

MELVIN DAVIS AND SECRECY LINKS 1-11

6-3-09 Oconee's Melvin Davis – Open Meetings Violations & Mistaken Policies adopted in secrecy
<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=4013>

AB-H 6-1-09- "...Davis and the commission have exhibited a continuing lackadaisical attitude toward the state open meetings statute...."

.....AVOC: Melvin Davis is not solely responsible for some of his mess. He had four commissioners at all times he made the changes and commitments. They were frequently passive and did not stop it.....

AVOC - June 2, 2009

Oconee's Melvin Davis – Open Meetings Violations & Mistaken Policies adopted in secrecy

By Wendell Dawson, Editor, AVOC, Inc

The Athens Banner-Herald Editorial today again takes Davis and two other commissioners to task for their lackadaisical attitude about Open Government. **Thanks to Lee Becker and Adam Thompson's reporting, the behind the scenes 'wheeling and dealing' of the Melvin Davis administrations is getting more exposure.**

With my predecessor's insight, early on I realized Melvin Davis was changing policies *without real public involvement*. It started in 2002 with changes in sewer and dense housing.

04-09-04 Oconee County MPD Ordinances Were "Hatched and Birted" in Secrecy

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=1081&ENGINEsessID=0d31f3a2db9111bea519fd3b8b6651fe>

The first "official action" by the BOC took place at a CALLED MEETING held on Friday afternoon at 5:00 PM (GA-FLA Game Weekend) on November 1, 2002. Coincidentally, the voters of the county were preoccupied with the November 5 Alcohol Referendum and the vote on the "Big Park"

AVOC - April 8, 2004

Oconee Sewer Policy and Dense Residential Development Just "Slipped In"

Information and documentation has been made available to AVOC about the history of the drastic change in policy in Oconee County about sewer service for residential lots. Some folks lobbied for it and even helped to write the ordinances according to memorandum and minutes of the County Commissioners.

The subject was discussed by the full **BOC at a "Retreat" in September 13-14, 2002**. The consultant hired by the BOC participated.

Notes of the session reveal that at least two of the members of the BOC and the County Attorney, Daniel Haygood, were in favor of it.

05-5-04 Oconee County Opened Pandora's Box With Residential Sewer Policy Change

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=1188&ENGINEsessID=0d31f3a2db9111bea519fd3b8b6651fe>

Oconee County's change in policies for sewer service for residences has opened a "Pandora's Box". There will be more and more developments and sooner or later a Mobile Home Park or two. "The cat is out of the bag"!

AVOC - May 5, 2004

Oconee County Opened Pandora's Box With Residential Sewer Policy Change

By Wendell Dawson, Editor, AVOC, Inc. -Another Voice Oconee County

AVOC sources have reported that Developer Benson Davis appeared at Monday's (5-3-04) Council Meeting and presented a proposal for 100-unit high-density development near Landrum and Thompson streets. The sketches presented dealt with a 28 acre tract known as the "McLeroy Estate" property. Eight acres on the front would be reserved for commercial uses.

The project is subject to agreement with Oconee County for Sewer Service. The project contemplates condominium like homes selling in the range of \$ 100,000 - \$ 200,000. It would involve approximately five detached dwellings per acre. The residential units be bricked and would contain approximately 1600 square feet.

There was some discussion of sharing the sewer line cost with Benson's Bakery who helped fund the Bogart Sewer line along with a \$ 500,000 Dept of Community Affairs Grant to Bogart and considerable county funds.....

6-8-08 "The Melvin Davis Record" – Secret Retreat and Beer & Wine Vote – Part 2

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=3888&ENGINEsessID=527d1c55591d1bbb444b3866b2b2ad8b>

By Wendell Dawson, Editor, AVOC, Inc

When I was leaving office in November and December of 2000, I spent considerable time with Melvin Davis. During a car ride on Government Station Road, the alcohol issue came up. I sensed he had support and pressure for a re-vote. I had publicly stated that the voters had spoken and I did not plan to bring up the issue again any time in the near future.

When I learned that Davis was considering pursuing the issue, I told him he should wait until a General Election and not do it anytime soon. In less than two years, his first Board was voting on it- twice because they were not together the first time. Don Norris had always pushed hard on alcohol.

I later learned that Larry Benson had actively campaigned to "get Wendell out" in 2000. Larry was appointed to some positions by me even though I felt he was more "Athens oriented" than "Oconee oriented". He was also a close ally of Jay Campbell, my nemesis for several years on the Board.

Larry Benson had pushed for alcohol sales for at least ten years. Since then he has served twice as the campaign chairman for Melvin Davis. My best speculation was that he pressured Davis for a vote –BEFORE qualifying or else. Without considerable pressure, Davis would not have let the issue come up before qualifying and the election cycle.....

1-13-06 Oconee BOC has scarce information on Veteran Memorial Funds

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=3297&ENGINEsessID=4b42a436948a40648672cf75a343d5ad>

AVOC- January 8, 2006

.....the County Commission Chair says '....the County does not have any information on the fund. He says it is a private fund....'

For sometime, the BOC has been talking about a joint project for the Veterans Memorial at the 'Big Park' on GA Highway 53. It strains credulity to accept that the BOC has no knowledge of the fund but has been actively pursuing the Memorial at the Park in concert with the Veterans Foundation.....

12-20-04 Oconee's Behind the Scenes "Wheeling & Dealing"

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=2128&ENGINEsessID=b8a32999162b751fd061a673044b98ac>

.....One of the Chairman's friends is Larry Benson who has been on the Oconee County Development Authority for years. He got a "sweetheart deal" from Mr. Davis on his Bogart Bakery sewer connection early in the Davis Administration. He reportedly wound up paying about a 1/3 of what my Administration had been negotiating for connection.

...Sources say that Chairman Davis was "wheeling and dealing" on the "Dooley" tract while he was working actively (behind the scenes) with the County Park Project. He was coordinating with a group of investors that would have included a golf course in the development, now known as Parkside.

Apparently, there were road plans, water and sewer plans and some land swaps being discussed. **All of this was done by the Chairman; reportedly without the involvement of the Board and unbeknownst to the general public.**

12-9-05 Update on Missing Oconee Veterans Memorial Funds

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=3235&PHPSESSID=cacb60bb5d12a2880b57217f7c138c38>

AVOC - December 8, 2005

Jim Ivey has been called "Mr. Oconee Republican" by some of us in recent years. He has been the contact and spokesman for visiting Republican Dignitaries.... Mr. Ivey was one of the principal players (along with Commissioner Donald Norris, Rep. Bob Smith and then Planning Commission member, Jim Luke, in the (Republican) substitution of Melvin Davis for Charlie Hoag in August 2000 to succeed me - more details below....

2-7-04 Oconee Commissioners Profile --DAVIS - Chairman

<http://avoc.info/info/article.php?article=894&PHPSESSID=0b17dc5472b9c19d04095d791583ce3b>

.....**NOMINATED:** Selected by a self-appointed **Group** of Republicans to Replace Charles Hoag as the Party Nominee in August 2000;

"The Group" was headed by Commissioner Donald Norris with help by Jim Luke (Commission Candidate); Russell Lee (Oconee Chamber); Jim Ivey ("Mr. Republican" in Oconee County); Representative Bob Smith; and Chamber of Commerce leader, James McClain. Former Commissioner Jay Campbell & Chuck Horton (Commission Candidate) reportedly participated in the "take-over" of Republican Party in Oconee County with a Slate Picked by this group. The State Republican Party acted hastily to ratify action and later told some Oconee Republicans that they were misled. There are conflicting reports on whether the interviewing committee considered Davis; at least two members of the then executive committee have confirmed Davis called and showed little interest before Hoag was selected;

AVOC Sources said many of these persons were not even dues paying members of the Oconee Republican Party until the 2000 "Take-Over";

8-18-02 Oconee Voters to consider \$ 12 Million Bond Issue for Recreation Complex

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=568&ENGINEsessID=4600384802740385ac0f8ba9fd5bbd>

This is a serious policy change for the county without much public discussion. It seems to be the new way of doing county business. This type action and mode of operation is not good for the future economic health of our county.

AVOC -August 18, 2002

Oconee Voters to consider \$ 12 Million Bond Issue for Recreation Complex

By Wendell Dawson, Editor, AVOC, Inc

Well, the subject of months of executive sessions (closed or secret meetings) is now out in the open! Just like the liquor question, it is 'in response' to a Citizens Committee - this one on Recreation and Cultural Affairs. This process seems to be a political tool of the current BOC.

It appears much planning has gone on without public discussion. The planned referendum for recreation completely disregards the results of the Vision Oconee Survey done at the Civic Center last fall. The overwhelming response of those surveyed was to continue to improve infrastructure with little support of large recreation projects.....

11-1-02 Voters need more facts on recreation referendum

<http://www.avoc.info/info/article.php?article=556&ENGINEsessID=4600384802740385ac0f8ba9fd5bbd>

Some have said that the Chairman talks to the individual Commissioners one on one, and does not violate the Open Meetings law. The Board holds Executive Sessions at nearly every meeting. From 26 years of experience with Commission meetings, I KNOW there is not that much legitimate exempted activities involved.

AVOC- November 1, 2002

Voters need more facts on recreation referendum

By Wendell Dawson, Editor, AVOC, Inc

A letter to the Editor in the Athens Banner-Herald on November 1, 2002, questioned some claims on values of the land being bought for a park. See letter below.

AVOC sources indicate the nearby 500 acre tract (Parkside) is under contract subject to rezoning, sewer service and other conditions. Any closing is months away. (Query: Will the commissioners be able to be objective in a Zoning hearing on this tract after using it as a "crutch" support for their recreation option?) Many such deals do not close or wind up with renegotiated prices. The "comparable" is not a "done deal"!

As to whether the commissioners knew about their own appraisal, it strains credibility. The secrecy and surprise action on the recreation proposal allows lots of rumors and "misinformation" from all sides. Some commissioners always like to go "one on one" with voters and take any position they want to. This whole project should have been subjected to public meetings and debate over a period of months.

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The Athens Banner-Herald

http://onlineathens.com/stories/110102/let_letter002.shtml

November 1, 2002

Letters

Oconee Voters Need More Facts Before Supporting Park Referendum

A couple of rumors exist surrounding the proposed \$ 20 Million recreation park in Oconee County. Here they are:

The \$ 15,000 per acre comparable sale reported in the Oconee Enterprise a few weeks ago did not happen. The tract is only under contract for \$ 15,000 per acre, and it has so many stipulations that it is unlikely the sale will actually take place. Chairman Melvin Davis was directly involved in the timing and content of this incorrect article.

The County Commissioners approved the \$ 15,000 purchase price for the recreational land without knowing that it was appraised for only \$ 9,300 per acre. They learned of the appraisal only after it was reported in this paper.

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