

2020 AQD ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY

Advocates for Quality Development, Inc. (AQD) held its annual meeting Saturday, November 7, 2020, at 10 a.m. Due to COVID-19 safety concerns for members, the 2020 meeting was conducted via Zoom, and some 70 individuals registered to attend the meeting.

Quorum and Election. A combination of emailed and mailed paper proxy/ballots established the meeting quorum and elected two Directors to the Board. Jim Codner was reelected to serve a new term, while Sharon Hamilton assumed the Director spot vacated by retiring Director Jim Schoonover. The Board thanked Chuck Smith and Jim Schoonover for the five years they represented AQD on the Duke Relicensing Stakeholder team.

PowerPoint. The meeting PowerPoint shows the complete agenda.

Keynote Speakers. Three guest speakers shared the program. **Oconee County** speakers included **Adam Chapman, Planning Director**, and **John Elliott, District 1 Council Representative**. They shared thoughts on planning, responsible growth and the special challenges posed by the pandemic and tornado damage. **Alan Stuart, Senior Project Manager, Duke Energy**, discussed programs & policies related to Lakes Jocassee and Keowee. Each of the speakers also addressed questions emailed in advance by members.

HERE ARE AQD INTEREST AREA REPORTS.

These were sent to members in advance of the meeting:

Oconee County Planning Commission, County Council— The Planning Commission (PC) and County Council have completed and implemented the 10-year Comprehensive Plan. PC recently completed a Recreational Vehicle Park ordinance, which will bring some badly needed oversight to these facilities. They are in the final stages of an ordinance to require buffer screening between non-compatible property uses (i.e. commercial and residential) and have initiated work on a junkyard ordinance. Council recently tasked PC with developing an impact fee ordinance that would require developers to include funds in their projects to offset attendant infrastructure costs. This major and complex effort will take considerable time to complete. Finally, Council's Planning and Economic Development Committee is working with Planning Department and PC to develop corridor standards to guide commercial development on key highways (i.e. US 123 and SC 28) as well as scenic byways such as SC130, SC188, and SC183. Key elements will cover highway safety design, building design, and signage.

Oconee County Board of Zoning Appeals— Representatives of AQD spoke at BZA meetings to oppose an exception that would have allowed a proposed development on Hwy. 130, across from Keowee I, II, and III subdivisions, to erect commercial structures within the protected Lake Overlay. The BZA denied the request, but the developer may return with modified plans. AQD believes preservation of Lake Overlay protections is one of the County's most important land planning and lake preservation measures.

Pickens County Planning Commission— Due to COVID-19, work on the 10-Year Comprehensive Plan has stalled. AQD's two leaders (Pickens Cty residents) will attend/monitor when work resumes.

Lake Keowee Source Water Protection Team— AQD is represented on this team by Rob Aulebach and Jim Schoonover. LKSWPT is focused on preserving our pristine Lake Keowee and Jocassee Watersheds. These efforts from its inception in 2017 have focused on identifying and monitoring the water quality of the two lakes. The LKSWPT was formed and is funded by Duke Energy. The team's specific objective is to undertake activities to protect, maintain and improve water quality in the watershed by addressing both existing water quality issues and also identifying problems that could occur as the area continues to develop. Currently, they are working on a Septic repair and maintenance program for the Cane Creek and Little Cane Creek area that would provide financial assistance to homeowners.

Habitat Enhancement Program (HEP)— AQD rep Sue Williams sits on the HEP Committee that evaluates proposals funded in large part by the HEP surcharges Duke Energy collects for dock & riprap permits. In 2020, only two proposals were submitted. They'll be evaluated this fall. They are:

- The SC Dept. of Natural Resources, S.C. Trout Unlimited, and Jennings Environmental propose to stabilize 900 feet of Eastatoc Creek in Pickens County, and enhance the stream's pattern and profile to reduce erosion, improve flood plain function and riparian habitat, and enhance angling and recreational opportunities. The \$190,000 request would be matched by the sponsors.
- Naturaland Trust's proposal requests \$150,000 to complete the purchase of a 238-acre Chapman Bridge Oconee Bell Preserve in Oconee County. The property boasts a Lake Keowee tributary, habitat for endangered Oconee Bells and mature forestland. The trust and other donors will provide the remainder of the \$883,125 purchase price.

Oconee County Infrastructure— AQD rep Bob Royer reports limited attendance at 2020 sewer meetings due to COVID-19. The Sewer South project is getting underway to sewer the southern portion of Oconee County plus Exits 1 & 2 on I-85. The focus is currently on securing property easements and finalizing the route to bury pipe and house pump stations. Construction, originally scheduled to start in November but likely delayed, is expected to take about 13 months. Project cost is estimated at just under \$6 million dollars. There is concern about rapid expansion on the East side of the county being driven by student housing and new and expanded businesses. Discussions have been proposed between the Sewer commission, the City of Seneca and Oconee County government to plan for the growth and expansion of all utilities.