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## Smithfield Town Council President Flynn retiring from public service

By GERRY GOLDSTEIN, Valley Breeze & Observer Correspondent

SMITHFIELD - For the first time in 36 years, the name Michael J. Flynn will be absent from a Smithfield election ballot this fall.

The Town Council president and former long-time state senator was not ready to confirm it this week, but Republican Party sources said Flynn has made it known that he's not running for re-election.

In another development, it was learned that Alberto LaGreca, whose term on the School Committee expires this year, will get the GOP endorsement for Town Council, along with incumbent Republicans Richard Poirier, Maxine Cavanagh and Ronald Manni.

The full slate of candidates for both major political parties will become known after the official filing of declarations June 25-27.

Flynn, a Bristol native who has lived in town for 42 years and first ran unsuccessfully for state Senate in 1976, won the seat two years later and served for 22 years until Democrat John J. Tassoni Jr. defeated him in 2000.

In 2002 Flynn, now 79, won for Town Council, where he has served ever since, the last two years as president.

Flynn, who in 2005 retired after 37 years as a math teacher at the Community College of Rhode Island, broke into the Senate in 1978 as the result of an election rarity - his bid to unseat two-term incumbent F. Daniel Russell ended in a tie vote.

In a subsequent special election Flynn prevailed by some 500 votes, with the outcome launching a political career that now, apparently, will come to a close later this year.

Flynn's decision, and LaGreca's expected endorsement, would leave the GOP with one council slot to fill.

It was also learned this week that Republicans plan to endorse Sean Clough for one of the two school board terms expiring this year, including LaGreca's.

Clough, 25, was a student when he ran unsuccessfully for School Committee two years ago. He has since graduated from Rhode Island College, where he pursued dual degrees in political science and economics.

Democrats who have so far announced for Town Council, which currently has a 4-1 Republican majority, are incumbent Bernard Hawkins and newcomer Suzy Alba.

The other expiring school board term is held by Joan LaFauci, who is part of the 3-2 Democratic majority and likely to run again.

Meanwhile, Senator Tassoni - who knocked Flynn out of the Senate in 2000 - announced earlier this year that he's giving the seat up this year and is throwing his support to former Democratic Town Council president Stephen Archambault.

The two local state representatives, Thomas Winfield and Peter Petrarca, are seeking new terms. Republican candidates for General Assembly have not yet come forward.

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