

It's up to the voters

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EPA Councilwoman Wilks will not run for re-election

By Phyllis Brown
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EAST PALO ALTO — Six new candidates may enter the race for a seat on a new East Palo Alto City Council this month.

Longtime East Palo Alto Municipal Councilwoman Gertrude Wilks will not be one of them. Wilks said she will not run for office because she she has been targeted for political defeat.

Joseph Sanders, Arn Cenedella,

Warnell Coats, Peter Evans, James Johnson, Litha Powell, Municipal Councilman Bradford Stamper and county Planning Commissioner Frank "Omowale" Satterwhite have taken out petitions from the San Mateo County Clerk's Office in order to enter the City Council race.

Three other potential candidates — Ruben Abrica, Onyango Bashir, Roosevelt Cox and Theotis Nelson — took out filing papers last week.

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Times Tribune file photo

Gertrude Wilks

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WILKS

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East Palo Alto Mayor Barbara Mouton also said she will run for office.

All of the potential candidates must return their forms to be eligible to run. The filing deadline is Thursday.

Potential candidates Coats, Evans, Johnson and Powell could not be reached for comment on their candidacy.

East Palo Alto's incorporation election was approved for April 13 by the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and by the Board of Supervisors. When the election was approved, a City Council form of government also was approved.

Wilks, who has served on the advisory East Palo Alto Municipal Council for eight years, intimated that she "has been made a target" for political defeat, but she would not say by whom.

She said she would not want her campaign to be a source of conflict in her community.

"If there were going to be a lot of energy spent on trying to discredit me, it would make sense, in the name of unity, for me not to run," she said.

Wilks said she will work full-time with the private school she found-

ed, The Gertrude Wilks Academy, formerly the Nairobi Day Schools. She also said she will host a cable television program entitled "Advocates for Inner City Children," beginning sometime next year.

Among the most recent contenders for City Council seats are two opponents of incorporation.

Both Joseph Sanders and Arn Cenedella favor annexation of all or part of East Palo Alto to Menlo Park.

Sanders, a member of the East Palo Alto Sanitary District Board of Directors, which will be dissolved if incorporation is approved, has said many times that he favors annexation.

"I still favor annexation," Sanders said Friday. "But I thought that, if the vote is successful, I would want to be in a position in order to give the public first hand knowledge of the finances and growth of the sanitary district."

Sanders, 62, is retired. He is a member of the East Palo Alto Senior Citizens Board. He lives at 890 Bell St.

Cenedella, 27, has been one of the chief opponents of East Palo Alto's incorporation. He believes that incorporation is economically infeasible.

"I am thinking about running, so that the people of East Palo Alto get both sides of the story on incorporation," Cenedella said Friday. "I am against incorporation, mainly on fiscal grounds. If you heard the president's State of the Union Ad-

dress, (you would realize that) all local governments have to be very concerned about how they are going to pay for services."

Cenedella is a resident of the Mission Palo Alto townhouses in the area west of the Bayshore Freeway.

Planning Commissioner Satterwhite, 39, said he chose to run for office "to help build a city."

"We have the local capability and the resources to solve the good majority of our local problems," he said. "And I am humbled and encouraged by the possibility of participating in that process."

Satterwhite is a former municipal councilman, having served on the board from 1974 to 1978.

If he wins a seat on the City Council, he said he will give up his seat on the Planning Commission. Satterwhite is a management consultant in community development. He lives at 2275 Euclid Ave.

Municipal Councilman Bradford Stamper said Monday that he has chosen to run for the City Council because "I want to see a city administration that is concerned about East Palo Alto and the most effective delivery of services to the people."

Stamper, 30, lives at 356 Wisteria Drive. He is an employment recruiter. He is serving his fourth year on the Municipal Council.

"I want to see East Palo Alto a city," he said.