Residents takes swipe at zoning process

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — The woman pushing a petition to have 53 parcels rezoned as a Tradition Rural district in her North Fairview community took a swipe at the process at Monday night.

Jean Jennings told Planning Commission members that she has done everything that's been required under the year-old Zoning Enabling Ordinance (ZEO), but seemingly to no avail.

County Council approved Jennings' request on first reading on April 13, but more than five months later, Jennings was wondering why playing by the book has not worked for her and the 83 percent of parcel owners that also signed her petition.

> **'My neighbors and** I followed the law... we selected traditional rural. Why would the Planning Department staff show so much disrespect for our community?'
>
> **David McMahan**
> North Fairview resident

Planning Commission Vice Chairman Howard

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Moore suggested that part of the problem from the start was that Jennings' petition was linked with the petition advanced by the North Cane Creek community.

Thirteen parcels in Jennings' petition are also proposed in a North Cane Creek rezoning petition, in what has been called dueling rezoning requests.

The Planning Commission reviewed Jennings' petition and sent it to County Council for second reading. Planners deemed her request to be dominant over the North Cane Creek petition.

To Jennings' surprise, the Planning Department presented to Council her petition along with two other proposals.

One of the alternative proposals put into play a new Agricultural Residential District that did not exist when Jennings submitted her petition.

Jennings said the other proposal substituted the residential form for traditional rural in some parcels.

"Our community followed the instructions approved by County Council in the preparation of our zoning request," Jennings said. "We hope you will once again give our request your approval and send it back to County Council for second reading."

Jennings also read a statement from David McMahan, who has also been spearheading the North Fairview petition.

"My neighbors and I followed the law... we selected traditional rural," McMahan said in the statement. "Why would the Planning Department staff show so much disrespect for our community?"

Commission Chairman Tommy Abbott asked and received a motion to send the North Fairview petition to Council for second reading. It was approved.

Abbott also commented about the process.

"From the get-go we told the people of Oconee County that they could pick the way they wanted their property to be zoned," he said.

Moore also presented a motion asking that a letter be sent to Council requesting feedback to proposed changes to the zoning process made at a joint special meeting months ago. Moore's motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

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