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Open space advocates triumph in Forks Twp.

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By **JD MALONE**
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FORKS TWP. | The two new faces joining the board of supervisors in January are Robert Egolf and Erik Chuss, according to unofficial election results.

The new supervisors made it through a four-man field in a narrow race that changed the look of the board. Incumbent John Ackerman was ousted in the primary, and Chairman David Hoff did not seek re-election.

"I think the board of supervisors does need some new people," said Chuss, the current chairman of the planning commission. "(The board needs) some new approaches to dealing with the problems the township is facing."

All four candidates, James Wideman, David Billings, Chuss and Egolf, focused on preserving open space, reining in growth and watching the township's bottom line.

"I think (the residents) expect that we are going to manage growth," Egolf said. "We as supervisors are in the driver's seat."

Egolf, 68, hopes to hold down spending and watch the township's budget. On Thursday, the current board of supervisors tentatively approved the first property tax increase in 10 years.

Chuss and Egolf agreed that the two seats, each with a 6-year term, represent a chance to plot the future of the township because of the wild pace of development and the ongoing legal battle with KMRD LP over its 3,000-home Kings Mill proposal.

Both Egolf, a member of the zoning hearing board, and Chuss oppose any settlement with KMRD.

Chuss, 46, thinks the major challenges facing the board of supervisors are open space preservation and cleaning up the fallout of the rapid development the township absorbed over the past decade.

"We have a lot of challenges that we need to face in the township," Chuss said. "And we need to run the government in a fiscally responsible manner."

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