Oconee: Details on Highway 11 deal to come

Ordinance advances

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THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Oconee County councilmen promised the public they would provide more information on the purchase of Highway 11 property and two other parcels.

During public comments at Tuesday night's meeting, residents voiced concerns about the county getting into the real estate business. Taxpayers also were critical about the little information that has been provided on plans for the property.

John Adams, of Adams Commercial Real Estate, went so far as to request that a second reading of the 408-acre Highway 11 tract be delayed "until the county submits a plan for public input."

But the council took up the second reading of the ordinance and approved it unanimously.

Councilman Joel Thrift said more information is forthcoming.

"These items will be explained and broken down in the near future," Thrift said. "They'll be a chance for people to comment on it."

Councilman Mario Suarez reiterated his desire to see a recreational facility built on the Highway 11 property.

However, Councilman Wayne McCall repeated that Oconee should buy the land to attract industry immediately.

"We need flat ground to get industry in here," McCall said. McCall said the Highway 11 purchase would be a good deal if used for industry.

Councilman Paul Corbeil added that exhibits A, B and C, alluding to the purchase of the Highway 11 property and two other parcels, would be made available before a public hearing is scheduled on the proposed transactions.

Alos Tuesday, the council did not move forward as anticipated with a request for proposal (RFQ) to find a design-build company for a new detention facility.

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