

Officials Say City Is Trying

By DWIGHT OTWELL
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The city hasn't been dragging its feet to delay a federal court order in the redistricting suit, College Park City Attorney George Glaze said Tuesday afternoon.

Glaze said there has been no intentional delaying of getting information to the U.S. Justice Department. He said the information the department requested will be mailed out this week.

Plaintiffs in the suit to force the city to draw ward lines so that blacks will have a chance for representation in city government held a press conference Tuesday morning charging that city officials are delaying sending information which the Justice Department requested.

But city council members said the city attorney has been steadily working on the case and that federal red tape has bogged the work down.

Two council members said they aren't trying to put off an election (which was supposed to be held for all city council seats and the mayor's seat in December). They said they would have been glad if the election had already been held.

However, Mayor Ralph Presley Tuesday was unavailable for comment in the allegations by the plaintiffs.

"The city attorney has been working on it about as fast as he could," Councilman Harry Swann said.

Swann blamed the slow-down on red tape, requirements, and reports required by the Justice Department.

"It would have suited me to have had the election last year," Swann said. "I would like to get it over with."

"The sooner they can settle it the better," Councilman Don McLean said.

McLean said he doesn't want the case to be delayed.

"You'd be delaying something that is inevitable," he said. "I feel the election will be sometime this year. If there is an election before November, I wouldn't run for it because I have put my efforts toward the county commission race."

McLean is running for the spot on the county commission now held by Richard Johnston.

Councilman Calvin Wilson said at a recent city council meeting that the city has done all it can about the

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redistricting matter. He said it is now in the hands of the Justice Department.

"No; we aren't intentionally delaying," Glaze said.

Glaze said some figures in the black/white population percentages that the Justice Department had didn't correspond with the city's percentages and knowledge of the area.

The city attorney said the city asked the city's consultants, Public Research & Management, to check the percentages out and get the best, accurate information.

"They did this and sent the information to me in mid-February," Glaze said.

Glaze said errors were found in the reports sent in by Public Research. The city attorney said an error by the Justice Department was found Tuesday.

"We have been trying to sift these things out and resubmit it," he said. "We do have the information now and are putting it together."

Glaze said he can find no fault with the plaintiffs.

As to allegations that he won't return phone calls to the Justice Department, Glaze said a Justice Department official called his office last Friday while he was at a meeting out of town. He said he didn't know of the call until Monday.

As to plaintiffs' contention that the city hasn't communicated with them, the city attorney said, "We have sent the plaintiffs everything we've done."

"What I have to submit, I would have done with or without the new conference," Glaze said.