

# Council set to take next step to stop

## Meeting set to begin at 6 p.m.

BY NORM CANNADA  
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Oconee County Council is set to vote tonight on the next step of an effort to stop a planned annexation of property inside Oconee County by the city of Clemson.

The council will consider second reading of an ordinance providing an incentive package for Lakeside Lodge Clemson that county officials have said is contingent on the developer withdrawing its request to be annexed by Clemson. The meeting is set to begin at 6 p.m. in council cham-

bers at the county administration offices, located at 415 S. Pine St.

County council unanimously approved first reading of the ordinance in title only on March 6 and will get a chance to look at the full written agreement tonight. If second reading is approved, a public hearing and final reading would likely be scheduled for April 3.

“Hopefully council moves forward with this second reading,” Oconee Economic Alliance executive director Richard Blackwell said. “I think by continuing to do it, it continues to work in

our favor regarding the annexation, essentially killing that issue.”

If the ordinance receives final approval in April, it would bring a successful end to a more than month-long effort by county officials to stop the

annexation of the development into the city of Clemson. County officials have said the county would lose about \$100,000 in accommodations taxes annually if the annexation went through.

But county administrator Scott Moulder and others have said they are also concerned the annex-

ation would allow Clemson more opportunities to annex property inside Oconee County. During a public hearing last month before Clemson City Council, planning and codes director Todd Steadman said the city had a comprehensive plan that includes annexation into Oconee County as a way to help the city grow.

Lakeside Lodge developer Steve Mudge asked the city for annexation, which was approved by the city planning commission Feb. 12, with the city council public hearing following on Feb. 19.

The next day, Oconee County Council voted to let county officials begin negotiating with the developer on an incentive



Blackwell

## Clemson annexation

package to prevent the annexation.

Lakeside Lodge is a planned \$45 million condominium project on nearly 8 acres of land adjacent to the under-construction Hartwell Village shopping center on U.S. Highway 123 near S.C. Highway 93.

While terms of the tax incentive agreement have not been released, Moulder said earlier this month it would be contingent on the developer dropping the annexation request and would require a minimum investment and a minimum job creation. The investment and job requirements are part of any incentive agreements in Oconee County, according to Moulder.

Mudge told The Journal last month he asked the county for tax incentives before going to Clemson for annexation. The city of Clemson has also offered tax incentives to Lakeside Lodge if it is annexed by the city.

The city of Clemson has yet to have the first of two required readings on the annexation ordinance. Mayor J.C. Cook told The Journal earlier this month that the ordinance was not on the agenda for the March 5 meeting at Mudge's request. The annexation request was not on the agenda for city council's March 19 meeting either.

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