FOLKS wants changes to

Group wants time to add commercial development

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THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Friends of Lake Keowee Society is again lobbying to have commercial development standards included in the Lake Overlay District.

The new push comes after a previous attempt to adopt business development guidelines fizzled in the Oconee County Planning Commission.

FOLKS used a recent Oconee County Council meeting as a forum to advance its cause. FOLKS Executive Director Ben Turetzky addressed the group's concerns.

"We have been discussing the implementation of the development standards for a number of months now and FOLKS feels strongly that there should be such standards implemented for commercial development within the Lake Overlay," Turetzky said.

According to Turetzky, FOLKS thinks that the Duke Energy Shoreline Management Plan Guidelines fall short of protecting existing residential lands from the negative impact of commercial development, such as lighting, noise and pollution.

Planning Commission member Andrea Heller proposed the commercial development standards in the Lake Overlay around the time that lake residents feared that the proposed Palmetto Pointe Marina was close to becoming reality.

Although the developer dropped his plans for the marina, Turetzky feels that county officials should not wait for another "close call."

"While many members of FOLKS and other citizens may favor development standards throughout the county, we believe that such implementation is proving to be a long and hard fight and therefore urge that County Council and Planning Commission to revisit the proposal made by Commissioner Heller," Turetzky said. "The time for such action is now, while there are no active applications for commercial marinas that would be grandfathered."

Others, including some members of the Planning Commission, think that FOLKS' Lake Overlay proposals would just give businesses one more reason to avoid investing in Oconee.

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Lake Overlay

standards