

Big things in the works for tiny Six Mile



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Well, it looks like the tiny town of Six Mile is going to get a grocery store, finally.

Meanwhile, the Clemson area has a new special events facility on the way. I decided to stop by the Pickens

County Planning Commission's meeting Monday night when I saw items on the agenda about two "large-scale" projects — one, a commercial/retail development that would be capable of generating more than 1,000 vehicle trips a day on State 183. That's a big traffic increase for that road.

The other was listed as a recreational facility and an RV park and campground. As it turned out, that was just a label that fits into the Planning Depart-

ment's bureaucratic nomenclature. It's actually an outdoor events center with cabins.

Both items got preliminary approval, after a considerable amount of discussion, input from interested parties who live near the sites, and a few discomfiting maneuvers into the outer limits of parliamentary procedure.

The commercial/retail project is

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actually a lot more than just a grocery store. The first thing that will go up is a Mexican restaurant.

The developer, landscape company owner Jarrett Jernigan, said he's talking with other businesses that may be interested in filling in a shopping center composed of free-standing buildings on a 30-acre site at the intersection of State 183 and State 133, a couple of miles north of Six Mile. He said it will not be a strip mall but more like a retail community.

"It's going to be nice," he said.

Whatever else goes in there, the grocery store is the big thing people in that area have been clamoring for. The nearest ones are in Pickens, Liberty or Clemson, at least 15 minutes away. Rumors have swirled around the community that Ingles or Walmart was coming, but

hopes have always been dashed.

Jernigan doesn't have a grocery tenant lined up but said he would put in a store himself if no grocers come forward. A pharmacist is working on getting financing for a store on the property, too, he said.

The shopping center also will provide jobs for people who live in the community, his wife, Bethany, said.

There's been a good bit of growth in that part of the county, particularly coming from the direction of Clemson, so he's convinced his project will fly. "I think it'll be a hit out there," he said.

I think it'll go nicely with the plans the town of Six Mile has for development of a historical park downtown. They're going to have a big ceremony on May 1 at 11 a.m. to dedicate historical markers along the ancient Cherokee Trading Path, which ran right down what is now Main Street.

The Planning Commission first voted to table the project until Jernigan

brought back more details. Then Chris Brink, the county's community development director, said those details wouldn't be available until much later in the design process.

So they backed up and rescinded that vote and then approved the project with the understanding that if the developer wants to make any substantial changes he'll need to come back before the commission.

Approvals from the state Department of Health and Environmental Control and the state Department of Transportation also will be needed for development of a septic system and turn lanes on the highway.

Meanwhile, Steve Peckham of Clemson is moving ahead with his plans for an events facility along a branch of Lake Hartwell off Pike Road, Central.

He told the commission that he has been diagnosed with cancer and doesn't know how much time he may have, but he wants to establish the events center

for his two special-needs daughters to operate as a home-based business. He plans to build his own home and cabins for his daughters and a son on the site.

He also envisions building up to 30 more cabins that could be rented out, although he said it could be decades before that many would be built.

The plan includes a pavilion and an amphitheater, aimed at playing host to weddings, parties, meetings and other special events.

The site is at least a quarter-mile from the nearest homes, and he said he would impose a curfew so as not to disturb any neighbors late at night. The commission required that a police officer or security person be on site to direct traffic for any events that would draw 100 or more vehicles.

Peckham will have to go before the county Board of Appeals to get variances that are needed. The residential part of the property also will have to be divided off from the business property.