

Lowe's Home Improvement interested in Hiawassee

By Bo Wilson

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

Lowe's Home Improvement Store has expressed interest in building a center in Hiawassee, according to Mayor Barbara Mathis.

Mayor Mathis said

Lowe's informed the city of Hiawassee they want to locate near the junction going to Hayesville, N.C.

"That is our understanding," Mathis said.

"We've been told they have spent a lot of money on engineering."

The only problem: sewer.

Earlier this month,

Mayor Mathis and City

Manager Rick Stancil met with representatives of

Lowe's to discuss their request for sewer service.

Mayor Mathis says a response from the city will be dependent on action by Commissioner Bill Kendall or the Towns County Water and Sewer Authority.

"Commissioner Kendall said he is willing to help the city in any way he can to get Lowe's to locate in the city," Mathis said. "We

would love to see a business like Lowe's come to Hiawassee. It would bring tax dollars and jobs to the city and county, but we have to wait and see what the study reveals."

To consider Lowe's request, there are several steps that must take place.

The first step would be to perform a line and flow analysis. The next step would be submission of the project to state and federal funding agencies.

The city's says they will not fund the line analysis or the matching portion of any grants or loans without long term funding being guaranteed to the city for infrastructure development in the county. Since the Towns County Water and Sewer Authority refused to provide sewer service, there will be no connections of county commercial lines to sewer service until the issue is addressed.

"We're under a

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moratorium right now," Mathis said. "So until the necessary steps are taken, are hands are tied."

The moratorium is on county commercial connections. Mathis did say Lowe's

has been very understanding so far.

Lowe's representatives have requested a response from the city as to the sewer status by June. 1.