Opposition surfaces to Keowee eatery

Neighbors say plans are unfit for residential area

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — A long-time property owner near the shores of Lake Keowee on Doug Hollow Road is taking her opposition to a proposed restaurant before the Oconee County Council tonight.

Edalene Kelley, who has called her Kelley Ridge Road property home for 56 years, said that plans for a restaurant across from her home would bring traffic and noise to a quiet neighborhood.

Plans for the restaurant have kicked around for several years and resurfaced last month.

Richard Cottingham of Cottingham & Associates told the county's Transportation panel in September that he's interested in breaking ground on The Lighthouse Restaurant in June 2011 and opening in spring 2012.

Cottingham told committee members that the restaurant would be similar in quality to Copper River in Seneca.

Kelley said she would oppose the plans during the public comment session at tonight's council meeting. She said she has a petition signed by about 20 neighbors who also object.

"We're opposed to a restaurant being built in a residential area," Kelley said. "The restaurant also would have a bar, and we don't want a bar. It's quiet here."

Kelley said the petition also wants to stop the developer's plans to close the current access to Lake Keowee on Doug Hollow Road, also known as old state highway 183.

Kelley said that closing would cut off a long-time lake access to the public.

At last month's Transportation meeting, Cottingham proposed that the county take over a portion of Doug Hollow Road that is maintained by the state.

Kelley said the closing of that portion of the road would also take away a school bus turnaround.

The Transportation Committee is scheduled to address the developer's plans and residents' opposition at a meeting Oct. 26.

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Rachel Smith, left, and her mother, Edalene Kelley are among a group of residents opposed to the plans for a restaurant in the residential area of Kelley Ridge Road and Doug Hollow Road near Lake Keowee. The two will speak out against the plans at tonight's Oconee County Council meeting.