Planner rethinking Lake Overlay vote

Some want the new rules to apply to residential uses, too

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WALHALLA — Planning Commissioner Andrea "Andy" Heller got a big surprise at the end of Tuesday night's workshop with Oconee County Council to review changes to county zoning law.

When it came time to review the new standards to the Lake Overlay District, which she championed and the commission approved last week by a 4-3 vote, Heller found out that a commission member wanted to reconsider his affirmative vote.

"This is the first time I hear it needs to come back," Heller said of the request to reconsider.

Planning Commission Chairman Tommy Abbott broke the news during a discussion on the Lake Overlay District proposals.

"One of those who voted for it wants it back for more consideration," Abbott said.

County Attorney Tom Martin, who sat through the nearly two and a half hour meeting, said there was nothing improper with a commissioner requesting to reconsider a vote. He said the matter could be brought back for discussion at the next regular Planning Commission meeting, which is scheduled for July 19.

Councilman Wayne McCall raised questions about the Lake Overlay proposals directed at non-residential uses. He said they should also apply to residential uses.

After the meeting, Planning Commission Vice Chairman Howard Moore said he is the one asking for the issue to be reconsidered. He said he was confused when he voted in favor.

"Don't get me wrong, I agree with a lot of the things being proposed, and I think something could be worked out," Moore said.

Planners and councilmen spent most of the time discussing changes to the Method 2-small area citizen-initiated rezoning method.

They postponed two areas of contention: requiring that petitions have the signature of 65 percent of the property owners representing 65 percent of the area to be rezoned and charging $5 per parcel on rezoning requests.

Council Chairman Reg Dexter pushed back a recommendation to have a rezoning petition come before the Planning Commission before the council takes a first reading in title only of an ordinance requesting the rezoning.

"Who is the authority, council or commission? Dexter asked. "I don't think anything should be going to the commission before it goes to council."

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