

Rejected rezoning petitioners want investigation

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Representatives of the North Fairview community are calling on Oconee County officials to conduct an independent investigation into why their rezoning petition was rejected.

In a letter dated Dec. 31, Jean Jennings and Michelle McMahan wrote to County Administrator Scott Moulder and council members requesting an independent investigation to look into their allegations that special interest groups on Lake Keowee influenced policymakers into thwarting their rezoning request.

Jennings and McMahan said that until such a review is made council should delay a third and final reading of the rezoning request.

The item is not listed on council's agenda at tonight's meeting.

In their letter, Jennings and



Corbeil



Dexter



Suarez

SEE REZONING, PAGE A5

REZONING: Letter questions Corbeil, Suarez, Dexter

FROM PAGE A1

McMahan also invoked the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act in submitting a list of questions they would like to see answered in writing.

Almost all of the six questions submitted deal with what influence special interest groups — including Advocates for Quality Development, Mountain Lakes Community Association and Friends of Lake Keowee Society — played in getting the majority of council to rezone the Fairview group into Agricultural Residential.

"We have reasonable suspicion that the Planning Staff, Mr. (Paul) Cor-

beil, Mr. (Mario) Suarez and Mr. (Reg) Dexter all acted on behalf of special interest groups along the lake," Jennings and McMahan said in their letter.

The North Fairview community petition received the support of more than 80 percent of landowners in the area, which represents about 300 acres.

North Fairview landowners were requesting the Traditional Rural District designation allowed by Oconee's Zoning Enabling Ordinance. Instead, council voted 3-2 on Dec. 7 to rezone their land Agricultural Residential District, a designation that did not exist when

the Fairview group filed its petition.

ARD is more restrictive of commercial activity than is TRD.

Jennings and McMahan also took issue with a letter they said they received from Corbeil on Dec. 13 in which he expressed concerns with the TRD that North Fairview sought.

In his letter, Corbeil stated he had "become very concerned that (TRD) could be misused in the future to the serious detriment of many.

and various types of owners." Corbeil added that TRD "is a blank check that offers little protection to a community."

Corbeil is listed as one of the initial directors of MLCA in the group's by-laws.

"Be it known that we are the community, and we would like to think we are considered citizens of our community," Jennings and McMahan's letter stated.

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