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Expanding the field in Morris Township

Ordinance aims to attract more applicants for boards

Morris Township is poised to take a step toward opening up its government a bit.

The township committee plans a final vote at its October meeting on an ordinance requiring the township to notify the public through its Web site every time a vacancy occurs on any municipal board or commission. Those interested in serving on, say, the planning board, the recreation commission or any other body would be invited to submit a resume for consideration.

The traditional way of filling vacancies is for officials to appoint political associates. Given the fact Republicans long have controlled township government, the change is being pushed by the two Democrats, Jeff Grayzel and Ron Goldberg, on the five-member governing body.

During a discussion at last Wednesday's meeting, Republicans indicated they would support the ordinance, but they backed tabling it a month to make minor changes.

The ordinance would not change the fact appointment power lies solely with the mayor. No matter how many resumes are submitted for an open spot on the board of adjustment, the mayor would be free to appoint his nephew. Grayzel acknowledged that, but said he hoped a slew of resumes would discourage a mayor from doing that. Perhaps.

The ordinance offers no guarantees, but it still strikes us as a good idea. Soliciting interest from those outside the sphere of politics could produce applicants with different views. Diversity of thought is valuable and the ordinance should be adopted.

Additional Facts

Our View

Bucking the tradition of the "spoils system."
