

MIDDLETOWN

Board will work to pick new township supervisor

Three township residents have submitted resumes, but the vacancy board can also consider others.

By CHRIS ENGLISH STAFF WRITER

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Middletown officials will attempt to appoint a new township supervisor when a vacancy board meets at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, just before the regular supervisors meeting at 7 p.m.

A replacement is needed after Republican Lisa Pflaumer resigned last month to spend more time with her family and on her at-home chocolate business. The vacancy board consists of the remaining supervisors, Democrats Robert McMonagle and Chuck Thompson, Republicans Jasper Caro and George Leonhauser and vacancy board Chairman Bill Cosen, a Democrat. He was appointed to that position in January.

Three township residents have applied for the vacancy. They are: Democrat Kathy Heuer, Republican William Oettinger and Ryan Gregory.

Gregory said he's a longtime Republican but switched to the Democratic Party to vote in Tuesday's primary. He declined to say whether he voted for Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton. Gregory said he switched because he especially wanted to see one of them out of the race.

"I don't like one and I don't like the other worse," he said.

Gregory, 28, said he already has "paperwork in the mail" to switch back to the Republican Party.

A family service specialist for the N.J. Division of Youth and Family Services, Gregory is engaged to and lives in the Middletown Trace Apartments on Trenton Road. He said he has lived in Middletown for almost two years after living for many years in Falls, where he was a member of the township planning commission for four years and twice ran unsuccessfully for supervisor.

Oettinger, 33, is married and lives in the Parkland section of Middletown, where he is a volunteer firefighter for the Parkland Fire Company. A fire inspector for Lower Southampton, Oettinger has lived in Middletown for nine years.

A 25-year resident of Middletown, Heuer is married and lives in the Silver Lake development in the northern part of the township. A special education teacher in the Neshaminy School District since 1977, Heuer has served on several volunteer committees for the school district and is a member of Middletown's Matrix Advisory Board. That group meets to discuss and make recommendations on what should go on Middletown's share of the Matrix development proposed for land near the Oxford Valley Mall.

Since the vacancy board members aren't restricted to the three people who have sent in written applications or resumes, Caro said he will again nominate Republican Russ Kavana, a township zoning hearing board member and former supervisor who lost his bid to regain a seat on the board in November's election.

A motion to appoint Kavana at a supervisors meeting earlier this month failed by a 2-2 vote, with Caro and Leonhauser voting for their fellow GOP member and McMonagle and Thompson voting against.

Caro said he was glad to hear of the three other people showing interest.

"I've always said a supervisor should serve only one [six-year] term because there are a lot of qualified people in the township," he said.

Thompson said he was impressed with Heuer's qualifications.

"I might be leaning toward voting for her, but I haven't decided yet," Thompson said. "I want to appoint somebody who thinks for himself or herself and doesn't have an agenda."

Whoever is appointed to fill Pflaumer's seat would serve through 2009 but would have to run and win in that year's election to retain the position. If the vacancy board can't make a selection by May 6, the matter will go to Bucks County court.