West Union tables tourism plan

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND
THE JOURNAL

WEST UNION — West Union Town Council has decided to wait before getting on board with the countywide South Carolina Great Outdoors (SCGO) tourism plan after hearing a presentation Tuesday night.

Ken Sloan, president and CEO of the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the multi-municipality plan involves a $15,000 investment from the cities of Westminster, Seneca and Walhalla, and Sloan requested $2,500 from West Union to join the project and said the Town of Salem could also become involved at the same cost.

Sloan told council the tourism initiative would give the town a strategic plan for its ongoing projects, as well as branding with the idea of what the town would "look like when it grew up" in mind.

"In my opinion, everyone needs a strategic plan in place," Sloan said. "This is the opportunity to have a consultant come in at a very low price."

Councilman Chris Johnson asked Sloan if certain design standards for things like signs would take control away from town businesses if it elected to participate, but Sloan responded that those standards would ultimately be outlined by council.

"What we're trying to do as a county as far as design guidelines is give it a consistency of that natural, outdoor mountain-forest type of look," Sloan said. "Those would be the design standards we would be looking for in the county and in the town as well."



Sloan

Sloan said officials would prefer a decision by the town on the project by mid-September. Council decided to table the discussion on the matter, opting to put it on next month's agenda.

Council also addressed widening roads in town in response to previous resident complaints. Mayor Linda Oliver said she had researched the ownership of all roads and determined the road involved in the complaint — Anderson Street from Main Street to the 1200 block — is state-owned.

"The county didn't want us to mess with their roads, and the state didn't want us to mess with their roads," councilwoman Sharon Zimmerman said. "So it's only logical to give it to them and (tell them) people are complaining about that road that it needs to be updated."

Oliver agreed, saying she would ask if the town or the state could make a decision on the roadwork.

The council did take action on water line improvements, citing recent issues with the older pipes on S.C. Highway 11, Neville Street and Burns Mill Road.

"I know we've talked about since I've been on council that we need to re-do some water lines," Oliver said.

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Oliver told The Journal on Tuesday the town had a major water leak last year and existing water lines are old clay lines and have recently had a "band-aid" repair, but that is only a temporary solution.

"You know, we had that bad leak last winter, and it's not fixed 100 percent," Oliver said during the meeting. "I'm afraid if we don't (fix it) with it being the old pipe, we're going to be in trouble, paying out repairs all winter."

The council approved a plan for Goldie and Associates of Seneca to work on a proposal to receive grant funding for the water line improvement projects.

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