

My name is Lee Becker.

I live at 1050 Scott Terrace in the Welbrook Farms subdivision.

I also am president of Friends of Barber Creek, but I am NOT speaking on behalf of this group, which enjoys nonprofit status. My comments tonight are my own.

As you know, the first draft of the County's stormwater ordinances was released to the public in September of 2005. It was drafted by Amy Morrison, coordinator of the County's stormwater program, and was based, according to Ms. Morrison, on national model legislation.

A key feature of that set of ordinances was the application of statewide standards for the construction of stormwater facilities throughout the County.

I attended the public hearing on those proposed ordinances on October 24, 2005. I and others raised questions about the enforcement capability of the County regarding the ordinances. No one spoke in opposition to the ordinances. One developer spoke in favor of the decision to apply the statewide standards to the entire County.

These draft ordinances were to be presented to the Board of Commissioners on November 29, with final action to be taken on December 6, 2005.

Following the public hearing, however, County Commission Chairman Melvin Davis informed Ms. Morrison through her supervisor, Public Works Director, Mike Leonas, that the ordinances were to be redrafted.

Developers in the County, according to Ms. Morrison, opposed the ordinances because they required them to spend money on the stormwater retention and other structures and used up lots in the development for these structures that would otherwise be sold to homeowners.

Ms. Morrison was instructed to consolidate the original three ordinances into one and apply the state standards only to that small part of the County designated by the state as urbanized.

I want to make sure you have seen a picture of that area of the County that has been designated as urbanized. It is marked in pink hatches on the sheet I'm giving you. I ask you to take a look at this area and try to think of when it was that you reviewed any rezoning request for a significant development inside that area.

Restricting the application of state standards to development inside this area would have the effect of rendering the ordinance essentially useless.

There is a counter-argument, I admit. The proposed ordinance would have allowed the Board of Commissioners to impose the state standards for development outside the urbanized area. But the developers signaled their resistance to this idea by voicing opposition to the original ordinance.

There is no reason to expect, given this opposition and given the County's record in managing stormwater runoff, that the proposed legislation would have done anything to improve the quality of water in the streams of this County.

I told you I live in Welbrook Farms subdivision. The double lot I own with my wife backs onto Barber Creek.

Much of the stormwater from this subdivision dumps directly into Barber Creek, because the County did not require the developer to put in detention facilities throughout the subdivision. Our subdivision is less than 10 years old. I know it is NOT the exception.

In fact, those of us who have expressed concern about Barber Creek have been told repeatedly by County officials that it is badly polluted. And we've been told the vast majority of that pollution results from

storm water runoff.

The County officials say they will do us the favor of dumping treated—and they say cleaner--wastewater from an expanded Rocky Branch Waste Treatment Plant into the creek.

But some of those same officials have asked that the County's stormwater ordinance be gutted. This would assure that Barber Creek is not protected from runoff. And the other streams in the County would suffer the same fate.

I want to show you what that means in real terms. I've taken a series of pictures of Barber Creek from the lots my wife and I own. I've got a copy to circulate here tonight, and these same pictures are on the web site [www.barbercreek.org](http://www.barbercreek.org).

These pictures show a beautiful creek that is seriously being eroded because this County has not provided it the kind of protection it deserves. The creek floods quickly. Even small amount of rain produce high levels of sediment. It is undercutting its banks, causing significant erosion.

Ms. Morrison, in response to citizen complaints about the second version of the ordinance, has rewritten it again in an effort to apply the state standards County wide. The result is a rather inelegant document. But so be it.

It is not too late to offer Barber Creek—and the many residents of this County who live along it-- some assistance. Barber Creek—and the other streams in the County—are living things, and they deserve this protection.

The State of Georgia has said as much, and I would hope the Georgia Environmental Protection Division would reject any effort by Oconee County to mock its requirements by applying the state standards only to that tiny part of the County designated as urbanized.

I urge this Commission to apply the state standards countywide and encourage the officials of this County to provide the resources needed to enforce the provisions of the ordinance.

Thank you very much.

Lee Becker