

# Live Oak holding 'clarification vote' on annexation

By JAMIE WACHTER  
jwachter@lakecityreporter.com

LIVE OAK — The Live Oak City Council will meet next week to try and clear up any confusion about annexing a large property into the city.

The council has called a special meeting for Tuesday at 6 p.m. or soon thereafter to hold a "clarification vote with a roll call vote" on the first reading of an ordinance to annex 139 acres on the south end of the city into the city limits.

City Clerk John Gill said Wednesday that after discussions with City Attorney Todd Kennon it was decided to hold the special meeting for the clarifying vote. Gill said Kennon agreed "clarity" was probably needed on the issue.

"We wanted to take any ambiguity out of it," Gill said. "We

want to make sure there are no technicalities.

"I've had people comment to me that it didn't seem like it was done properly."

The confusion stems from the council's Feb. 13 meeting when it held a public hearing on the first reading of the ordinance. After hearing from six people during the hearing about the annexation — four of which encouraged the council to not bring the property into the city — the council held a vote that wasn't clear what side the councilors were on.

Councilman Matt Campbell made a motion to deny the annexation and after the vote was held against the motion, a roll call vote was held with the councilors mentioning if they were for or against annexation, not the motion itself, which only added to the confusion.

Council President David Burch, who had the tie-breaking vote, said he was "against and I will say for," which was deemed as supporting the annexation.

Campbell and Councilwoman Lynda Owens were against annexing the property.

Much of the concern with annexation stems from the plans to build a large housing development on the property which sits on the side of U.S. Highway 129.

Campbell, a teacher at one of the Suwannee County elementary schools, which are all in the vicinity of the property, said his issue was traffic congestion in that area.

According to Lance Jones with Jones Engineering at a January workshop on the matter, the development would include commercial properties along U.S. 129 with 460 homes behind it in a mix of site-built

homes and townhomes.

The landowners want to annex into the city in order to hook up with the city's utilities which are present on the northern end of the property at the city limits.

During that previous meeting, Ricky Gamble, the county's property appraiser who lives near the project off Bass Road, urged the council to make sure, if it moves ahead with the project that it holds the developer responsible for any road improvements needed. Gamble told the council that city and Suwannee County officials need to engage with Florida Department of Transportation about the impacts on the local roads — Bass Road to the south of the property and 121st Road to the west — in addition to U.S. 129 caused by the development to ensure that local taxpayers weren't left footing the bill for those upgrades in the future.

ESTATE SALE

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