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Keowee watchdog tracks new project

Group concerned about proposed marina complex on Highway 130

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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SENECA —Advocates for Quality Development is keeping watch on a proposed new Lake Keowee marina complex on Highway 130.

The organization that came into existence in spring 2006 to challenge a high-rise condominium project called MonteLago remains vigilant as ever, said AQD President Gary Owens on Monday.

During its annual meeting Saturday, AQD officials said they plan to continue playing an active role on zoning issues, as well as participating as a stakeholder in Duke Energy's hydroelectric re-licensing process. The group also is keeping watch on a new commercial development being planned on the lake.

Although the project is in preliminary stages, AQD wants to monitor its progress because it would include a marina with 56 boat slips, a restaurant, a ship's store, a 10-room lodge and boat storage.

Oconee County Planning Director Art Holbrooks said the 13.26-acre project by developer Ray Fretwell has all the land use approvals needed.

Holbrooks said that because there are no design standards for commercial projects, the Planning Department's main issues have been emergency access and fire protection, buffer requirements, height limit and residential density.

Once application is made for building permits, county planners would verify all the

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details during the plan review for the various structures, Holbrooks said.

Owens said he has toured the project area by boat and came upon narrow passages and shallow water.

"It has all kinds of issues," he said.

AQD also plans to play an active role in Duke's hydroelectric re-licensing process.

Duke received a license for the Keowee-Toxaway Hydroelectric Project in 1966. The Fortune 500 company will file a new license application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in 2014. Its current license expires in 2016.

Owens said AQD had to apply to become a stakeholder. It now will have a place on the table during Duke's relicensing process along with other stakeholders such as Upstate forever, FOLKS, the Cherokee Tribe and the City of Seneca, among others.

Owens is completing his year as AQD president and will officially pass on the top leadership role to Jim Codner at AQD's next meeting on Nov. 18.

Codner, who has been active with the AQD since its inception, said one of the group's top concerns would be to continue making sure there is measured development on the lake.

Owens said three new board members would officially come aboard at the next meeting, including two from Pickens County.

with their child. If students are behind when they enter middle school, chances are they won't graduate."

Although enrollment in Family Literacy this year, currently at 12, is low compared to other years, Mefleh said she has been actively seeking participants.

"We feel Family Literacy