

Pickens County Council Work Session

June 29, 2026

6:30 p.m.

County Council met in a work session, in the Main Conference Room of the County Administration Facility, with Councilman Alex Saitta presiding. Final agendas, bearing date, time, and location of meeting were emailed to members of council and local news media on June 25, 2026.

Council Members in Attendance:

Alex Saitta, Chairman

Chris Lollis, Vice Chairman

Dale Holloway, Vice Chairman Pro-Tem

Claiborne Linvill

Scott Lang

Council Members Absent

Chris Bowers

Staff in Attendance:

Ken Roper, County Administrator

Jessica Varney, Clerk to Council

Allison Fowler, Assistant Administrator

Rodney Robinson, Public Works Director

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Alex Saitta called the work session of June 29, 2026, to order and welcomed those in attendance. Councilor Dale Holloway led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

- A) Second reading of an Ordinance No. 684 establishing a Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee overlay district to protect water quality, conserve natural resources, safeguard drinking water and other matters related thereto.**
- a. Administrator Roper recognized Assistant Administrator Allison Fowler to give an overview of the changes to the ordinance based on the feedback from Council at the June 15, 2026 Work Session, including:
 - a) Enhanced language of the purpose and intent statement.
 - b) Altered definition of water-enhanced use for clarity.
 - c) Added a definition of view lanes, drawing from Kershaw's Ordinance.
 - d) Changed Section 6 to better define light industrial uses and removed single-family attached (how duplexes and townhomes are defined in UDSO).
 - e) Altered language for impervious surface areas.
 - f) Changed language for landscaping and buffering for clarity.
 - g) Added language for forestry and timbering, referring to Forestry Commission.
 - h) Added language for pet waste stations.
 - i) Added language about septic systems.
 - j) Building height stipulations pulled from Oconee's Ordinance.
 - b. Chairman Saitta opened the floor for questions.

- a) Councilor Holloway asked could there be a stipulation for structure loss? Yes, a stipulation could be added with same or similar home footprint.
- b) Councilor Linvill asked:
 - i. do we have authority to control wake boats? No. That is a state function (SCDNR).
 - ii. Why is Board of Appeals (BOA) consulted and not Planning Commission? This ordinance is allowing these uses to be special exceptions, and as special exceptions those are heard by BOA as in state law. This does not change the responsibility of the Planning Commission.
 - iii. Is our ordinance the only thing BOA has to make this decision? Resources would be this overlay ordinance, UDSO, and Comprehensive Plan. There would be an application specific to this ordinance and a public hearing process.
 - iv. Cutting trees: where did language come from? It is a combination of the stormwater ordinance, information from Clemson Extension, and Stormwater Director's experience.
 - v. If landowners follow this, will it influence preserving water quality? Yes. Vice Chairman Lollis asked if it was enough. Assistant Administrator Fowler explained that there is a level above this we simply cannot enforce with staff.
 - vi. There was discussion about the previous vote regarding single-family homes.
- c) Chairman Saitta asked:
 - i. Do water dependent, water related, water enhanced affect residential at all. He asked that a drydock be moved to water related.
 - ii. Planning Commission needs to be removed from the whereas clauses because Council did not ask for their input. Vice Chairman Lollis asked if they should provide input.
 - iii. Add language regarding "preserving and protecting wildlife and their habitat," as stated in the Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9, to the whereas clauses, specifically whereases 4,5,7 on page 1 and on purpose on page 3 and 4 add natural beauty and wildlife and their habitat.
- d) Vice Chairman Lollis asked:
 - i. Has anyone approached the county for this type of water related permit? Yes. Administrator Roper gave the example of Sunset Marina's land use approval through the Planning Commission.
 - ii. Are projects already in process excluded? Assistant Administrator Fowler explained in the case of the development example, they do not have a development permit yet and are not vested.
 - iii. Can someone build a new garage? There was discussion about how staff would approach this and protect existing use.
- e) Councilor Linvill asked if this puts us in any liability for changing how close homes can be to the lake. Administrator Roper stated memo from the County Attorney would be best and cited Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Council ruling that if a government regulation denies a landowner of all economically viable use of their property, the government must pay for it. However, the government can regulate the use of the land. Any new builds will be subject to the regulations of this ordinance, and the BOA will examine appeals.
- f) Councilor Linvill asked about including Lake Hartwell to this overlay, noting that many adjacent parcels are within City of Clemson or owned by Clemson University. There was discussion about whether to include it in this ordinance or propose it as a separate ordinance.

- g) Industrial Discussion: Heavy and Light Industrial are prohibited, and water-enhanced light industrial could go to the BOA. There was discussion about boat manufacturers or dock builders.
- h) Commercial Discussion: Councilor Holloway asked if there would be an opportunity or avenue to build a commercial establishment in the future, should the residents desire, or would it come back to Council. Administrator Roper stated no unless the ordinance was changed. Chairman Saitta, Vice Chairman Lollis, and Councilor Lang expressed their view of no commercial, no exceptions. Councilor Linvill stated that the purpose is water protection and whether the rules are being followed. She gave the example of the Lighthouse Restaurant in Oconee County and stated such a commercial establishment would not be allowed in Pickens County under this ordinance. She found it overly limiting to jump to no commercial, when there is opportunity to have commerce on the lake and allow the lake to be accessible by the public. Chairman Saitta compared to the discussion on Highway 11 and retained his position that residents do not want commercial.
- i) Residential Discussion: Chairman Saitta asked what type of homes could be built in accordance with this ordinance. Assistant Administrator Fowler stated that any single-family home as defined in the DSO.
- j) Vegetation Discussion: Councilor Linvill stated she was pleased with these additions and asked for public education for homeowners affected by the regulations before they do landscaping. Chairman Saitta asked about the building height restriction being limited to the same as the UDSO at 35 feet.
- k) **Chairman Saitta made a motion to approve Second Reading of Ordinance No. 684**, including no new industrial, no new commercial, and limit building height to 35 feet. The motion was **seconded by Councilor Lang**. Vice Chairman Lollis thought Planning Commission should be involved. Councilor Linvill stated should this pass as proposed, there will never be a new marina, restaurant, etc. on Keowee or Jocassee, and no appeals process is provided. **The motion passed 3-2 with Vice Chairman Lollis and Councilor Linvill opposed.**

B) Council Goals Discussion

- a. Chairman Saitta opened the discussion of goals for the next 6 months. Each member was given the opportunity to outline 3 goals, with previously stated goals not yet completed carrying forward.
 - a) Chairman Saitta's goals are: 1) Roads and Bridges Ad Hoc, 2) Lake Keowee Ordinance, 3) To review the minimum lot size and minimum width of homes not in a subdivision.
 - b) Administration proposed goals are: 1) Roads and Bridges Ad Hoc, 2) Completion of compensation study along with staffing analysis looking specifically into career progression and retention efforts, including supervisory roles across all departments. 3) Phase 3 of the Courthouse to renovate the vacated areas of the courthouse (moved to Garvin Street) and fix security entrance.
 - c) Councilor Holloway's goals are: 1) Adjustments to Recycling Centers for ease of use by elderly residents and comfortable work environment for recycling attendants. 2) Noise related to concert venues, trespassing issues during events. 3) Revisit UDSO balancing growth in District 6, specifically looking at the 10 requests by residents around the Bluffs at Kay.
 - d) Councilor Lang: 1) PAC Lease 2) Historical Properties Committee 3) Changes to the Development Areas Map for District 4.
 - e) Vice Chairman Lollis: 1) Hotel Ordinance 2) Lake Keowee Overlay 3) Outlining roles and responsibilities of Planning Department and Planning Commission.

- f) Councilor Linvill: 1) Solar Farms 2) Lake Hartwell to Lake Overlay (shared by Vice Chairman Lollis) 3) UDSO Committee, including outline of beginning zoning 4) Presentation from PCYB regarding 7-OH and Kratom and involve municipalities through a joint group.
- C) Extension and/or Creation of Special Ad Hoc Committee(s).
 - a. Roads and Bridges Ad Hoc Committee. Chairman Saitta made a motion to extend the ad hoc committee. Vice Chairman Lollis seconded the motion. Hearing no discussion, the motion to extend for three months passed 5-0.
 - b. UDSO Ad Hoc Committee: **Chairman Saitta made a motion to create an ad hoc committee to sunsets in six months for the purpose addressing a noise ordinance, changes related to the Kay Drive requests and concert venue, increasing the minimum lot size and width of homes, and zoning procedures. The proposed committee members would be Councilor Holloway, Councilor Linvill and Chairman Saitta. The motion was seconded by Councilor Linvill. Hearing no discussion, the motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

ADJOURN:

Hearing no further Council business, Chairman Saitta made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Lang and carried unanimously (5-0). Pickens County Council stood adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectively Submitted:



Jessica Varney, Clerk to Council

Approved:



Alex Saitta, Chairman of County Council