

Republican groups make endorsement

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Bristol Township / Middletown

Two Republican groups have endorsed a candidate for the GOP nomination for Tony Melio's state representative seat.

Neshaminy school board member Rick Eccles has received the endorsement of two local Republican organizations, while a third GOP group has called for an open primary in the race to replace outgoing state Rep. Tony Melio, D-141.

The Bristol Township Republican Organization, Lower Bucks Republican Club and Middletown Republican Committee met Sunday to screen candidates.

Eccles, an 11-year school board member and a resident of Middletown, was chosen over fellow Republicans Jim Connelly and Jean Bruce Chadwick by the Lower Bucks Republican Club and the Middletown Republican Committee.

But Joe Hogan, chairman of the Bristol Township Republican Organization, said his group wants an open primary and won't endorse a candidate for the GOP nomination.

After failing to secure a GOP endorsement Sunday, Connelly called on Republican groups not to campaign on behalf of any candidate. The computer consultant from Stonybrook vowed to stay in the race.

"Unfortunately for Mr. Eccles, the voting on the May 18 primary will not be done by proxy," Connelly said.

The newspaper was unable to reach Chadwick Monday for comment.

The Bucks County Republican Executive Endorsement Meeting is March 4.

The Democrats could meet next week and endorse a candidate, officials said.

It could be a quick decision because only one Democrat - Bristol Township councilwoman Tina Davis - appears to want the endorsement.

Former Bristol Township commissioners Mike Slipp and Melvin Howard remain in the race. Howard said he hasn't pursued the Democratic endorsement and Slipp said he wouldn't accept it because he wants an open primary.

And Bristol Township Mayor John Monahan bowed out Sunday.

Melio's district includes all but two precincts in Bristol Township and four precincts in Middletown.

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