Clemson eases water conservation rules

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CLEMSON — Clemson City Council lowered its water conservation status from mandatory to voluntary Monday.

The council took the initial step to downgrade to voluntary water conservation follows that of most water systems that draw from Lake Hartwell and synchronizes Clemson's rules with all but one of the 14 Anderson Regional Joint Water System members, said Rick Cotton, city administrator.

The downgrade "will strengthen the message" when water providers call for conservation and will eliminate confusion, Cotton said.

The lake is more than 15 feet higher now than it was this past winter, said Benjie McGill, city utilities manager. A resolution drafted for the council to consider Monday night advises people to voluntarily continue conservation.

The council also unanimously approved initial reading of a proposal to rezone 2.8 acres on Kelly Road that would enlarge a shopping center development already approved on Freedom Drive.

The city Planning Commission had recommended against the measure that several residents spoke against at a public hearing.

Resident Paul Schleifer said the plans go against the city's stance for environmental stewardship. Developer Tom Hamilton did not comment.

The council also approved purchase of equipment that will provide wireless Internet access for the downtown area near the Clemson campus.