

# Councilman responds to zoning lawsuit

Paul Corbeil denies any wrongdoing

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WALHALLA — Oconee County Councilman Paul



Corbeil

Corbeil denied any wrongdoing in answering a zoning lawsuit filed against him and other county officials.

Corbeil's answer filed Monday on his behalf by attorney J. Victor McDade at the Oconee County Court-

house states among other things that the councilman took no improper action related to emails between him and others named in the lawsuit that was filed by Jean Jennings and David and Michelle McMahan on Aug. 24.

The lawsuit filed by attorney Roberta Barton on behalf of the plaintiffs' claims that ex parte communication between Corbeil and other defendants "rose to the level of the Tort of Civil Conspiracy."

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## ZONING: 'We'll just see what the jury says,' McMahan said

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Corbeil maintains in his rebuttal that he did not engage in any improper communications.

Jennings and the McMahans filed the lawsuit after obtaining emails through a Freedom of Information Act request. The emails formed the basis for much of the plaintiffs' claims in the lawsuit.

They claimed that Corbeil participated in the majority of the ex parte communication and demonstrated partiality by referring to them as "inmates" and implying that they "were not intelligent nor reasonable when it comes to the zoning issue."

County Council denied a request by Jennings and the McMahans to rezone their property near Lake Keowee as Tra-

ditional Rural District. Instead, council rezoned their property to a more restrictive Agricultural Residential District that did not exist when the plaintiffs' initially filed their rezoning request.

Reached Monday night at his home, David McMahan had little to say about Corbeil's response to the lawsuit.

"We'll just see what the jury says," McMahan said.

The other defendants named in the lawsuit have not filed an answer. They are County Administrator Scott Moulder, Councilman Reg Dexter, Planning Commission member Andrea Heller, Planning Director Art Holbrooks and Advocates for Quality Development members Jim Codner, Gary Owens and Chuck Smith.