

Residents cool to planners' suggestions

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Zoning, development up for debate among new, established residents

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Lake Robinson area residents are facing such fundamental questions as: "What do we want this region to be like 15, 10 years from now?"

That is the opinion of Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever.

"Do we want to become another Atlanta, or do we want to take a different path and grow and attract businesses without becoming a vast urbanized region?" he asked.

Wyche said he hopes residents will study carefully a recently completed growth and land-use report.

"Sooner, rather than later, I hope the citizens in the area will be willing to sit down and have a candid, open discussion about the future and what they want to see happen in the Lake Robinson area," he said.

But the report hasn't been received well in many homes across the Lake Robinson region.

Bob Miller, who lives near Tigerville, said it seemed as if people who supported the study wanted to prevent

residents from developing their land.

"Those people around Lake Robinson who own a half acre of land were wanting to come up here and tell me what I can do with my 100 acres," he said.

"They came up here and bought their little house in the country on a half acre, and they don't want nobody else up here buying themselves a house. That's the part that upset us."

The report lists possible options to control development, such as conservation easements, transfer of development rights, cluster developments, public parks and open-space programs.

And it brought up the prospect of zoning the uses of land.

Tripp Muldrow, whose firm completed the study, said one of its most surprising findings was that residents wanted to be left alone.

The company found a lack of interest in discussing issues concerning the rapid growth.

Most residents who attended public meetings held as part of the study were op-



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posed to any discussion about restricting the use of land.

Residents in the growing number of new subdivisions around the lake were "poorly represented" at the meetings, the study said.

Wyche said there was a lot of misunderstanding about the project. He said the study lacked sufficient money to fully explain its purpose to residents.

Miller said there were about 10 people at the meetings in support of the study, while about 290 were against it.

Many of those opposed have lived in the area for many years, if not all of their lives, Miller said. "We are happy with the way things are. The area around Lake Robinson is the area that is really growing by leaps and

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bounds," he said.

"From where I live and from my standpoint, that doesn't impact me any more than what's going on at Woodruff Road or something. I don't go through there but maybe once a month."

Muldrow said eventually the influx into the lake area will bring efforts to incorporate regions or to begin more planning for land uses.

"There's going to be a breaking point," Muldrow said.

Tom Faulkner, who lives on Lake Robinson, said there is an interest among some residents to accommodate growth while preserving the quality of life.

"I anticipate a number of us will continue to pursue organizing the property owners, homeowners and renters who are in the vicinity of the lake who are sympathetic to those kinds of interests and concerns," he said.

"The study becomes a

springboard for our next step, which is to distribute this study to public officials and others in our community who are interested in what is going on up there and who need a foundation from which they can make decisions."

But any kind of plan must respect and be built around peoples' concern and pride in their individual property rights, Faulkner said.

Greenville County Councilman Joe Dill said people in northern Greenville County are very protective of their property, and "they're not going to give in to people who want to tell them what they can and cannot do with their land."

Neighborhoods wanting options such as zoning, incorporation or any plan for growth need to settle opposition in their community before approaching the County Council, he said.

Muldrow said his company has promised residents it won't do another study of this sort without more support from the community.

"Twenty years from now when State 414 looks like Woodruff Road and there is a Wal-Mart and malls, Tigerville becomes a city and all that stuff, we may do something," he said.