Neville property zoned Traditional Rural

Oconee deviates from Future Land Use Map

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — The Neville family accomplished this week what others before them have failed to do: Get property hugging Lake Keowee to be zoned Traditional Rural District.

It was a deviation from the Future Land Use Map incorporated in Oconee's Comprehensive Plan.

Jim Codner, an officer with Advocates for Quality Development Inc., a group of mostly Lake Keowee residents engaged in controlling development around the lake, was quick to jump on the precedent-setting action at Tuesday's Oconee County Council meeting.

"Please don't use this one instance where you have a pretty good reason for deviating to deviate additionally in the future for not so good reasons," Codner said.

According to Codner,

SEE ZONED, PAGE A5

'Is going to happen more and more,' Honea said

FROM PAGE A1

who is the front man for a two-part Cane Creek zoning petition covering more than 1,000 parcels and 1,200 acres on Lake Keowee, one of Neville's parcels should have been zoned residential, if council had followed the Future Land Use Map.

Jess Neville, representing his family, said they were seeking what Oconee's Zoning Enabling Ordinance allows through citizen-initiated zoning. Furthermore, he noted that on the county's own website, the Future Land Use Map is described as being "non-regulatory and imposes no standards or regulations."

"That's what Neville Brothers is trying to do, and we want to finish the process tonight," he said.

Lilly Davis, who owns property on South Cove Road, took the opportunity of a public hearing on the Neville petition to make her pitch for Traditional Rural, too.

Davis and a group of neighbors with about 140 acres in their area have been asking for Traditional Rural since May 2010. They received a setback Monday when a majority on the Oconee County Planning Commission voted to recommend they be zoned to a more restrictive Agricultural Residential District.

That did not stop Davis from pressing County Council on her request.

"I would really like for you as council members to take this into consideration and look into it," Davis said. "It's beyond me why they would ever think that property, just because it's on South Cove Road, would fall under Ag Res."

Council contemplated amending the Neville petition to include four other parcels that wanted to join at the last moment. Such an amendment would have required that the Neville petition be sent back to the Planning Commission for review.

In the end, council gave final approval to Neville's request as presented, and will deal with the additional parcels in a separate ordinance later.

According to Planning Commission Chairman Ryan Honea, that is the most efficient way of dealing with the additional parcels.

"This is going to happen more and more," Honea said.

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