



Emily Anne Staples Tuttle papers.

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Staples won't run again for Hennepin County Board

Hennepin County Commissioner Emily Anne Staples ended weeks of indecision Thursday by announcing that she will not seek reelection. She cited her approaching wedding as her reason for not running.

Staples had been hoping not to run since she announced her engagement this spring but didn't want to step down without recruiting a candidate she'd be comfortable with for the western county seat.

She said Thursday that she'd found that candidate in Metropolitan Council Member Mary Hill Smith, a former school board member from Wayzata. Staples is a DFLer but said she's comfortable with Smith, a moderate Independent-Republican.

Smith hasn't announced her candidacy and couldn't be reached Thursday.

But Staples and state Sen. Gen Olson, IR-Minnetrista, said Smith will be a candidate. Former Commissioner Nancy Olkon of Medina announced her candidacy as an independent earlier this week. Independent-Republicans have endorsed Penny Steele of Plymouth. Richard



Emily Anne Staples cited her upcoming marriage in announcing her decision not to run.

Pugh of Mound also is seeking the job.

Staples said in May that she was thinking of quitting, which would

threaten the County Board's newly formed majority supporting abortion rights. She is more fiscally conservative than some DFL commissioners, yet she is a strong believer in a prevention strategy for health and social issues.

She has supported such controversial measures as a needle exchange for drug addicts to fight the spread of AIDS and domestic-partner health insurance for county employees, despite the conservative leanings of her district.

Both Smith and Olkon support abortion rights, but Staples said she prefers Smith because she considers her more familiar with the district's issues, having lived in the area longer. Olkon spent six years on the County Board representing part of Minneapolis and St. Louis Park.

Moreover, Smith and Staples share interests, both having served as president of the Junior League of Minneapolis, as Guthrie Theater board members and as officials of the Minnesota Women's Political Caucus.

The district is considered Indepen-

dent-Republican territory, even though its last two commissioners have been DFLers.

A contest involving Smith and Steele, who is more conservative, could be influenced by their party's ideological struggle in the gubernatorial primary between Gov. Arne Carlson and party endorsee Allen Quist.

No one has announced for the seat as a DFLer, although Marilyn Corcoran a DFL member of the Hennepin Parks Board, said she would at least think about running. She is a former mayor of Dayton.

Several other elected officials who have been suggested as candidates, including state Rep. Steve Smith, IR-Mound, have ruled themselves out. So has former state Rep. Bill Schreiber, an Independent-Republican who lost to Staples in 1990.

Staples, a widow, is planning to marry Gedney Tuttle, a widower.

She said she wants flexibility to travel, find a new house and participate in volunteer activities.



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