

Planners give thumbs up to zoning ordinance changes

New zoning law goes into effect today

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WALHALLA — Without fanfare, discussion or debate, the Oconee County Planning Commission voted unanimously Thursday to accept amendments made by Oconee County Council to the Zoning Enabling Ordinance (ZEO) that goes into effect today.

“This will be the shortest meeting in Oconee County history,” Commission Chairman Tommy Abbott announced to begin the 4 p.m. meeting.

He wasn’t kidding. Less than five minutes later the vote

was taken and the meeting ended.

Abbott did find time to introduce the group’s newest member, Andrea Heller.

“You picked a good time to join the commission,” Abbott said, referring to the many stormy meetings Heller missed in which factions in favor of and against zoning and the Lake Overlay District often went at each other.

County planners briefly explained the major modifications in the ordinance amending the ZEO — establishing a 750-foot setback from full pond in the Lake Overlay District

and eliminating wording that would have made implementation of a 25-foot vegetative buffer along lakefront properties retroactive — before the vote was taken.

People who showed up a few minutes late were surprised to see the meeting had ended.

Although the County Council had indicated a third and final reading of the ordinance modifying the ZEO would be taken up at Tuesday’s regular council meeting, it was missing from an agenda posted on the county’s Web site on Thursday.