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NEWS ARTICLE: Access North Georgia on January 24, 2012

Oakwood, homeowners to meet about annexation plan

South Hall city wants to incorporate roads leading to Lake Lanier

Annexation proposal

What: Oakwood seeking the Hall County Board of Commissioners' permission to annex certain roads, including ones leading to Lake Lanier

When: 6 p.m. Thursday

Where: Georgia Mountains Center, 301 Main St.

Contact: Hall County, 770-535-8288;
Oakwood, 770-534-2365

Oakwood officials plan to meet this week with Lake Lanier homeowners to hash out concerns about the city's roads annexation proposal.

The two sides agreed to meet following a Hall County Board of Commissioners meeting Monday morning. A dozen or so residents showed up opposing the plan while Oakwood City Manager Stan Brown touted it as a way to fulfill part of the city's long-range plans.

"I've talked with several of the representatives from the key neighborhoods that were here," Brown said after the commission work session, adding that he hopes after the talks between the two parties, "we'll have a little bit more information" by the time of the commission's vote Thursday.

Oakwood, in an effort to gain access to Lake Lanier, wants the county to allow the city to annex Flat Creek Road from McEver Road to Nags Head Circle, near Sunset Cove Marina, and Mountain View Road from McEver Road to Balus Creek Park.

Also being proposed in that area is annexation of Stephens Road from Flat Creek Road to McEver Road.

The annexation would "empower the city to provide enhanced recreational opportunities in the Oakwood area," Brown wrote in a Dec. 22 letter to County Administrator Randy Knighton.

The commission will consider the matter for a vote at its meeting set for 6 p.m. Thursday at the Georgia Mountains Center, 301 Main St.

Commission Chairman Tom Oliver has said he opposes the proposal for several reasons, including increased radar usage by city police.

Also, "I think you lose your representation," he said at Monday's meeting, receiving some applause from the audience for the remark.

He elaborated on that point after the meeting, saying he believes Oakwood could rezone property "any way they want and the neighbors have no representation. They can't vote for the Oakwood council members. They would still be in Hall County, but Oakwood would be in their backyard just zoning as they please."

David Scobey, vice president of Timber Crest subdivision on Flat Creek Road, said Oakwood went from "very general discussions" in November about the city wanting to expand its limits to the lake to "a very specific proposal in a very short period of time."

"The residents along the ... impacted roadways simply have not had enough time to look at the long-term impact," he said.

"We respectfully request that the commission simply defer your decision until the city of Oakwood can make a proposal to those subdivisions along the affected roadways so that we can make an informed decision as to whether we are for or against it."

Commissioner Ashley Bell said he appreciated city efforts to inform the public about its Lake Lanier access plans.

"Sometimes, it takes public hearings like this to get people to actually come out," he said. "Do you think it would be a hindrance to your cause to take some more time to meet with some of the homeowners associations?"

"I have no problem with that," Brown said.

In addition to the roads leading to Lanier, the city's proposal includes annexing portions of roads that flow in and out of the city limits, from smaller stretches, such as Candlestick Lane, to more heavily traveled roads, such as the four-lane Thurmon Tanner Parkway between Mundy Mill Road and Ga. 13/Atlanta Highway.

In the letter to Knighton, Brown said the city would assume maintenance and repair of the newly annexed roads.

The annexation of the roads also would "simplify and enhance public safety and public works response to service requests, thereby eliminating confusion when some roads have segments in both incorporated and unincorporated areas," he said.