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It's not too late to serve on Planning Commission

County Council is putting off filling 4 openings until later next month

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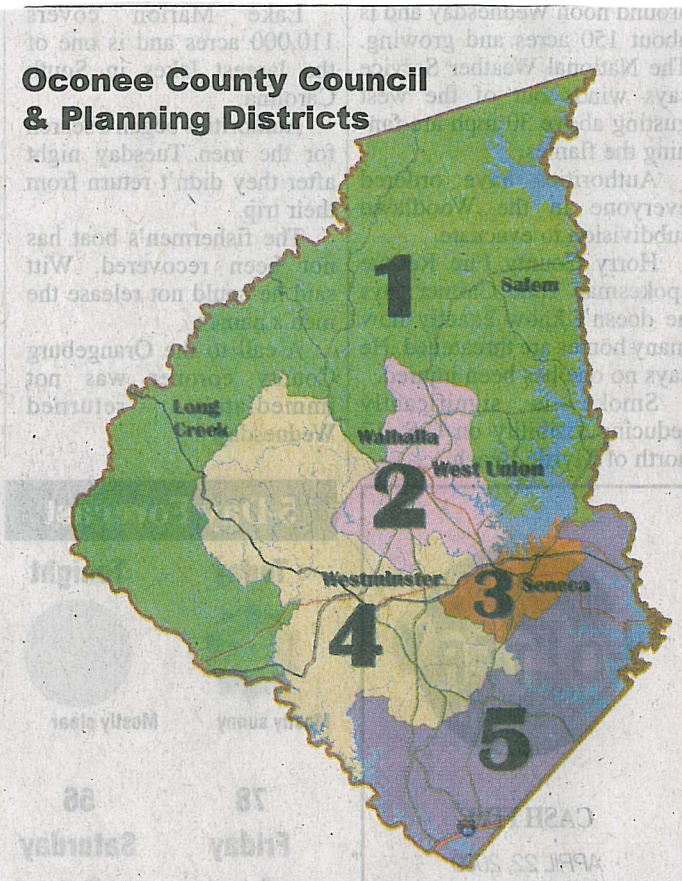
WALHALLA — Oconee County residents interested in being considered to serve on the Planning Commission still have time to do so.

The County Council must make appointments to four expired terms on the seven-member board. In recent weeks, the Council voted to reappoint Ryan Honea to represent District 5, covering Fair Play and surrounding areas, and approved the appointment of Andrea Heller to replace retiring Bill Nelson, whose District 1 seat stretches from Salem and wraps around unincorporated areas near Walhalla and Westminster.

Through quirky circumstances never before seen, the four-year terms of six out of seven planners all expired on April 1. Council agreed Tuesday night not to make more appointments until final approval of an ordinance that would stagger the terms of Planning Commission members and more clearly define their duties, responsibilities and compensation. The ordinance is being sent to the Planning Commission for review and won't return to the Council until May 19 at the earliest.

Until then, civic-minded residents with a desire to serve on the Planning Commission could make their interest known to councilmen representing the district in which they live.

Beth Hulse, the Clerk to Council, said the best way to catch councilmen's attention is to fill out a basic questionnaire available at her office in the county administration building on Pine Street, Walhalla. The questionnaire asks for personal contact information and the applicant must check off the boards and commissions for which they would like to be considered. The list includes the Aeronautics, Arts & Historical, ATAX, Economic Development, Infrastructure Advisory, Parks, Recreation & Tourism, Board of Zoning Appeals, Anderson-Oconee Behavioral Health Services, Board of Assessment Appeals, Building Codes Appeal Board, Emergency Services, Library Board, and Planning



1. County Council: vacant; planner: Andrea Heller

2. Council: Wayne McCall; planner: Randy Abbott

3. Council: Mario Suarez; planner Bill Evatt

4. Council: Joel Thrift; planner: Tommy Abbott

5. Council: Reg Dexter; planner: Ryan Honea

Commission.

Hulse said she currently has a stack of about 20 completed questionnaires that councilmen routinely check whenever they have to fill a board or commission vacancy from their districts.

Once a councilman recommends someone for an opening, the entire Council must vote to approve. A simple majority is needed.

The expired seats on the Planning Commission still unfilled belong to Randy Abbott of District 2, which covers Walhalla, West Union and adjacent areas, Bill Evatt of District 3, which encompasses Seneca and adjacent areas, and countywide at-large seat. Commissioners Howard Moore and Rex Ramsay. The four will continue to serve until they are either reappointed or replaced.

Residents who want to be considered for the district seats must live in those areas. Anyone living in the county can be considered for an at-large seat.