

Ten vie for planning chairmanship so far

■ Deadline to apply for the job is 5 p.m. today; council president expects process to take five or six weeks

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The County Council is likely to appoint a new Planning Board chairman within five or six weeks of today's application deadline, council President George I. Leventhal said Tuesday.

If the council keeps to that schedule, Chairman Derick P. Berlage, who withdrew his bid for reappointment earlier this month, would stay in place only a few weeks after his term expires June 14.

The council will conduct public interviews for Berlage's replacement, said Leventhal (D-At large) of Takoma Park.

Planning Board Commissioner John M. Robinson submitted his application for chairman, the only full-time job on the five-member board, last week.

Art Brodsky — an Olney activist and communications director of Public Knowledge, a group that advocates openness in the use of information technology — said Tuesday that he is also an applicant. Brodsky holds a degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and a degree in government and politics from the University of Maryland.

Many council members declined to discuss the applicants in detail, saying they did not want to discourage anyone from applying or to "handicap" the field before all the contestants were known.

But two offered views of the contest.

"I think we should get a fresh start," said Steven A. Silverman (D-At large) of Silver Spring, chairman of the council's Planning Housing and Economic Development Committee.

Silverman, who is running for county executive, said he would not support a current board member as chairman.

But he said he is "very impressed"

READ THE APPLICATIONS

As of Tuesday, 10 people have submitted applications to the County Council. Go to www.gazette.net/planningletters06. Deadline to apply is today.

by the work that former Planning Board chairman Royce Hanson did in advising the council on how to fix the failures that led to hundreds of uncaught building violations in Clarksburg.

Hanson, a nationally respected planning expert who has held key academic jobs at universities in Maryland, Texas and Minnesota, led the Planning Board from 1972 to 1981.

"Mr. Hanson's seniority is a plus as far as I'm concerned," Silverman said.

Hanson, who lives in Montgomery Village, holds a law degree and doctorate in government and public administration from The American University. He is director of the Center for Washington Area Studies at The George Washington University.

Councilwoman Nancy M. Floreen said Hanson can "get the agency back to basics ... and would have the respect of all the stakeholders."

"My money is on Mr. Hanson," said Floreen (D-At large) of Garrett Park.

But there are still other people who are interested in the job and have not submitted applications as of Tuesday, said Councilman Thomas E. Perez (D-Dist. 5) of Takoma Park.

Robinson has three years remaining in his second term on the board and, therefore, would be eligible to serve as chairman for only three years.

But Robinson — a staff lawyer for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission who has practiced real estate law and was co-chairman of the Silver Spring Redevelopment Advisory Board — said three years would give him enough time to make changes.