

LONG ISLAND / SUFFOLK

Mastic Beach holds election despite move to dissolve village



Christopher Anderson and Robert Miller are facing off for the job of mayor of Mastic Beach in a March 21 election with different opinions on how the village should navigate through its dissolution process. Aug. 31, 2011 Credit: James Carbone

By Deon J. Hampton

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Two candidates are vying for mayor of Mastic Beach — a position that will be abolished at the end of the year, but still is needed to guide the municipality back to being an unincorporated part of Brookhaven Town.

Village trustee Christopher Anderson and challenger Robert Miller are facing off for the top job in Tuesday's election with different opinions on how the village should navigate through its dissolution process. Residents, in a 1,922 to 1,215 November vote, approved a plan to disband and rejoin Brookhaven by Dec. 31 this year.

Still, state law requires an election and that officials adopt a budget.

Anderson, 33, running on the Residents Unite Party line, said the village should hire more employees to process building permits and create a certificate of occupancy amnesty program to generate revenue and lower debt.

"There's a lot of lost revenue," he said.

Miller, 50, is running on the Dissolve Party line. He initiated the petition drive that led to Mastic Beach disbanding because, he said, he felt there wasn't a large enough tax base to afford being a village or offering services.

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"I feel I need to be the mayor to transfer the village back to the town," Miller said. "I want to see the plan brought to its completion."

If elected, Miller said he would enter into multiple intermunicipal agreements with Brookhaven Town to help the dissolution process and save money.

Also in the coming election, four candidates are competing for two open village trustee seats.

Christopher A. Ricciardi, 52, is running on the Residents Unite Party line. He was chairman of the zoning board for four years, has been a village employee since its inception six years ago, and played a role in creating the zoning and planning departments.

Ricciardi wants to focus on the building department, where he said there is a backlog of New York Rising paperwork and residents need help getting back in their homes damaged by superstorm Sandy. He also called for more work on the village dissolution.

"We would advocate to hire a few positions and will be more transparent," he said. "We need more residents involved because this plan will affect the residents in the future."

Diana M. Soldano, 51, is a trustee candidate on the Residents Unite Party line.

"I'm not happy with the way the current administration is handling the dissolution process," she said. "They are doing everything behind closed doors and that's wrong. They are not involving the public."

Soldano, a 21-year village resident and member of its planning board for two years, says entering agreements with Brookhaven can be costly when the village should be trying to lower debt. She said she wants the village to repair roads, spend unused funds and build a relationship with Brookhaven.

Victor Viola, appointed as a trustee earlier this month after Anne Snyder abruptly resigned with three weeks left in her term, is seeking election to the trustee position. He is running on the Dissolve Party line.

"I wanted to be involved because at this point I feel our village was run very poorly. It got to a point where our services were affected," said Viola, 69. "The trustees always had a lot of conflict and that stopped us from

going forward.” He was on the village ethics board and the zoning commission.

Viola, a retired Con Edison employee, said he plans to work with Miller on crafting a budget that includes the intermunicipal agreements.

The fourth candidate, Fred Krage, 63, also is running on the Dissolve Party line. Board members last year called for his removal from the planning board because he collected signatures to disband the village.

“As we dissolve, we have to make sure we stay in contact with all levels of government. We have a lot of work to do down here,” he said. “I feel Mastic Beach could really be nice; it’s part of our goal to bring it back to being neighborly. The village didn’t bring us together. It divided everybody.”

He said his 20 years of experience in maintenance and operations has prepared him to help the village rejoin Brookhaven.

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