

GOP narrows road commission candidates to 4

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Those remaining on the Republican list of candidates to replace James E. Lanni on the Road Commission for Oakland County will be required to submit a list of property holdings.

Requiring the list is believed to be a new wrinkle in the process of selecting a road commissioner, explained commissioner John G. Pappageorge, R-Troy. "And it's designed to avoid any possible conflict of interest."

Pappageorge, chairman of the

GOP caucus on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, announced the new requirement Tuesday, the day after he and his Republican colleagues narrowed the number of candidates to be considered for the commission from 16 to four.

Those four — two former county commissioners, a Realtor and a Bloomfield Hills attorney who spent nearly 12 years on the Michigan Transportation Commission — will be interviewed at an open meeting of the GOP caucus Monday.

The successful candidate is expected to be recommended to the

county board and probably appointed to the road commission next Thursday at its next regular meeting.

REPUBLICANS SAY the selection system they have established is open and objective, and designed to select the most qualified person.

Democrats, however, insist the GOP system is "more of the good old boys network." They intend to interview their own candidates at a public hearing beginning Tuesday.

The system set up by Republicans is the same one that gave us Jim Lanni," said commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick, D-Southfield. "It's

the same system that gave us John Giau."

The road commission is officially a nonpartisan appointment filled by a vote of the entire county board. The appointment becomes partisan, however, when members of the majority party vote along party lines.

With the GOP controlling the county board since 1980, five of the last road commissioners over the last decade have been Republicans.

Two of the five — Lanni and Giau — both faced prison terms after being charged with felonies.

after pleading no contest in Oakland Circuit Court to twice raping a 15-year-old babysitter. He will be sentenced Sept. 24, and will likely get some time in prison as part of the sentence.

JOHN GNAU JR. was a successful Bloomfield Township public relations man and active GOP fundraiser in October, 1986, when he resigned from the road commission after pleading guilty in federal court to influence peddling. He was sentenced to three years in prison.

Republicans are obviously embarrassed by those developments. But they insist the appointments of Lanni and Giau were abominations.

"We used a good selection process when we picked them," said commissioner John E. Olsen, R-Huntington Woods. "There was no way of knowing either would go to prison."

Thus any criticism of the selection process is merely "second-guessing and hindsight," said Olsen.

Even so, Republicans this time say they are more interested in qualifications rather than partisan credentials.

Commissioner David L. Moffitt, R-Farmington Hills, for example, said he's looking for someone who knows about roads — but also understands the importance of Lansing and Washington, D.C., as revenue sources.

Commissioner Thomas A. Law, R-West Bloomfield, said that in addition to qualifications, the candidate he will support must have "objectivity and integrity."

"We can be very careful in our evaluation," said Law, a lawyer. "But if the candidate we select

doesn't have integrity, it doesn't matter."

PAPPAGEORGE SAID the remaining four candidates have been notified of their upcoming interviews and asked to submit a list of property holdings.

"We don't need to know the value of the property," said Pappageorge. "We just want to know what property they own or, if they are in a partnership, what property that partnership owns."

The candidates to be interviewed by Republican commissioners beginning at 6 p.m. Monday are:

• Mark Chester, of Troy, a senior purchasing expediter for the General Motors Corp. Chester is a former county commissioner who was defeated last November by Democrat Teresa Krause, also of Troy.

• Rudy Lozano, a Realtor from Clarkston and an accomplished GOP fundraiser. He has the backing of former Oakland County prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, one of the most influential names in Republican circles.

• Michael McCulloch, a lawyer in the Joseph & McCulloch law firm, Royal Oak. McCulloch was a county commissioner until last fall, when he ran unsuccessfully for district judge rather than seeking re-election to the county board.

• Roger D. Young, a Bloomfield Hills lawyer with Stone, Biber, Young & O'Toole in Troy. Young was on the Michigan State Transportation Commission from April, 1979, until last Jan. 15.

Young submitted a listing of his property holdings before being asked to, according to Pappageorge.

... Dems, too, will pick nominee

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Democrats are convinced their counterparts on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners overlooked some good prospects when they cut the list of road commission candidates from 16 to four.

So Democrats are inviting road commission candidates who were

passed over by the GOP to reapply with them.

"We're inviting all those candidates who were passed over Monday to interview with us," said commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick, D-Southfield. "They were probably so interested in getting a good Republican that they overlooked some highly qualified people."

They hope to interview the follow-

ing people whose applications were considered by Republicans: Kenneth E. Culling, Royal Oak; John DiGiovanni, Hazel Park; Martin W. Hollander, West Bloomfield Township; Ben Marks, Farmington Hills; Dennis Oaks, Southfield; Samuel N. Oaks, Southfield; George Schutte, Rochester Hills; Jay Shah, Pontiac; Donald E. Waldron, Clawson; Leslie Wright, Orionville; and William Hassberger, Beverly Hills.

"We're also inviting anybody else interested in being the next road commissioner to interview with us," said Pernick, chairman of the Democratic caucus on the county board. He said anyone interested in being interviewed for possible appointment to the road commission may contact the Democratic headquarters at 435-4044.

DEMOCRATS HAVE SCHEDULED a public hearing beginning at 6 p.m. Tuesday to interview candidates and select a nominee for appointment to the Road Commission for Oakland County.

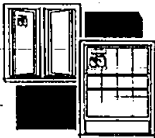
Their nominee — along with a candidate selected by Republicans — will be submitted to the full Oakland County Board of Commissioners next Thursday, when the board is expected to replace James E. Lanni of Royal Oak.

Because of the partisan nature of selecting a road commissioner, however, Democratic efforts to pick the next road commissioner may seem pointless.

The road commission post is a non-partisan appointment made by the full county board.

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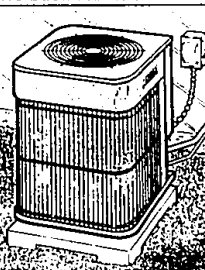
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