



Jasper County, South Carolina

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Jasper County Council gives initial OK to temporary development stop in northern corner of county

Jasper County leaders on May 15 gave preliminary approval to a 270-day halt to large residential subdivisions, commercial development, and signage within the Euhaw Broad River Area of northern Jasper County.

“We have seen tremendous development growth over the past decade, and Council wants to step back, let our planners do their work to update the Comprehensive Plan, and come back with recommendations on smart growth and where that should best occur,” County Administrator Andrew Fulghum said.

County Council voiced its concern over the impact of new subdivisions and commercial development on roads, evacuation routes, streetscapes, overall traffic congestion, stormwater management and how to protect open space and natural habitats in the northern part of the county.

“As a county, we understand we are in a critical location between Beaufort, Bluffton, Hilton Head Island and Savannah,” Jasper County Council Chair Martin Sauls IV said. “More and more people are making the good choice to live in Jasper County, but we want to be sure we put protections in place to protect our heritage and natural resources.

“This moratorium will allow the county time to assess current zoning ordinances, preserve critical environmentally sensitive land, but also determine what areas may be suitable for development as well,” Sauls said.

The temporary moratorium ordinance requires two additional votes by Jasper County Council and a public hearing June 5. The 270-day countdown begins when the ordinance receives final approval. The pending ordinance doctrine took effect in first reading. The South Carolina Supreme Court has approved the "pending ordinance doctrine" as a basis for a local government

to refuse to issue a building permit when such proposed use is repugnant to a pending and later enacted zoning ordinance.

The temporary growth hold applies to new commercial and residential development in the areas along the Broad River, Highways 170, 462, Bees Creek Road, and the area known as the Okeetee Club.

The pending ordinance affects new residential subdivisions of four or more lots, or four or more multi-family units, commercial development and signage in the Euhaw Broad River Planning Area, including the SC Highway 170 corridor to the municipal boundaries of Hardeeville.

Over the past two years, Jasper County has seen progress on the \$42 million widening of US Highway 17 through the county, construction of a new fire station at Marsh Cove, reviewed the state's scheduled widening of Interstate 95 through the county and the continued expansion and improvements at the Ridgeland-Claude Dean Airport.

The 2020 Census showed Jasper County grew by 28 percent over the previous decade, from 24,948 residents to 31,925 in 2020.

The South Carolina Coastal Conservation League stood in support of the moratorium, saying it "greatly appreciates the council, staff, and Broad River Task Force for their leadership in this endeavor to retain the sense of place and community quality of life that defines Northern Jasper County."

During the May 15 Jasper County Council meeting, about 25 people attended in support of the proposed ordinance. Although no one spoke against it, that could be because many of the larger developers are from out of state and may not have been aware of the County Council agenda, said Danny Lucas, director of Jasper County's [Development Services Division](#).

To date, very few commercial permits have been issued in the northern part of Jasper County covered by the moratorium, so any loss of fee revenue would be minimal during the 270-day period, said Lisa Wagner, director of Jasper County's Planning and Building Services.

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