

POLLING FOR RCC GOVERNORS

By William Nicoson

Reston Community Center's annual polling season is upon us. Three seats on its nine-member Board of Governors are being contested. Voting is already underway at either of RCC's facilities during their regular hours. You'll need a driver's license or other identification to receive a ballot. On Saturday, October 16, polling stations will be open at all Reston village centers and the Reston Regional Library from 10 AM to 4 PM.

This year's preference poll will, for the first time, be open to business property owners, all of whom will receive in the mail a voucher to be exchanged at a polling place for a ballot. Residents will vote as usual without receipt of vouchers.

In one of my previous columns I suggested that businesses, reminded by receipt of vouchers, would turn out in greater strength to vote than residents who received no such reminder. The obvious unasked question: might business interests take control of the RCC Board of Governors with an intent to slash programs in order to slash the piggy-back county property tax which funds RCC and is resented by some business property owners.

That won't happen since, as best I can tell from the background of the six registered candidates, none of them represents predominately business interests. In last year's preference poll, a group representing business interests campaigned vigorously for three like-minded candidates, two of whom prevailed. No such campaign has come to my attention this year.

Of the six candidates, two are currently serving on the Board of Governors: the current chair, Beverly Cosham, and frequent past chair, Terry L. Smith. They will contribute institutional memory of great value to RCC.

Of the four hopeful newcomers, one is conspicuous for his potential contributions: Roger Lowen.

Since moving to Reston in 1988, Lowen has served on the boards of Reston Interfaith and Reston Citizens Association. He helped organize a local scholarship fund, received the 2003 Martin Luther King award for outstanding service to Restonians, and participated in the RCC Governance Panel which urged County Supervisors to open the RCC preference poll to business property owners.

He has participated in five Reston Triathlons, winning first place in his age group four times.

With a masters degree in economics, Lowen understands the importance of careful financial planning and reporting. And unlike many others gifted with intelligence, he prefers listening and cooperation to announcing with fanfare the "obvious" solutions.

This year RCC's Board of Governors would be fortunate to retain the services of Beverly Cosham and Terry L. Smith and to welcome the services of Roger Lowen.

William Nicoson is President of Reston Historic Trust.