

Extension plans in the works at Keowee Marina?

Loran Pointe residents talk development options

BY ANDREA KELLEY
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SENECA — Residents of the Loran Pointe neighborhood met at Lake Keowee Marina last week to hear a presentation about possible

development options on an adjoining property.

Ben Collins, owner of building company Pandacon, presented two conceptual designs — the first for a 180-unit hous-

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Engineer Lynn Solesbee and Ben Collins, owner of building company Pandacon, give a presentation last week to residents of the Loran Pointe neighborhood about a possible extension project at Lake Keowee Marina.

ing complex with around 300 parking spaces.

The second design would be an extension of Lake Keowee Marina, which is located on the north side of Loran Pointe.

Four dry storage buildings would hold 100 boats, and the marina's service center would also move to the new property, but the land would need to be rezoned to commercial for the project to be a viable option.

The 33-acre property along Old Salem Road is

currently zoned RM-16, which the city of Seneca's zoning ordinance says is reserved for high-density residential purposes.

"The regulations which apply within this district are designed ... to

discourage unwarranted encroachment of commercial, industrial, or other uses capable of adversely affecting the residential character of the district," the ordinance says.

Residents voiced con-

cerns along those lines throughout the presentation, with questions ranging from how bright the overnight lighting would be around the storage area to how much of the buildings would be seen from the road.

One man asked if people would be allowed to enter the storage area and get their boats out at all hours of the day or night.

Marina owner Bart Schile said the service center would continue to operate on a 9 a.m.-5 p.m. schedule, and dry storage would most likely be gated

and accessible via key code.

"We rent dry storage now and that doesn't happen, or it doesn't happen frequently," Schile said. "It's gated up there right now, and you might have some of the bass people that come in early in the morning, we have two of them that are up there. Most of the people are coming in that you see at the current dry storage is before dark. It's rare to have anybody coming in later than that."

TRAFFIC FLOW

Multiple residents were worried an increase in traffic from the housing development would strain an already overused road, and one man asked if officials planned to apply for a traffic light where Old Salem Road meets U.S. Highway 123.

Engineer Lynn Solesbee said the South Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) would require him to conduct a traffic study.

"Who knows what the traffic study would show," he said. "I'm not familiar enough with traffic patterns in this area, but it would have to warrant a signal, or even if everybody and their grandma wanted it, DOT would not allow it."

Collins said the land is "going to have to be used," it's just a matter of which project to chase.

"(The housing development) would absolutely be — I'm not trying to scare you, because they always figure out a way to manage traffic — but this

would be a huge increase in traffic," he said.

Collins said the marina storage plan wouldn't bring an increase in traffic because it would be relocating the shop and storage buildings already on the road.

Solesbee added that the part of the road from Loran Pointe to the marina could see a drop in traffic, and the rest should stay the same.

"Across the front of (the property) and down to 123, I don't think there'll be a material change in traffic," he said. "You're just moving an existing facility."

Later in the meeting, Collins asked for a show of hands for each project to gauge the neighborhood's opinion. Approximately two-thirds of the residents in attendance voted in favor of the marina project.

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