Complex might prompt growth

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Assisted living facility would add sewer lines north of Duke Energy

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SENECA — Plans to build a retirement complex on Lake Keowee could hasten sewer infrastructure to a broad underserved area along Highway 130 north of Duke Energy.

Installing five to six miles of sewer lines to the proposed project site — approximately 1.5 miles on the backside of the exclusive Keowee Key gated community — could spur development around that area of the lake and eventually continue into Salem.

Projects plans are still in the infancy stage but received a much-needed endorsement from the Oconee County Council on Tuesday night.

Council unanimously approved a resolution endorsing a bond issue not to exceed $13 million for Apex Development Group — a Piedmont-based firm

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COMPLEX: Group says Keowee Key name trademarked

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behind the project.

The South Carolina Jobs-Economic Development Authority would issue the Recovery Zone Facility Revenue Bonds, which are backed by the federal government, to help finance the senior residential and health care facility.

The S.C. Budget and Control Board approved the bonds for the Lake Keowee project at its Sept. 29 meeting. The board also approved two assisted-living developments Apex wants to build near Greenville and Spartanburg and another in Berkley County.

County Council Chairman Reg Dexter questioned Apex principal Seth Landry about the repayment of the bond debt to make sure the public understood that Oconee would in no way be liable.

Landry said the developer, as borrower, would be responsible if it defaults. Furthermore, he said council's approval of the bond issue would not reduce the county's borrowing capacity.



This artist's rendering of the Retreat at Powdersville in Anderson County is featured on the Apex Senior Living website. Apex Development Group wants to build a similar facility on Lake Keowee in Oconee County.

Councilman Paul Corbeil, who lives in Keowee Key and would have the future development next door as a neighbor, said he had concerns about sewer.

Landry said he has been talking with Seneca Utilities Director Bob Faires about the project linking up to the Highway 130 sewer line that ends at Duke Energy but is currently being connected to the Seneca sewer system.

Landry said Apex has the financial capacity to pay for the infrastructure.

According to one insider's estimate, it could cost more than $2 million to run sewer lines some six miles to the site and build a pump station at the development and a force main.

Apex proposes to build the Lake Keowee retirement complex in three phases. The first phase calls for a 56-bed assisted living facility that would create 35 full-time and 30 part-time jobs.

The second phase would add 40 skilled nursing beds to the facility and double the number of jobs. The final phase would add medical offices to the complex.

At one point during the meeting, local developer Scott Vick came forward to endorse the project.

"If this is not approved, it goes to someone else," Vick said.

Vick, whose Keowee River development plan included an assisted-living facility, said he would have the most to lose by having competition. However, he said it would be good for Oconee County.

It has not been all smooth sailing for Apex, however.

On Wednesday, a spokesman for the Keowee Key Property Owners Association said the group's attorney would contact Apex about the name it chose — The Retreat at Keowee Key.

Kevin McCracken, community general manager for Keowee Key, said Keowee Key is a licensed trademark.

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