

# Revised rezoning request headed back to Seneca City council this month

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SENECA — A rezoning request, which was sent back to the Seneca Planning Commission in November, is expected to return to Seneca City Council this month after the applicant made changes before resubmitting it to the commission for another vote in December.

The commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval to council on the revised rezoning request from Lake Keowee Marina and property owner LBS Assets LLC.

The original request was supposed to go to council last month, but was tabled after city administrator Scott Moulder said another portion of the same property was included in a second rezoning request.

"I would like us to see more of a planned development on the entire property with a layout and or some type of design element that indicates what the entire acreage is going to be used for," he said in November.

At the Dec. 19 meeting, zoning administrator Tracy Chapman said the request includes 11.63 acres requested to be rezoned from residential multi-family (RM-16) to planned development commercial (PDC) to construct four commercial dry storage buildings "for boats and watercraft" and one office and maintenance facility for watercraft and land for recreational vehicle and

boat trailer parking. Another 2.18 acres was presented to be rezoned from R-16 to R-20 (single-family residential), but the rest of the property wasn't included in the request.

"The analysis is the application does not meet the intent set forth by city council at their November meeting in that it does not address the whole of the property," she said. "The applicants have expressed that they do not wish to seek rezoning on the remaining acreage currently zoned RM-16."

She added staff recommends "PDC is appropriate choice to be considered for a commercial rezoning the rezoning request of R-20" and that the applicant "should consider including covenants and restrictions for both the R-20 zoning and the remaining RM-16 zoning."

Construction manager Greg Carpenter said the owners have added three residential lots "at the request of people in the community and community leaders to help provide another buffer" between the commercial development and the neighborhood.

## SPEAKING OUT

Cliff Henry, a Loran Pointe resident, was one of three people speaking against the project, saying the proposed development would impact residents with increased traffic noise and "unsightly buildings."

"I think it would be a

terrible precedent to set to allow this particular residential property to be rezoned to commercial," he said. "I think that many of the older homes along Old Salem Road that sit on several acres are old houses ... and would immediately recognize that their property would be far more valuable if they rezone to commercial. Once you say 'yes' to this large commercial expansion, how can you say 'no' to a small, family-owned business? I wouldn't be surprised if most of Old Salem Road becomes a commercial strip."

Beverly Zeabart said a nearby boat storage business said it has a "5-mile non-compete clause" and is only 2.2 miles from the proposed development. She said she is also concerned about how it would affect her neighborhood.

"This is prime property we're talking about," she said. "A lot of residents would like to retire near or around the lake. It has helped the population of the city of Seneca."

Lynell Hecht, a Loran Pointe resident, said there

has been "a rumor" the developer might turn the property into "low-income housing" if the city doesn't approve the plan.

"It's just a rumor ... that if we don't approve this, or we don't go along with this, we're going to get 250 to 500 units of low-income housing," she said. "I don't think that is likely for that area, but that's the rumor that's been floated to residents around, so then people are like, 'Oh gosh, well, we would much rather have this. That's the lesser of two evils.' ... I'm all for them making money and doing what they want to. I just do not think what they're proposing is appropriate for the area."

Commission chairman Barry Duvall, who only votes in the event of a tie, didn't vote in this case, but did say the revised plan is a "much better" plan than the earlier one also approved by the commission.

The rezoning request is expected to go before city council for first reading on Jan. 10.