

Wasinger wins easily in GOP voting

By Clay Barbour

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CLAYTON

Town and Country Alderwoman Colleen Wasinger easily defeated Fenton Mayor Dennis Hancock late Tuesday in the St. Louis County Council's GOP primary.

The two were competing for the GOP-heavy 3rd District seat being vacated by longtime Councilman Skip Mange, R-Town and Country. Mange is stepping down at the end of his term.

Wasinger now faces Democrat Kathleen Schweitzer in the general election. County Executive Charlie A. Dooley, a Democrat, handily beat his two primary opponents: Charlotte Meshell and Carl Johnson. Dooley faces Republican Joe Passanise in the general election.

In all, four council seats are up for election this year. The other council members running are: Hazel Erby, D-University City, who is unopposed; Greg Quinn, R-Ballwin, who faces Democrat Steven Biggs; and Kurt Odenwald, R-Shrewsbury, who faces Democrat Barbara Fraser.

While Odenwald's race figures to be the most contentious, it is no more important than the one Mange is vacating. The 3rd District, home to communities such as Creve Coeur, Town and Country and Kirkwood, is considered a Republican stronghold. It is generally assumed that Tuesday's winner will easily win the general election.

Mange chose Wasinger, 41, to fill the seat. Wasinger has a master's degree in business administration and a law degree. She is an expert in real estate law, a qualification that could come in handy on the council. But she also is relatively unknown in political circles, having served less than a year on the board.

Dooley has spared no expense in campaigning. He has raised about \$1.15 million and spent about \$530,000 to keep his job. That includes more than \$100,000 spent on polling agencies and political consultants. Passanise has raised about \$5,600 and spent more than \$2,000.

Most experts agree that Dooley is looking at this race as a chance to establish his power base for the foreseeable future. "I am not taking anything for granted," Dooley said.

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