

# Oconee planners address zoning donuts

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WALHALLA — Several Long Creek residents representing donut holes on a rezoning map refused to keep quiet at Monday night's Oconee County Planning Commission meeting.

The residents spoke up just as commissioners were about to vote on whether to join their properties with their neighbors' majority request to have their parcels near Long Creek Highway and Orchard Road rezoned as Traditional Rural District.

One woman said she had been out of town and had not received correspondence from the Planning Department about her neighbors' request.

Another couple said the county's communication "is broken down."

By voicing their discontent, the residents might have stopped the commission from adding them to the majority's request.

By a 3-2 vote, the commission sent the rezoning request back to County Council without the additional parcels.

"We just want to be left alone," said Jay Medeiros. "We want to remain control free."

The fate of the holdout property owners now will rest with County Council.

The split commission vote brings to light once more just how emotional and controversial zoning has become in the county.

The commission voted unanimously to approve two other petitions with changes made by council.

"We have to address



those donut holes," said Commission chairman Ryan Honea.

The commission also took up grandfathering as it applies to zoning, but the discussion didn't go far.

Commission Vice Chairman Howard Moore argued that council could approve an ordinance that could undo a grandfathered land use at any time.

Sitting in the audience, Councilman Paul Corbeil could be seen shaking his head in disagreement to Moore's comment.

Moore said he would like to get a legal opinion from the county attorney on the issue.

The commission agreed to schedule a workshop to get public input on a draft of uses for the Traditional Rural District.

Commissioners also voted to recommend John Lyle and Randy Abbott Jr. as their two candidates to County Council to fill an empty at-large seat on the commission.

Lyle and Abbott Jr. were the top-two vote getters from a list of four candidates that commissioners voted on.

The seat became available with the passing of Randy Abbott Sr. in March.