

# Pickens Co. Council extends SC Highway 11 moratorium

## Ordinance to establish standards and limitations on future development put on hold for 90 days

BY GREG OLIVER  
THE JOURNAL

PICKENS — Pickens County Council has put a hold on an ordinance on future development along the S.C. Highway 11 corridor in the county so it can be studied more.

"I don't think we're ready to vote yet — we really haven't had a chance to go through and look at it yet," Councilman Trey Whitehurst said before a unanimous council vote to table

second reading in August. "There are, in my eyes, some contradictions that don't make sense and some unclear stuff. I don't think we're ready to come out of committee yet to vote on this."

Councilman Roy Costner III agreed, but added he was conflicted on the issue.

"There's a lot we need to talk about," Costner said. "This is something that should have been initiated a long time ago as having these discussions. I'm conflicted because I don't want to rush into it."

According to the ordinance, the Highway 11 corridor is made up of the area 1,000 feet from the center line in either direction along the distance from its eastern boundary at the county line with Greenville County to the Oconee County boundary. The area is more than 20 linear miles.

Among its stipulations are that all new commercial, residential and industrial development on Highway 11 is prohibited except for the following:

- Single-family residential construction on a parcel at least 5 acres in size;
- Renovation, maintenance and expansion of existing commercial uses provided that any portion of such renovation and expansion shall not encroach further toward Highway 11; and

- Agritourism development as defined by the South Carolina Agritourism Society.

The ordinance also says compliance with regulations is required before the issuance of any building, electrical, storm-water, development or land use permit, unless it is demonstrated that work necessary to bring the parcel into compliance will be undertaken simultaneously with a development, rehabilitation, remodeling or redevelopment project. All proposed

development on Highway 11 must be approved by the Pickens County Planning Commission.

County Councilman Alex Saitta proposed the existing moratorium on development, which had been set to end Sept. 1, be extended for 90 days and sent back to committee. Costner then made a substitute motion the moratorium be extended 90 days or third reading, whichever comes first. Council unanimously approved the substitute motion and amendment.

Saitta said he talked to numerous residents along Highway 11, including knocking "on a lot

of doors," and found the overwhelming majority wanted to keep that area as is.

"The reasoning was varied, but what it came down to was that it was a scenic highway and we need to protect it," Saitta said. "In 1994, when it was made a scenic highway, the state should have put those regulations in but didn't. So it's left upon us now."

Saitta added that extension of the moratorium is needed to examine the language of the ordinance more closely.

"The idea that it allows a 35-foot-high building on a scenic highway kind of defeats the purpose of a scenic highway," Saitta said.

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**Alex Saitta**

Pickens County councilman