Cliffs, Upstate Forever reach agreement

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
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GREENVILLE — After months of negotiating on plans for development, the Cliffs and Upstate Forever have reached a tentative agreement over wastewater disposal and new golf course construction issues that have been the target of environmentalists focussed on The Mountain Park Cliffs Community.

The original proposal made by The Cliffs Community development called for discharged wastewater to flow directly into the North Saluda River.

After residents complaints, The Cliffs repealed the plan and applied for a permit to discharge the wastewater on a hillside adjacent to the planned golf course.

The Cliffs was then issued a permit from the Department of Environmental Health and Control (DHEC), but a handful of conservation groups appealed the decision, stating the hillside area was never tested to see if it could handle that amount of wastewater.

In addition, conservation groups were fighting the overall golf course plan.

According to documents, The Cliffs also sought authorization to construct an 18-hole golf course along both sides of the North Saluda River for a distance of almost 2.5 miles.

Again DHEC approved the plan. And, again Upstate Forever and conservation groups appealed, citing severe impacts on the river and the failure to evaluate alternate sites for the golf course.

Brad Wyche, Executive Director of Upstate Forever was happy with the settlement.

"We've come a long way from The Cliffs' original plan, which included putting wastewater into the North Saluda River, massive alteration of the river channel, limited buffers and an excessive number of bridges and playovers. We continue to believe that this is not a good site for a golf course, but at least the impacts on the North Saluda will be substantially reduced. We're pleased that the settlement includes a public access site to the river and the watershed protection fund."

The revised plan includes a shorter course, fewer bridges, specific amounts of water that can be used from the river to irrigate, a public access to the river for boating and fishing and The Cliffs will provide $250,000 to fund and protect the natural resources of the North Saluda watershed.

jsibley@dailyjournal.com | (864) 882-2375