

Home / Spotlight

http://www.cecildaily.com/spotlight/six-file-for-three-seats-on-charlestown-board/article_09692994-3970-51b2-a545-d2e14974817d.html

Six file for three seats on Charlestown board

By Jessica Iannetta jiannetta@cecilwhig.com 14 hrs ago



FILE PHOTO

CHARLESTOWN — Town voters will be spoiled for choice in this year's election, as six people — including five who are relatively new to town politics — have filed for the three open seats on the board.

Avalon Park Committee member Patricia Clements, former town maintenance worker Jeff Fields, former commissioner candidate Jack Kronner, The Wellwood owner Larry Metz, incumbent and current board president Andy Thompson, and former commissioner and Elkton Police Department officer Lou Wood are all hoping to be elected to a two-year term on the board in the upcoming March 6 election.

Commissioners Renee Capano, who has served three terms, and Mary Carol Durange, who has served four non-consecutive terms, have both decided not to seek re-election. The winners of the election will join Joe Letts and Karl Fockler on the board.

Patricia Clements, a 30-year town resident, has never held elected office before but has been involved with Charlestown for years. She currently serves on both the Green Team and the Avalon Park Committee and has also served on the Planning and Zoning Board in the past. As a school teacher for 32 years — 28 of those in Cecil County — Clements, who has since retired, said she learned valuable leadership and grant writing skills that can be an asset to the board.

“I wanted to volunteer my service to the community and push for the advancement of Avalon Park,” she said, noting the two years she’s spent on the park committee are a major reason she decided to run.



Clements

PHOTO COURTESY OF PATSY CLEMENTS

Fields has been a town resident for nearly 25 years and also worked for the town for six and a half years as a maintenance worker. Now retired from the Maryland Department of Transportation, Fields said he’s running because he’d like to see the town board be more responsive and connected to residents. During his time as a town employee, Fields said it seemed like more and more of the power was being given over to the town administrative staff, rather than the democratically-elected commissioners.

“The commissioner board is getting away from the people,” he said.



Fields

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF FIELDS

two years ago to be closer to his son and grandchildren who live in North East.

Metz, who owns The Wellwood, said he decided to run for commissioner in hopes of bringing his perspective as a businessman to the town board. He noted that running a town is similar to running a business.

“I hope to bring a new light to the commissioner’s office as a business owner,” Metz said, noting he’s not aware of any other business owners who have recently served on the board.

Kronner ran for the town board in last year’s election, ultimately losing to Fockler and Letts by less than 20 votes. Kronner joked that he’s running again “because I didn’t get elected last year,” but added more seriously that he received a lot of votes in last year’s election and believes he will get similar support again this year.

“The town needs a change and the only way to get a change is to elect new people,” he said.

Last year, Kronner ran on a platform of encouraging new businesses to come to town and increasing community involvement, two issues he plans to continue campaigning on this year. Kronner, who worked in the mortgage industry for more than 30 years before retiring, moved to town with his wife



Kronner

CECIL WHIG FILE PHOTO



Metz
CECIL WHIG FILE PHOTO

If elected, Metz, who grew up in Charlestown, said his main priority would be safety, in terms of sidewalks, lighting and other features that help residents, he said.



Thompson was first elected to the board in 2016 when he also faced a crowded field of six candidates, emerging as the top vote-getter. He was elected president of the town board last year and currently holds that role. Thompson, who works at Aberdeen Proving Ground, grew up in Charlestown and moved back to town with his family a few years ago after living in North East.

During his time in office, Thompson said he's happy about the way the board has worked to bring the town's budget under control and found ways to keep operating costs low so that taxes won't need to be raised. Going forward, Thompson said he'd like to continue working toward acquiring community grants to improve and renovate Avalon Park as well as other areas of town.



Thompson
CECIL WHIG PHOTO BY JESSICA IANNETTA

“I just want to continue to try and have a positive impact on the town,” he said.



Wood

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOU WOOD

Wood has lived in town for more than 40 years and previously served one term on the town board 15 or 20 years ago, she said. After working as a police officer first for the Cecil County Sheriff's Office and then EPD, Wood retired 10 years ago and said she now finds herself with the time to serve the town.

Charlestown used to be “more fun” years ago and Wood said she'd like to see the town hold more activities and things to do, such as the now-defunct Riverfest. Wood has 14 grandchildren and volunteers every year to help with collecting free toys at Christmas for kids. If elected, Wood said she'd like to see Charlestown make a name for itself.

“Charlestown is a great little town,” she said. “It's just one that's not really ever heard of or talked about.”

The town election will be held from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 6, in Charlestown town hall. All residents registered with the county with a Charlestown address and who have been a town resident for at least three months prior to the election are eligible to vote.