Oconee planners ask, 'Where's the funds?'

Some planners wonder how the county will pay almost $23,000 for a rezoning request

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WALHALLA — Several Oconee County Planning Commission members took parting shots Monday night at the almost $23,000 it'll take to process a nearly 3,000-parcel rezoning request coming down the pike.

Commission Vice Chairman Howard Moore brought up the expense during Monday night's meeting and questioned where the money to pay for it is coming from.

Moore pointed out that the Office of Zoning had almost $5,000 allocated for operations in fiscal year 2010 and nearly $6,000 in the current 2011 budget that ends June 30, but nothing in the 2012 budget.

Last week, the Planning Department mailed out notices to property owners named in the 2,900-parcel rezoning request pertaining to Keowee Key/Stamp Creek. It is by far the largest rezoning request to date.

The total estimated cost to rezone one parcel is $7.84, according to the Planning Department. That brings the cost of processing the Keowee Key/Stamp Creek request to $22,736.

Commissioner Tommy Abbott said the Planning Commission recommended to County Council more than a year ago that a fee of $5 per parcel be charged to those requesting a zoning change.

Abbott said council discarded that idea.

Moore points out that the $22,736 expense must be repeated when it comes time to send out notices announcing a public hearing on the request.

"I'm just wondering where the money is coming from to pay for this because there's nothing budgeted for the Office of Zoning," Moore said.

Monday's meeting marked the debut of at-large Commissioner David Lyle. He takes over the seat left vacant with the passing of Randy Abbott earlier in the year.

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