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Planning commission says no to luxury RV park

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The Spartanburg County Planning Commission turned down a proposal that would have built more than 230 lots for recreational vehicles in northern Spartanburg County.

The commission voted 5-2 to reject the plan for the Carolina RV Resort, on West Frontage Road, near the intersection of I-26 and Highway 11.

While the public hearing, which lasted more than an hour, focused on several issues concerning residents of the largely rural Campobello area, the main problem was the quality of West Frontage Road, a county-maintained road that has a posted weight limit of four tons per axle because of its age and poor quality. The high-end RVs that would frequent the Carolina RV Resort carry an average of about 10 tons per axle, and commissioners expressed concern about approving a plan that would go directly against state law.

After the hearing, two of the developers, Chuck Piazza and Gus Meyers, said they would continue to pursue the project, and might try to find a way to improve the quality of West Frontage Road.

"Obviously we're very disappointed in the outcome," Piazza said. "The bunch I'm associated with, we're not quitters. There are some other options, and we'll look at them."

For the roughly 20 neighbors who showed up in opposition to the plan, the defeat of the plan was a pleasant outcome, said Pat Knie, a Spartanburg lawyer who lives on property adjacent to the proposed resort.



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Pat Knie shows a weight limit photo to the county planning commission on Tuesday.

"In the end, I think that the planning commission made the right decisions for the right reasons," Knie said. He added, "But I realize that this isn't over, that there's a chance they'll come back and do something else and have some other idea."

Opponents who spoke cited concerns about water and sewer runoff, the potential for an eyesore if the development did not pan out, and about the affect of the resort on an area that is largely rural and residential.

Don McDonald, who lives on land behind the proposed park that his wife's family has owned for more than 60 years, said that his property includes a gully where the RV park's sewer could end up, and a well where he gets his water.

"This goes right into my backyard," McDonald said.

The developers said they paid over \$1 million for the 73 acres, and would get water from the Inman-Campobello Water District. The plan was to allow owners of high-end RVs - many of which are built on bus chassis and range in price from \$200,000 to \$2 million - to purchase 99-year leases on 233 lots, which would go for about \$50,000 each and include a yard and a parking pad for the motorhome.

Those 99-year leases were necessary for the resort to fall under the county's restrictions for RV resorts, the developers said, instead of those for subdivisions.

Whit Kennedy, chairman of the planning commission, said that he was concerned that those arrangements could be abused by developers.

West Frontage Road was the deciding issue, though, and one that commissioner E. Kent Miller said near the end of the hearing needed to be looked at by the county.

"The county makes developers build residential subdivision roads at a far higher standard than exists in this road we have here," Miller said.