

FOLKS to await new DHEC ruling

Friends of Lake Keowee Society keeps legal action on the table

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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SENECA — Opponents of a planned Lake Keowee marina on Highway 130 want to put off legal action until state regulators have had time to issue a second ruling on the project.

Ben Turetzky, executive director of the Friends of Lake Keowee Society, said Thursday that his group would await a second decision by the state Department of Health and Envi-

ronmental Control before pursuing legal channels to stop development of the Palmetto Pointe Marina.

DHEC issued Palmetto Pointe developer, Ray Fretwell, a Construction in Navigable Waters Permit on Oct. 6 that would have allowed the project to proceed.

The DHEC notice to Fretwell stated in part: "After reviewing the project plans, Department Staff determined that there is a reasonable as-

urance that the proposed project will be conducted in a manner consistent with the permitting requirements ..."

However, just two weeks later, DHEC turned around and informed Fretwell and his engineer Wesley White of Goldie & Associates that it was rescinding the permit.

DHEC officials buckled under public pressure, led by FOLKS, demanding a public hearing on the Palmetto Pointe project

proposal.

DHEC wrote to White in a letter dated Oct. 21: "... subsequent to the public notice of the proposed decision, the Department received a number of letters of concern and several additional requests were made for a public meeting."

Turetzky said DHEC is targeting mid-January as a likely time frame for the public hearing. He

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on Keowee marina



FILE PHOTO

State regulators might schedule a public meeting for sometime in mid-January regarding plans for the Palmetto Pointe Marina on Lake Keowee. FOLKS is keeping its legal options open until DHEC makes a final permitting decision on the Highway 130 project.

MARINA: FOLKS attorney preparing legal challenge

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said the meeting might be held at the Walhalla Civic Auditorium.

In the meantime, FOLKS has retained an attorney who is preparing a legal challenge to the marina before a S.C. Administrative Law Court judge.

Turetzky said the lawyer is ready to file by Tuesday specific reasons why FOLKS is opposed to the

project, as well as a list of people to be testifying on FOLKS behalf.

FOLKS, however, wants to wait until DHEC holds public hearings and makes a second decision on the permit before pushing ahead with its Administrative Court challenge.

"If they (DHEC) permanently turns it down, there's no need to appeal," Turetzky said.

Should DHEC decide to

issue a permit to Palmetto Pointe after all, then FOLKS is ready to appeal to the DHEC Board, and if that fails, take the case before the Administrative Court judge.

Fretwell has called DHEC's flip-flop on the permit "a black eye on that agency." He said his proposed marina would "provide the public with a place to go and enjoy themselves."

Palmetto Pointe Marina would be built on a 13-acre tract that Fretwell once wanted to turn into a small subdivision, until the U.S. housing market and the economy tanked in 2008.

Described as a public-use marina, it would include a restaurant, ship's store and four 14-slip docks, as well as a swim-beach area.

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