

claims that the building was poorly maintained and in deteriorating condition.

Ann Arbor attorney Stefani A. Carter, who is representing the county, noted that the photos were taken 2 1/2 years after the accident.

"I think much of this will not be admissible at trial to prove that we should have known about the board," Carter said.

The building was used for programs other than Cooperative Extension, Carter said, and no one reported the loose board to county officials.

The county planned at least three years ago to demolish the two buildings that housed Cooperative Extension and the county Environmental Services office, estimated to date to the 1950s. Replacement buildings will be constructed on the county's road commission property on Zeeb Road near I-94 in Scio Township. Meanwhile, the offices have temporarily moved to Parkland Center on Jackson Road in Scio Township.

Last month, the county asked Washtenaw County Circuit Judge David S. Swartz to dismiss Crisman-McQuarrie's claim that the county knew about the loose board. But Swartz denied the county's request, keeping the question open for mediation and a possible trial.

Crisman-McQuarrie said in court documents that she was sitting next to a building column in her master gardener class, held in the basement of the building, when a piece of paneling that was attached to the column fell off and hit her on the head.

The suit says she suffered a closed-head injury that affected her speech and memory, among other things.

She was about to start substitute teaching before the accident, but Moffitt said she is not now employed and still receives weekly rehabilitation. The plaintiff and her husband, Neil A. McQuarrie, are seeking \$5.75 million in damages.

The suit contends that had the county systematically inspected, repaired and kept records of the building's condition, someone would have found out about the board.

"We believe that a jury will find that no reasonable inspection would have found a loose board," Carter responded.

Mediation of the case must be completed by March. That step comes when a lawsuit is not settled or after a judge denies a request to dismiss it.