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Last minute surprises perk Smithfield election

By **GERRY GOLDSTEIN, Valley Breeze & Observer Correspondent**

SMITHFIELD - The political scene here was still changing even as the June 27 filing deadline approached, and one final surprise was the emergence of a four-way contest for the District 44 seat in the state House of Representatives, held by Democrat Peter J. Petrarca.

Another development was the last-minute withdrawal of 19-year-old Brent Barrows, an endorsed Republican for School Committee, who decided that with a part-time job in the state Senate and his college plans unresolved, he had too much on his plate.

His decision had the GOP scrambling for a candidate to fill the slot, and the party tapped Kellie-Ann Heenan, who two years ago ran unsuccessfully for a school board seat.

Petrarca, a five-term incumbent in the district representing Smithfield, Lincoln, and Johnston, now faces a primary, because Lincoln's Gregory Costantino is running as an unendorsed Democrat.

Costantino filed candidacy for the seat in 2010, but later dropped out.

His new filing puts him and Petrarca in a head-to-head primary battle, with the winner still facing two other opponents in November, Republican James Archer, of Smithfield, and former long-time Democratic senator James S. D'Ambra, of Lincoln, who's running as an independent.

Archer, a member of the Smithfield Planning Board, is a former GOP party chairman.

Petrarca, a House leader who did not run as strongly two years ago as he had in previous elections despite facing a candidate who did little campaigning, came out battling this time with an early statement touting his support for educational funding and his membership on a committee that oversees the revenue stream at Twin River that he said is expected to provide Lincoln with nearly \$7 million this year.

Both D'Ambra and Costantino say he's vulnerable because of his connections to controversial auto body shop legislation that Governor Chafee vetoed.

Expected to attract keen interest in November is a face-off for the District 22 Senate seat that 10-term incumbent John J. Tassoni Jr. is giving up.

Tassoni is supporting former Town Council President and fellow Democrat Stephen Archambault, who will be opposed by incumbent Town Council Vice President Richard Poirier, a Republican who is himself a former council president.

Incumbent Democrat Thomas Winfield in House District 53 will face the GOP's David Bibeault, who lost to Tassoni for Senate in the last two elections.

For Town Council, Republicans, who hold a 4-1 majority, have endorsed incumbents Ronald Manni and Maxine Cavanagh; Rose Marie Cipriano, Matthew Fabisch, and Alberto LaGreca.

In addition to Heenan, they endorsed Sean J. Clough for School Committee, where two of the five terms are expiring.

Republican Town Council President Michael J. Flynn announced earlier that he would not seek re-election.

Endorsed Democrats for Town Council are incumbent Bernard Hawkins, Suzy Alba, Lauraine Ouellette, David M. Fanning, and Patrick G. Reddy.

For the school board, Democrats endorsed incumbent Joan LaFauci and Ronald T. Riley.

Town Committee candidates are:

Democrats: Suzy Alba, Stephen Archambault, Donald Brown, James Cambio, S. Jean Cerroni, Stephen Cicilline, Matthew DeAngelis, David Fanning, Anthony Gallone, Dennis Grilli, Virginia Harnois, Frances Harris, Bernard Hawkins, William Hawkins III, John Hunt, Janet Labrecque, Joan LaFauci, and Lawrence Mancini (party chairman).

Republicans:

Anne Allen, James Archer, Brent Barrows, David Bibeault, Donald Burns, Maxine Cavanagh, Henry Cipriano, Rose Marie Cipriano, Sean Clough, John Emin, Matthew Fabisch, Kathleen Flynn, Michael Flynn, Antonio Fonseca, Anthony Fuzek, Kellie-Ann Heenan, Jennifer Hirons, Philip Hirons (party chairman), Richard Iannitelli, and Alberto LaGreca.

There are no independent or unendorsed candidates on the municipal level, according to the town clerk's office.

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