

Was Fairview an annoyance from the beginning?

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Signers of the North Fairview rezoning petition may have been left out of the communications loop as changes to Oconee County's Zoning Enabling Ordinance were being crafted, but they were never far from the minds of many of the principals making those changes.

Within months of the rezoning paperwork being filed, concerned lake development residents were quizzing Councilman Paul Corbeil about how the county intended to "protect the quality of the neighborhood" from those who were seeking "traditional rural" zoning.

In early January a "farming only" restriction was suggested to Corbeil to "protect residents like us so no games can be played with the rezoning petition."



Corbeil

Once the Fairview petition was approved on first reading April 13, 2010, and the relative lack of restrictions that came with TR zoning became better known, email lines began to really hum. By late summer and early fall the emails reflect a growing frustration.

On Aug. 11, 2010, Fairview petitioner Jean Jennings wrote the

county asking for assurances that the zoning she had asked for was still what she was going to get.

A week later, Corbeil wrote then-Council Chairman Reg Dexter and Councilman Joel Thrift indicating a willingness to set down with Jennings, her friends the McMahan and TR opponent Jim Codner and try and find a compromise. However, Corbeil's growing frustration is evidenced in the email as well.

"We need a strategy where we are driving, not the inmates," Corbeil's email said.

In September, Jennings penned another letter to the county ask-

SEE FAIRVIEW, PAGE A5

FAIRVIEW: Emails humming

FROM PAGE A1

ing several questions about what was going on behind the scenes. Six days later Corbeil wrote to County Administrator Scott Moulder saying Jennings' letter "seems to be a set-up with the usual supporting cast."

He went on to say that "zoning opponents" see the TR form of zoning as a "blank check and, contrary to their public utterances of wanting to protect what they've always had, also want to have it as an insurance policy in the event that a commercial offer or the like comes ..."

Corbeil went on to

tell Moulder, "I'm very tempted to tell them and the Planning Commission that the petition has been submitted, and council will act on it. They may not like the outcome."

Council held second reading on the North Fairview request, imposing an ag residential category on the Jennings and McMahan properties, on Dec. 17, 2010.

Third and final reading would be held Jan. 18, 2011, but four days before that vote, Corbeil explained his frustration in an email to Stephen Nix.

"My frustration isn't with zoning per se, nor is it Oconee County spe-

cific. It (sic) with a group that has a very specific agenda, in our case, don't spend or invest a dime ... unless I'm a direct beneficiary. They object to almost every initiative, whether it be growing our tax base, jobs creation, improving our infrastructure, etc. ..."

Later, closing the email, Corbeil writes, "... I also agree that we need to continue to refine and improve our new ZEO. It's not perfect, but it's legal, the local law supported by state and federal case history. And, very workable for intelligent, reasonable people."

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