhalla.com/community-development-grant-program/.

Business Resources

Food Industry

Businesses that handle food, including restaurants, grocery stores and convenience stores, must first obtain a license from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) prior to operation. Call the Upstate Walhalla Office at (864) 638-4185, or email BEHS-Walhalla@dhec.sc.gov.

Food Trucks

Food trucks, carts or other mobile food businesses must apply for and receive approval from the City's Community Development office before applying for a business license. Call (864) 638-4343, visit www.cityofwalhalla.com.

Hospitality

Restaurants, bars, clubs, coffee shops, bakeries, delis and other businesses that prepare, serve, repackage, or sell food or alcohol within City limits are required to collect and remit a 2% hospitality tax to City Hall each month. For more information, contact (864) 638-4343 or visit www.cityofwalhalla.com/hospitality-tax/.

Incorporation

To incorporate your business, contact the South Carolina Secretary of State at (803) 734-2158, or visit www.sos.sc.gov.

Retail

If your business sells items at the retail level, it must obtain a retail license and collect and remit sales tax to the South Carolina Department of Revenue. Call (864) 241-1200 (Greenville) or (803) 898-5000 (Columbia), or visit www.dor.sc.gov.

Tobacco

Businesses that sell tobacco products must obtain a license from the South Carolina Department of Revenue. Call (803) 896-1970, or visit www.dor.sc.gov.

New Business Checklist

- [ ] Contact Main Street Walhalla for Downtown/Main Street information, optional
- [ ] Contact the City Administrator for Economic Incentive Grants, optional
- [ ] Call Community Development to schedule a Walk-Through
- [ ] Meet with Community Development Team (Community Development, Fire Marshal and Utilities Director)
- [ ] Zoning Permit Approval
- [ ] Sewer Accessibility/Equivalency Form Submittal
- [ ] Fire Marshal Inspection
- [ ] Utilities Connection (must have Fire Marshal approval first)
- [ ] Hospitality Tax (if applicable)
- [ ] Sign Permit
- [ ] Business License (must have all other permits/approvals first)
- [ ] Contact Main Street Walhalla for ribbon cutting

Submittal Procedures

No permit applications may be submitted until after the Pre-Application Meeting.

Please submit forms, fees and any supporting documents to the appropriate department, in the following order.

- Zoning Permit - Community Development, City Hall
- Sewer Accessibility/Equivalency Form - Front Counter, City Hall
- Fire Inspection - Call Fire Marshal to schedule
- Utilities Contract - Front Counter, City Hall
- Hospitality Tax - Front Counter, City Hall
- Sign Permit - Community Development, City Hall
- Business License - Front Counter, City Hall

Fees may be paid by cash, check or card.
Online or over the phone payments are not accepted.

Businesses located within the Downtown Business District are subject to the Downtown Design Guidelines.

If you are starting a food business, please contact SC DHEC for any required permits prior to fire inspection.

If you plan on building, expanding or other alterations, a Zoning Permit is required to obtain Building Permits.