Oconee boots back

Dueling petitions headed to Planning Commission

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THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Two dueling rezoning petitions on and near Lake Keowee properties came back before the Oconee County Council after a hiatus of almost four months but they didn't stay in the council's court for long. Instead, council members unanimously punted the would-be ordinances back to the Planning Commission. The rezoning requests are related to 56 parcels located in the North Fairview community and 253 parcels located north of Cane Creek.

Council Chairman Reg Dexter said the action was taken because Planning Commission Chairman Tommy Abbott informally requested it of him after Monday night's Planning Commission meeting.

The Cane Creek petition is spearheaded by Jim Codner, who also happens to be president of Advocates for Quality Development, a group that played an important role in Oconee County enacting a Zoning Enabling Ordinance (ZEO) two years ago, which took effect last year.

The majority (68 percent of parcel owners) signing Codner's petition would like to be rezoned Lake Residential District.

Jean Jennings, the leader

rezoning requests

of the North Fairview community property owners that would like to be rezoned Traditional Rural District, spoke up at Tuesday night's meeting to complain about how her petition has been handled. Jennings said that at a May 19 meeting the Planning Commission recommended to council that her petition be the dominant map.

Jennings found it strange that the Planning Department staff would take it upon themselves to add two alternative maps with different configurations to what the Planning Commission had recommended.

The Planning Department's alternative maps make use of a new Agricultural Residential District zoning category proposed in an amendment to the ZEO. Council held public hearings on the new district and gave final approval to the ordinance establishing the new zoning type Tuesday night.

Jennings said 83 percent of the property owners that signed her petition don't want to be rezoned Agricultural Residential District.

"We want Traditional Rural," Jennings said.

The traditional rural designation essentially establishes no standards on land use within the rezoned parcel.

The unfolding conflict between the petitions likely will be on the Planning Commission's agenda when it meets again Sept. 13.

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