

Problems exist'

Residents still concerned about planned 100-acre development after meeting

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SENECA — Less than three weeks before a controversial development is scheduled to go to the Seneca Planning Commission for a vote, residents living in surrounding neighborhoods say

they are still concerned about how the plans would impact traffic and other concerns in their communities.

Residents in the community near the proposed development met last week with Josh

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Richardson, vice president for real estate investments and development for the Forestar Group. Forestar is overseeing plans to develop a little less than 100 acres into single-family homes and townhomes.

The development would border Frontage Road, Knollwood Drive, Woodcreek Drive and Queen Annes Lane. The Seneca Planning Commission tabled the rezoning request in May. It is set to be back on the commission's agenda at its next meeting on July 18, according to city planning and development director Ed Halbig. If approved, it would have to be signed off in two readings of city council.

Residents who attended last week's meeting at the Shaver Recreation Complex said it did little to alleviate their concerns.

John Johnston said the impact of traffic and overall density are his biggest concerns.

"They consider their plan to be the 'sweet spot' where they can make the maximum profit," Johnson wrote in an assessment of last week's meeting to the communities near the proposed development. "They have no plans to do anything about traffic problems. They simply deny that the problems exist. If the council approves the current rezoning request as it stands, the surrounding communities will inherit the resulting mess."

He added the traffic would be impacted by the proposed density, which he estimated at between 345-370 units, and noted

"the traffic study lists 245 townhomes and 83 single-family units."

"It is confusing, but even the smallest number is a lot of units," Johnson said.

NO COMPROMISE?

Johnson added he believed Richardson was unwilling to compromise with the concerned residents.

"Several attendees made pleas for the developers to consider building fewer units to moderate the impact on adjoining communities," Johnson said. "No one expects the property to remain undeveloped. However, it does seem reasonable to ask that development be at least somewhat consistent with the (city of Seneca) Comprehensive Plan Update of 2016. Forestar showed zero interest in any compromise."

Johnson said Keowee Plantation would be more affected by the proposed development than many of the other neighboring communities. Keowee Plantation resident Gordon Howard listed several concerns about the Forestar proposal after last week's meeting, including environmental and noise issues.

Howard said environmental concerns include "erosion with the siltation of our coves from construction and subsequent land use," he said, adding, "the development, as planned, will require massive alteration (grading, filling, etc.) as this is a high relief property."

He listed polluting the ground water and surface water "that enters our coves via Bold Creek and Keowee Creek" as another

er concern, along with "noise intrusion, as the high-density townhouses are packed up against the site's border with Keowee Plantation with insufficient buffer zones."

Howard also said there is a potential for trespassing and loss of privacy due to lack of fences and "sewage

pollution of surface and ground water from pump (lift) station(s) failures and sewer line leaks."

Richardson didn't respond to a message left with his office by The Journal seeking comment on residents' concerns.