LOCAL NEWS

Developer gets more time for project

Old inn awaits asbestos inspection

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CLEMSON — The developer of a proposed condominium on land now occupied by a gutted hotel has been given more time by the city to show progress on the long-delayed project.

Clemson City Council agreed Monday night to table a resolution that would have directed the city's zoning and codes department to issue an order to demolish the old Lake Hartwell Inn on U.S. 123.

Instead, the council directed zoning and codes administrator Robert Vecchio to direct Clemson Grande Lakefront Condominiums LLC to immediately secure the property, which city officials have said has become a home to transients.

"At a very minimum, he needs to secure the place," council member Tim Fowler said prior to Monday night's vote.

Vecchio told the council the state Department of Health and Environmental Control plans to visit the site soon to inspect for asbestos removal.

Vecchio said the property's owner has told him that once DHEC checks off on the asbestos removal, he will begin demolition of the building.

Demolition work at the site on U.S. 123 stopped in the summer of 2008, leaving basically the structure's brick and mortar shell.

A metal fence has since been erected around the property — at the request of the city — although city police have said that fence has been breached repeatedly, with evidence of transients and others entering the property.

Developers of the site, Clemson Grande Lakefront Condominiums, announced two years ago plans for a $5 million condominium project that were to include 93 new luxury condominiums, several restaurants and specialty shops.

City leaders want something done on the site in part because it sits at one of the prime gateways into Clemson. The city has recently spent thousands of dollars on improvements along U.S. 123

The tabled resolution would have declared the property to be "unsafe and condemned" and directed Vecchio's department to proceed "with all actions necessary for the removal of the structures and cleaning of this property."

The resolution also states that should the city wind up accepting responsibility for clearing the property through condemnation, the cost to the city could be in excess of $300,000.