No timeline for zoning

Ranking member opposed to setting deadline

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WALHALLA — The Planning Commission is not setting any time schedule for a review of concerns with Oconee's Zoning Enabling Ordinance, a ranking commissioner said Tuesday.

Planning Commission Vice Chairman Howard Moore said he would not be in favor of setting a deadline in trying to make fixes to the document.

Moore presented the motion Monday night calling for a moratorium of all new rezoning requests. His motion was seconded by District 3 Commissioner Bill Evatt and approved without a nay vote.

Moore said the commission's action should not be interpreted as a sign that the group is out to kill the ZEO or stop groups from pursuing citizen-initiated rezoning requests. He said that personally he's not opposed to zoning or planning for future growth.

"We all have concerns," Moore said. "All we're doing is slowing down. ... No one is trying to stop (rezoning),"

Moore and other commissioners have been besieged by calls and visits from property owners who say they've been caught up in petition initiatives.

Moore said he's yet to discuss with Commission Chairman Tommy Abbott the process for reviewing and addressing concerns with the ZEO but said it could include public hearings for property owners.

In the meantime, Oconee County Council Chairman Reg Dexter made it clear Tuesday that a moratorium would not grind the process to a halt.

Dexter said he expects the Planning Department to bring the next rezoning petition for a first look by

moratorium

council at its next meeting April 13.

Planning Director Art Holbrooks said he would bring the first of three requests from Jim Codner dealing with 254 parcels in the Cane Creek Basin. The petitions combined would affect 1,132 properties.

Holbrooks said he would also bring before council a request from Jean Jennings that would take a handful of properties in the north Fairview area that want to be rezoned as Traditional Rural District.

Should council act affirmatively on the rezoning requests, Holbrooks and his staff would then forward the request to the Planning Commission.

That's where the moratorium could cause a bottleneck in the process. State law calls for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the County Council before council takes final action on a rezoning request.

Dexter said all the commission has to do is "follow the procedure."

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