

# Final vote on Lakeside Lodge planned in April

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WALHALLA — After approval of a proposed tax incentive agreement Tuesday night, Oconee County Council is likely one meeting away from achieving its goal of stopping a proposed annexation of property inside Oconee County into the city limits of Clemson.

After an executive session that included five agenda items, council unanimously approved second reading of an ordinance providing the incentives for Lakeside Lodge Clemson. A public hearing and final reading of the ordinance is scheduled for April 10.

There are still a few details to be worked out between now and then.

Council also authorized county attorney David Root to negotiate a Public Infrastructure Reimbursement Agreement with the Lakeside Lodge developers and attorneys.

"We're going to put it in

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final form, discuss the final terms, and that will be made available to the public and the council obviously before third reading and public hearing," Root said after the meeting.

If the ordinance clears final approval, 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.

Lakeside Lodge is a planned \$45 million

Clemson officials to consider annexation last month. He told The Journal he did so after county officials "declined" his request for tax incentives similar to ones offered by Clemson.

County officials have said the county would lose about \$100,000 a year in accommodations taxes if the annexation went through. They have also expressed concern the annexation would lead to more opportunities for Clemson to annex property inside Oconee County. During a public hearing Feb. 19 before Clemson City Council, city 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.

The day after the public hearing

in Clemson, Oconee County Council voted to let county officials begin negotiating with the developer on an incentive package to prevent the annexation. Oconee Economic Alliance executive director Richard Blackwell presented the proposal to Mudge and attorney Richard Few, and then a meeting between Mudge, Few and county officials followed.

Clemson did not vote on the first of two required public hearings to finalize annexation at that Feb. 19 meeting, and the issue has not been on the agenda in the two city council meetings since. Clemson Mayor J.C. Cook said the annexation was taken off the agenda for the March 4 city council meeting at Mudge's request.

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