

Thrift yanks zoning

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Councilman Wayne McCall has failed to get two controversial zoning items included on the Sept. 6 Oconee County Council agenda.

Council Chairman Joel Thrift said Monday that he pulled the items off the agenda because they are tied to pending litigation.

McCall had hoped to get

council talking about releasing zoning-related emails and overturning zoning decisions related to North Fairview and North Cane Creek petitions.

County Administrator Scott Moulder has cited attorney-client privilege for not releasing certain emails sought by Fairview residents under a Freedom of Information Act request.

McCall told The Journal last week that even if his requests were not added to the Sept. 6

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Joel Thrift
Oconee County Council chairman

agenda, he would bring them up for discussion under new business.

Thrift said McCall could do

that if he got another council member to second his motion.

Asked if he would be that councilman, Thrift said he would not do it.

"Not while it's under litigation," Thrift said. "If they hadn't filed (the lawsuit) it would be different."

McCall made his agenda request to Moulder and Clerk to Council Beth Hulse on Aug. 22, two days before Fairview residents filed a lawsuit against

issue

the county.

Other defendants named by the lawsuit filed by attorney Roberta Barton on behalf of Jean Jennings and David and Michelle McMahan, are Moulder, Councilmen Paul Corbeil and Reg Dexter, Advocates for Quality Development, Inc., AQD President Jim Codner and other AQD members, Planning Commission member Andrea Heller

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and Planning Department Director Art Holbrooks.

McCall told The Journal that it would be to council's advantage to repeal the two ordinances dealing with the Fairview and Cane Creek petitions, and start the process over. He said that would get the county out from under the lawsuit.

Thrift was not so sure that would work.

"Can he (McCall) guarantee that?" Thrift asked.

As for who would represent the county and its officials in the lawsuit, Thrift did not know for sure, but thought it

Martin, or the McNair Law Firm of which Martin is a partner.

Although Martin is not named as a defendant, his name appears several times in the lawsuit's pleadings.

The lawsuit claims, among other things, that Martin and other county officials privately discussed zoning issues with AQD members in emails that likely swayed council's decision to deny Jennings and the McMahans' petition.

Thrift said the pending lawsuit and the question of who would represent the county most likely will be taken up in executive session Sept. 6.

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