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Keowee restaurant dispute still festering

Compromise offer made to developer

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — A party to the dispute between property owners and a Lake Keowee restaurant developer said an effort was made at a compromise contrary to what the developer has stated.

Bo Knapp said he offered two ideas to Richard Cottingham in an effort to settle an ongoing dispute with Cottingham's proposed Lighthouse Restaurant.

As part of his proposal, Cottingham is asking Oconee County to take over from the state Department of Transportation a portion of Doug Hollow Road, which would be relocated to go near his restaurant on Kelley Ridge Road.

Knapp opposes the project because he thinks the lighthouse feature Cottingham wants to place on top of his restaurant would be an eyesore. The lighthouse would stand more than 50 feet tall.

Kelley Ridge Road residents don't want the road



relocated because it would allow Cottingham to shut off access to a point on the lake that they've used to launch their boats.

Knapp said his compromise ideas offered solutions to both points of contention.

First, he suggested that Cottingham put an American flag instead of a lighthouse on top of his restaurant.

Secondly, he suggested that the developer place a picnic area at the access point to the lake.

"That would be a compromise," Knapp said.

Cottingham told The Journal earlier this month that there's very little chance of a compromise being worked out by

the two sides.

At the time, Cottingham said "we have not heard from them and we have not contacted them either."

On Friday, Cottingham said he had received an e-mail from Knapp earlier this month and that he had responded.

"The ball is in his court, as far as I'm concerned," Cottingham said.

Cottingham declined to say what his response was or whether he had made a counteroffer.

Members of the Oconee County Council encouraged the two sides to try to settle their differences out of court.

Council voted April 5 to file for a declaratory judgment in circuit court to settle the Kelleys' claim that they have a deed that entitles them to an easement and access to the lake at the end of the road that Cottingham wants closed.

As of late Friday, the county had yet to file for a declaratory judgment.

carlos@dailyjournal.com | (864) 973-6685