

# Subdivision proposal draws ire of local business

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR  
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — The developer of a proposed 19-home Seneca subdivision blamed a frenzy of online misinformation for a variance request riddled with opposition from an adjacent family-owned business.

A request from Ridge-water Engineering and Surveying calling for a tweak from the 50-foot

right of way for the entrance into a future subdivision on Ellenburg Road in Seneca is up for a vote at tonight's meeting of the Oconee County Board of Zoning Appeals. The meeting agenda says the request is coming in because of "the end of the existing road not making full access into the property and only having a prescriptive ditch to ditch right-of-way." The

meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. in council chambers at 415 S. Pine St. in Walhalla.

## 'INACCURACIES'

Developer and Lake Keowee Real Estate broker in charge Andy Lee told The Journal on Monday a letter circulating from John's Marine Service was "full of inaccuracies."

A relative of Jimmy Ratliff, of John's Marine

Service, provided a letter last week about how the approval of a variance would negatively affect his business. The family-owned business has been on Ellenburg Road for more than 20 years and is located across from High Falls County Park on Lake Keowee. Ratliff owns property adjacent to the 15.37-acre plot of land

SEE PROPOSAL, PAGE A3

FROM PAGE A1

for the proposed subdivision and other land along nearby Knox Road.

"The property currently can be accessed, and the developer has always had access since his purchase in 2008. We are not trying to prevent the developer from improving his property," the letter reads. "However, the road and our business cannot handle the added traffic volume from 19 homes. The subdivision will also allow for vacation rentals, leading to even higher traffic levels. Safety will be an issue with cars and construction vehicles coming into a narrow bottleneck right by our shop."

In an in-person interview, Lee countered the letter's claims.

"What we're doing is actually providing him an additional 22 feet in front of the front of his business," Lee said. "It will give him more room than he presently has. ... We're improving the safety situation, over and above what it is now."

He said developers are offering to install a cul-de-sac so drivers can turn around. Lee also said county ordinances allow

for two homes to go on an acre of land, which could make for 30 homes in the proposed subdivision, but said planners weren't doing that.

"We have spent a lot of hours and a lot of man hours — having to work around all the misinformation that's out there," Lee said.

## LAND BOUGHT IN 2008

Online property records show Globe A SC Limited Partnership purchased the land from Crescent Communities SC LLC for \$1.8 million in December 2008.

The letter has been distributed to customers of John's Marine Service and area neighbors, one person told The Journal, and Ratliff said the developer tried to buy the family's property from his father to relocate the shop. Ratliff said that wasn't an option, "as 80 percent of our customers arrive by water." When reached by phone on Monday afternoon, Ratliff said the letter "states the facts."

Anyone wanting to sign up for public comment ahead of time can do so by emailing [planninginfo@oconeesc.com](mailto:planninginfo@oconeesc.com).

[rmorningstar@upstatetoday.com](mailto:rmorningstar@upstatetoday.com) | (864) 973-6685



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

A new subdivision proposed on Lake Keowee would have 19 homes, according to developers.

## PROPOSAL: Public comment available

A meeting notice for tonight's Oconee County Board of Zoning Appeals is posted outside a proposed Lake Keowee development on Ellenburg Road in Seneca.

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