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Cape chamber openly opposing Amendment 4

By DREW WINCHESTER, dwinchester@breezenewspapers.com

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The Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce is openly opposing "hometown democracy" by drafting a resolution urging its members to vote down Amendment 4 in November.

Chamber President Mike Qaintance said last week they fear the amendment, if passed, will not only slow down development but further alienate voters in the city.

"It's hard enough to get people engaged in the political process," he said. "The pundits say it gives people more control but I'm not sure. I'm concerned the fallout is going to be worse."

Opponents of the amendment say, if passed, ballots would be clogged with hundreds of land use changes each election cycle.

Without a detailed, working knowledge of each land use change, opponents fear voters would be lost in a sea of language and issues they don't fully comprehend, stalling commercial development for unforeseen amounts of time.

The city's Planning and Zoning Board will meet Wednesday to discuss each of the 57 proposed land use changes, the most controversial of which has thus far been south of Pine Island Road.

Residents in the Emerald Cove community on Trafalgar Parkway have already voiced their displeasure of the proposed changes, fearing their neighborhood and Trafalgar will be overrun with unwanted traffic and safety issues.

Nina Yelvington, president of the homeowner's association for Emerald Cove, said last week she is already trying to rally everyone in the community against the land use changes.

"We're all against it, I guarantee you," she said.

While residents like Yelvington support Amendment 4 and hometown democracy, Qaintance and the chamber fear what will become of the city should the amendment pass, or if there are any issues with land use changes themselves.

City staff said last week that while the deadline to have the changes approved in Tallahassee is tight, most should be able to pass without too much opposition.

As a pre-platted community, Qaintance said the Cape faces challenges other communities in the state don't, making commercial growth more difficult.

"We're a different animal," he said. "It's going to cause more problems ... and it (Amendment 4) doesn't fit into the constitution."

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