Planners look to wrap up ZEO review

By CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — "Come Monday," as the old Jimmy Buffett song goes, "It'll be alright."

Tommy Abbott, however, might just be singing another tune if the whole issue about a 1,300-foot setback comes up as part of the Planning Commission's review of Oconee's Zoning Enabling Ordinance (ZEO) at its regular meeting Monday.

Abbott, the Commission's chairman, has vehemently been opposed to the Lake Keowee overlay in the ZEO, which includes a 1,300-foot setback from the lake's shore and 65-foot height restriction on new development.

According to Abbott, the setback is one of three things left on the table for the Commission to resolve before it sends the ZEO back to Oconee County Council.

"I don't think the 1,300-foot setback will fly," Abbott said. "My preference is zero setback. I won't venture

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OCONEE PLANNING COMMISSION

- When: 6 p.m., Monday
- Where: County Council chambers, 415 S. Pine St., Walhalla

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to guess what the Commission will agree on."

Aside from the lake overlay debate, Planning Department Director Art Holbrooks said he would draft a series of recommendations of zoning changes sought for Fair Play so the Commission could act on it Monday.

The recommendations address the council's desire to allow residents in District 5 near Lake Hartwell and the Interstate 85 area to have a voice in the zoning process.

Last month, the council sent Oconee's first attempt at zoning back to the Planning Commission for review, comments and recommendations. Specifically, the council asked the Commission to come up with language to reconcile the three methods outlined in the ZEO for rezoning property so it would comply with state law. Abbott said County Attorney Tom Martin promised to have something in writing by Monday to address that issue.

Also, as part of the Commission's review, the council asked whether residents initiating a zoning change should pay for it.

At a Feb. 26 workshop, the Planning Commission agreed that aside from the possible payment of an application fee, they did not see residents being asked to pay for zoning.

Abbott said there was an outside shot that the Commission could complete its review by Monday night.

"If we can't reach an agreement, we can just send (the ZEO) back and let the County Council deal with it," Abbott said.