The Journal 5/18/2010

Planners delay vote on Keowee River project

Developer says he's ready to go on $200M community

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Developer Scott Vick is eager to get going on a $200 million Keowee River mixed-use project near Seneca.

But Planning Commission members Monday night were not ready to take action on an ordinance vesting the developer with a unique set of standards governing the 774-acre project.

If approved, the agreement would negate the need for the developer to obtain variances related to road design and other design standards on elements of the project, some of which are not currently regulated by the county.

Planning Director Art Holbrooks presented the commission with an updated draft of the ordinance that contained changes recommended by County Attorney Tom

SEE PLANNERS, PAGE A5

PLANNERS: Table Lake Overlay District talks

FROM PAGE A1

Martin.

The updated draft addressed the scope of the project, roads regulations, water quality, setbacks and speed limits within the development.

Commission Chairman Tommy Abbott said he did not feel comfortable taking action on a draft that was presented to members 45 minutes prior to the meeting. He suggested everyone take the document home and read it for two weeks before the next regular meeting.

Although he'd like to get the project started as soon as possible, Vick said he understood planners wanting to have time to read the document carefully.

"I want everyone to be comfortable," he said. "My concern is to get accurate information to the public."

Vick unveiled plans for the master-planned community last summer. The project incorporates the natural beauty of the property to promote adventure tourism and active adult lifestyles.

The commission also moved to table for two weeks consideration of new standards for the Lake Overlay District in the zoning law.

In response to criticism of a special meeting last week on zoning that appeared to get out of control at times, Abbott said anyone in the audience wishing to speak would have to raise their hands to be recognized by the chair.

Abbott also made it clear that he is not opposed to zoning. He said he's in favor of zoning but is concerned with some of the things in the law that he thinks could be made "more user friendly."

carlos@dailyjrn.com | (864) 973-6685