



**Advocates for
Quality Development**

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*Advocating for
sound land planning
that protects
what we treasure
as we prepare
for the future.*

*AQD's unpaid
volunteers attend
scores of meetings &
forums to represent
property owner views
on key land &
lake use issues.*

More News

Page 2:

- ✿ **Habitat Grants**
- ✿ **Developments, Sales Trends**
- ✿ **Annual Meeting**

Page 3:

- ✿ **Duke Progress on Action Items**
- ✿ **Growth Impacts Sewer System**

Page 4:

- ✿ **Elections**
- ✿ **Public Hearings**
- ✿ **AQD Renewals**

Design Standards Help Address Community Concerns

The Dollar General Store, located on Ebenezer Rd. near the Hwy. 188 intersection, doesn't look like the typical Dollar General built elsewhere in Oconee County. The facade features cultured stone and brick, while monument-style signage is set in a landscaped stretch of grass and plants. Even its back-of-store trash receptacles are enclosed.

Why the difference?

design, he drew up a proposal incorporating its concepts.

Moral of the Story

While those objecting to any store lost, the compromise is a win. That's why AQD believes Oconee County should codify a set of design standards for developers to reference when building along high-visibility corridors like Hwy. 123. However, County Council has told the Planning



ABOVE: The design of this Dollar General Store, located on Ebenezer Road, reflects modifications suggested at Board of Zoning Appeal hearings.

Size Mandates Hearing

This store sits within an area zoned Traditional Rural, a category with zero design standards. But, since the proposed structure exceeded a 5,000-square-foot size limit, the Board of Zoning Appeals had to grant a Special Exception.

An initial hearing attracted dozens of neighbors, most opposing the exception. While it was ultimately granted, the BZA asked the contractor to address community concerns about the building's appearance at this high-visibility site. Though willing, the contractor needed insight as to what might make the building palatable.

After viewing photos illustrating an acceptable

Commission it has zero interest in design or corridor standards beyond traffic.

"It's a shame," says one citizen, who has offered varied options to meet the need. "Most developers will spend a few extra dollars to make neighbors happy. It's good business. But contractors need a roadmap to accomplish that."

BELOW: This design is typical of Dollar General Stores built without the community having any input regarding appearance.



Habitat Grants

Duke's Habitat Enhancement Program (HEP), funded by Lake Keowee Permit fees and Duke contributions, awarded three grants in 2017, its third year of operation.

HEP's goal is "to create, enhance, and protect aquatic and wildlife habitat within the Project Boundaries." That includes lake reservoirs, islands, and watershed that drains into the lakes.



Sue Williams, AQD's rep on the HEP grant review panel, says the three grant awards included two 2017 applications and one 2016 hold-over. Recipients may contribute matching funds, volunteer labor, or both.

During 2017, Duke Energy met its \$1 million HEP funding commitment. Since it's not obligated to make added contributions, the \$500 HEP fees assessed when Duke issues dock & shoreline permits will provide future funding. These fees currently yield ~\$30,000 per quarter, but will decline as the area builds out.

Williams hopes to see more 2018 applications. To increase awareness of program potential, the Stakeholders have recommended signage at sites receiving HEP grants.

Approved 2017 Grants

- ◀ \$50,000 to the City of Seneca for enhanced shoreline habitat adjacent to its water treatment plant.
- ◀ \$16,390 to FOLKS to install more osprey platforms & fish attractors.
- ◀ \$10,758.94 to Oconee County for added shoreline restoration at South Cove County Park.

Upstate Real Estate Trends, New Lake Developments

During 2017, four Lake Keowee waterfront communities were either introduced or expanded.

Here's the community list with lot and acreage totals:

- ◆ Harbor Pointe – 151 Lots/ 297 acres
- ◆ Timber Cove (was Nine Points) – 9 Lots/12 acres
- ◆ The Peninsula (was Sunset Island) – 26 Lots/37 acres
- ◆ Peninsula Shore – 10 Lots/ 11 acres
- ◆ **Total Lots Included – 196**
- ◆ **Total Acres Included – 356**

Existing Home Sales

The real estate market improved for waterfront & interior homes during the year. Lots turned in respectable sales.

Statistics for 2017

- * Keowee Lake home sales up 28% over 2016, setting a new dollar record. This was the sixth consecutive year to set a new record.
- * 215 waterfront homes sold with average price of about \$743,000.
- * 153 interior homes sold at an average price of nearly \$314,000.
- * 185 lots were sold at an average price of about \$251,000, though some late sales of >\$500,000 impacted the average.

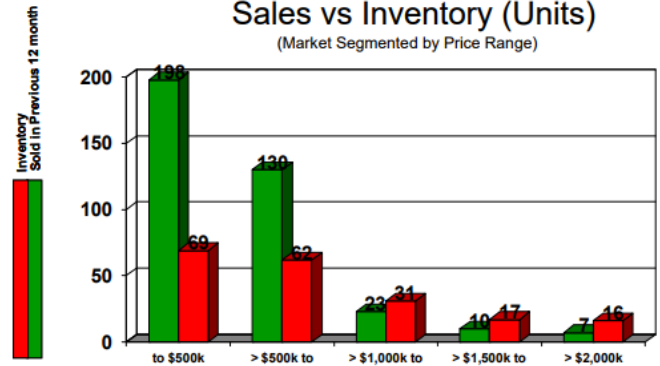
Reduced inventory favors sellers of houses priced <\$1.15 million. Homes offered <\$1 million can be absorbed in 6 months or less.

Chart & sales info courtesy of Eldon Blust, Assoc. Broker, 1st Choice Realty

Inventory by Price Segment

Sales vs Inventory (Units)

(Market Segmented by Price Range)



Annual Meeting/Election

Advocates for Quality Development held its 2017 Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 4. If you didn't attend, you missed a highly interesting and informative session. AQD Board members provided updates on our efforts related to land use planning, zoning, Habitat Enhancement Program, lake real estate developments, and infrastructure. Our return guest speakers, Alan Stuart and Brett Garrison, Duke Energy, updated us on policies related to upstate lake shorelines and dock installations.

We live in a very special area, one that AQD continues to work to protect.

So next fall when the AQD Annual Meeting notice appears in your

mailbox, please plan to join us to hear about all of the areas we work in to fulfill our mission on your behalf.

Board Election, 2018 Officers

Ed Lengyel and Jim Codner were re-elected to the Board. Continuing Board members are: Rob Aulebach, Gary Owens, Bob Royer, Jim Schoonover, and Sue Williams. Our Board members come from six Oconee & Pickens neighborhoods.

AQD Officers for 2018:

President, Ed Lengyel
 Vice President, Gary Owens
 Secretary, Gary Savercool
 Treasurer, Phil Soper

To contact the Board, email:

office@AQDUpstate.com.

Duke Energy Guest Speakers Offer Updates on License Implementation

Alan Stuart, Senior Project Manager, Duke Energy, returned for a second consecutive November to address our Advocates for Quality Development (AQD) annual meeting. This time Stuart shared the podium with Brett Garrison, Lake Services Representative.

Together the guests provided an informative update on Duke's progress in implementing relicensing agreement action items.

Lake Levels/Drought

Stuart expects Duke to meet the Dec. 31, 2019 deadline to complete hydro plant pump modifications that will let it operate its nuclear power plant with the Lake Keowee level up to 10 feet below full pool. During extreme Stage 4 drought, Duke may stop releasing water downstream before the lake reaches this critical limit. However, evaporation & leakage could still lower it the full 10 feet.

Recreation/Environment

Several Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee access areas are being upgraded, while master plans have

been drawn for new access areas at High Falls II and Fall Creek. Sites receiving upgrades include Devils Fork and Keowee-Toxaway State Parks, the World of Energy access area, and Mile Creek County Park.

On the environmental front, Duke is adjusting operations to stabilize lake



ABOVE: This is a model of the 10 cabins to be built at Mile Creek County Park in Pickens County.

levels during bass spawning season. It's also trying varied measures to eradicate hydrilla, an invasive aquatic plant that adversely affects water quality. It is providing funds for solid-waste prevention/education programs.

Shoreline Management

Garrison says by early November his team had already processed 780 permit applications, 25% more than in 2016, due to Reach Deeper Water permit demand. While Duke will accept these dock extension applications until 2020, new requests will require payment of both permit (\$350) & Habitat Enhancement Program (\$500) fees. Approved applicants have two years to complete the work.

Dock Maintenance Permits

Garrison addressed confusion about when dock owners must seek permits to perform maintenance on existing docks. His answer? No permit needed for cosmetic repairs such as cleaning/painting. But he suggests you ask if any repair could be considered structural. If Duke decides a permit is needed, the application fee is \$350. (The HEP fee is waived.)

He added repairs required due to storm damage are exempt from all fees but an application is still needed.

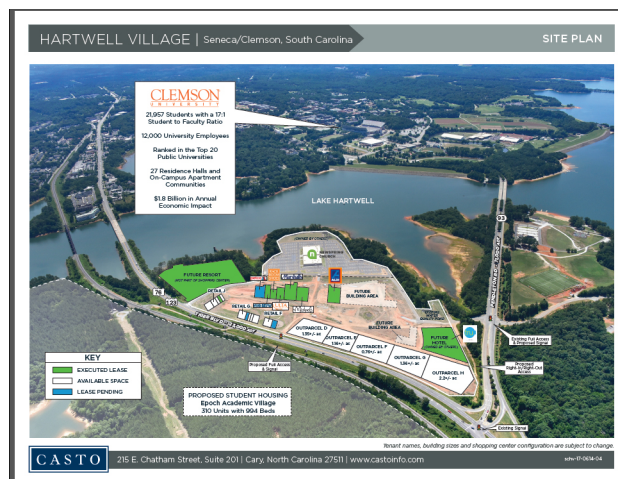
Garrison also noted no fees are charged for applications to use bio-engineering to stabilize shoreline.

Growth Impacts Oconee Sewer Capacity

Development of two parcels that adjoin Lake Hartwell are requiring expanded sewer system capacity. The two projects sit on opposite sides of Hwy. 123 just before it crosses the bridge to Clemson.

Construction of a variety of commercial buildings on the 45.5-acre Hartwell Village site is underway. Its developer has agreed to pay the Oconee County Sewer Commission to reserve 300,000 gallons-per-day of sewage capacity. This will max out Coneross Sewer Plant capacity.

Across 123, Clemson EPIC Academic Village plans some 290 housing units, with nearly 1,000 beds. Units include apartments, cottages and



townhouses. Fees charged to reserve added sewer treatment capacity will be used to pay for the Coneross plant's expansion.

In other 2017 infrastructure news, Oconee County Council paid the Sewer Commission \$1.9 million to settle a dispute. Studies also are underway regarding expansion of the sewer system in southern Oconee County beyond service to the I-85 commerce park.

An AQD representative regularly attends Sewer Commission meetings.

Vote This June 12th County Primaries Matter

Voters who move to South Carolina from other states may not realize how important party primaries are in determining who will represent them in local and state government.

For example, in Oconee County, the winner of the June 12th party primary may well appear on the November 8th general election ballot as the uncontested candidate.

This means voters need to find out what positions primary candidates have on policies they care about. For most AQD members, a key issue is their views on future planning to preserve what makes our county a good place to live, work, and retire.

Informative Forums

One way to learn candidate views is to attend forums hosted by groups such as the League of Women Voters.

This year, County Council seats in Districts I and III are up for election.

District I voters live in many communities adjoining Lake Keowee. The list of neighborhoods includes large developments such as Keowee Key, Waterford, and Waterside Crossing. District I also includes Salem.



District III encompasses primarily the City of Seneca and Utica.

If you're new here, register to vote with the Oconee County Voter Registration & Election Office (864-638-4196).

Absentee Ballots

Will you be out of town on June 12?

It's so easy to vote absentee there's no excuse. Absentee balloting is allowed for 16 reasons. Common ones include:

You're age 65 or older. You'll be on vacation or your job will interfere with your voting on Election Day. You're physically disabled or care for someone who is sick or disabled.

Absentee ballot applications & voter registration forms can be downloaded online. To print these forms, go to www.scvotes.org or call (864) 638-4196 to have them mailed to you.

If you plan to mail your absentee application and your ballot, allow at least 7 days for the Registrar to process your application, mail you a ballot, and for you to mail back your ballot to arrive on or before Election Day. Starting the process 2-3 weeks ahead is even better.

**There's no excuse
for not voting!!!**

Notification of Zoning Hearings

AQD has long championed better communication methods to ensure property owners receive adequate notice of upcoming hearings by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA).

The BZA holds hearings on property owners who are seeking:

- ◆ A variance from County standards (for example, to encroach on a setback).
- ◆ A Special Exception to allow a use that's not normally allowed within a given zoning district (for instance a non-residential use in the Lake Overlay.)

In such instances, the BZA is charged with giving consideration to both the petitioners and neighboring property owners who support or object to proposed changes.

However, if neighbors are unaware of upcoming hearings, their right to express their views disappears. AQD believes that posting generic notices of a Public Hearing is inadequate.

Recognizing the current problem, County Council created a committee to study notification procedures.

Two AQD members have been named citizen representatives on the committee.

AQD Membership Form

Join AQD or renew your membership today! Choose the desired membership type on the form below. Family Members be sure to list everyone in your household. Memberships may be canceled at any time. However, contributions are nonrefundable. Though Advocates for Quality Development, Inc., is a nonprofit corporation, contributions are NOT tax-deductible.

Make checks payable to AQD. Return form to AQD, P.O. Box 802, Seneca, S.C. 29679

NAME(S) _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE:

NEIGHBORHOOD _____

INDIVIDUAL \$30 FAMILY \$50
 DONOR \$100 HOA/BUSINESS \$100

COMMENTS: _____

ADDITIONAL DONATIONS WELCOME!
