44-year-old deed adds twist to Keowee restaurant plans

Document appears to give family access to lake on old SC 183

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — The family opposed to a developer's plans for a Lake Keowee restaurant that includes relocating old S.C. 183, which would block access to the lake, appears to have a document that trumps the proposed road closure.

The document that could keep open access to a public boat ramp at the end of Doug Hollow Road is a 1966 real estate transaction between the Kelley family and Crescent Resources,, which was known at the time as Crescent Land & Timber Corp.

According to the transaction recorded with the Oconee County Register of Deeds, the family deeded two Keowee District tracts that include the Doug Hollow Road property, which is at the center of contention between the restaurant developer and area residents.

In turning over their property rights to Crescent, which is the real estate arm of Duke Energy, the family included wording that allows them and their heirs to maintain "the right of ingress and egress over the described tracts of land below an elevation of 800 feet during periods of low water for access to the lake ..."

At an Oconee County Council Transportation Committee meeting this week, a reference was made to the document.

Addressing Pam Kelley, Councilman Wayne McCall said: "You have an easement agreement from Crescent. Do you have that document with you?"

Pam Kelley said she did not.

Edalene Kelley, whose signature appears on the document along with that of her deceased husband, James L. Kelley, told The Journal on Thursday that she has not seen the document.

"I really don't understand what's in that document," she said.

Her son, Steve Kelley, said he's not seen the document either. However, he said that if it does exist, it explains why family members and other residents chipped in to build a boat ramp at the end of the road.

Richard Cottingham, who represents investors backing plans for the restaurant, proposed to the Transportation Committee last month that the county take over a portion of Doug Hollow Road.

carlos@dailyjournal.com | (864) 973-6685