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Three vying in Whitpain Democratic primary

By Bob Keeler bkeeler@21st-centurymedia.com @bybobkeeler on Twitter

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Jeff Campolongo (submitted photo)

WHITPAIN — With two six-year-seats on the Whitpain Township Board of Supervisors up for election this year, there are three Democrats in the primary election to determine which two move on to the election in the fall.

The three are Jeff Campolongo, Kimberly Koch and Ken Wollman.

The two Republican candidates, who are unopposed on the primary election ballot, are Harry Phifer and Adam D. Zucker.

Wollman and Zucker are incumbents.

Campolongo and Koch, who are running as a team, have been endorsed by the local Democratic committee.

The three Democratic candidates were each sent a questionnaire for this article asking their background helping prepare them for this office, why they are running, their goals, what is the biggest issue at this time for Whitpain, and where people can get information about the candidate.

Jeff Campolongo

Campolongo said he has a passion for community service, having served on the Board of Directors of the Blue Bell Country Club Community Association, and is active as a volunteer coach for the Whitpain Recreation Association, Wissahickon Athletic Commission and the Ambler Softball League.

"I am entering this race because I see something that troubles me. I see that leadership in Whitpain neither resembles nor reflects what today's Whitpain Township looks like or aspires to be. Our community is changing, with aging seniors, working families, and busy and vibrant schools," Campolongo said. "Yet, the voices for progressive values on our Board of Supervisors are muted by stagnancy, complacency and intolerance. Our community needs leadership that sees, hears and responds to their needs."

His and Koch's goals include generating revenue from state and federal grants to balance the township budget while keeping taxes down, he said. The two will decline the healthcare offered to township supervisors, which means a cost savings of more than a quarter million dollars over the two six-year terms, he said. They also plan to find a cost-efficient way to broadcast supervisors meetings and increase transparency, he said.

"We will act with deliberate speed to pass a township ordinance prohibiting discrimination against our brothers and sisters in the LGBTQ+ community, so that everyone can enjoy the comforts and benefits of living in Blue Bell without fear of hate or intolerance," Campolongo said.

"Maintaining a high quality of life for our friends, neighbors and visitors to Whitpain Township. Whether it be through community-based programs, outreach to vulnerable segments, or education on important issues," is the biggest issue, he said. "For example, feedback from residents on the recent sober living house situation or the need for enhanced traffic and safety measures shows that we are not doing enough to listen and actually hear what residents are saying."

Information is available at the team4whitpain.org website, Team4Whitpain Facebook page or the [JeffCampolongo4Whitpain Facebookpage](#), he said.

Kimberly Koch

Koch said she has been a high school English teacher in the Central Bucks School District for 15 years and, since being elected as a Whitpain Township auditor in 2017, has chaired that board.

She said she is running for the supervisor position because she brings a unique perspective to it.

"As a life-long resident, I have watched Whitpain's growth and the challenges it brings — namely traffic and new development," Koch said. "As a working Mom, I know how important it is to work to maintain our quality of life and keep our taxes low. I believe that our board should reflect our changing demographic. I, like many of our residents, am a mom of two young children. I want to teach them the importance of service to our community. Working together with Jeff Campolongo, I believe we can bring meaningful change by holding developers accountable, increasing walkability, and making township government more transparent."

In answer to the question about goals, she said she is uneasy about the township's long-term financial security.

"The Township's budget projections are concerning — long-term projections show deficits, which could threaten our prized AAA bond rating. Based on the Township budget published earlier this year, our projected budget surplus for 2018 is listed as over 8 million dollars. However, as you look at the projections for the next several years, that surplus is projected to drop dramatically to less than 2 million dollars by 2023," she said. "In order to keep taxes low, which is a goal for me and Jeff, we must find creative ways to cut spending and increase our revenue."

Koch said she and Campolongo value open space preservation and cautious development, especially during the Route 202 widening project.

"The two top issues are quality of life and fiscal responsibility. Preserving open space and addressing traffic congestion are top priorities," she said.

Information is available at the team4whitpain.org website and the "Kimberly Koch Candidate for Whitpain Township Supervisor" Facebook page, which can be searched at [@kimberlykoch4Whitpain](https://www.facebook.com/kimberlykoch4Whitpain), she said.

Ken Wollman

Wollman said he is a 25-year Whitpain Township resident whose 25th wedding anniversary is on May 21, the same day as the primary elections.

He has worked in sales management for Cargill for the past 10 years, he said. As a member of the Whitpain Township Board of Supervisors for the last 5.5 years, he was vice chair for two years and is currently serving as treasurer, he said.

"I love public service, helping residents and using my Bully Pulpit to promote good things happening in our community," Wollman said in answer to the question of why he is running.

In answer to the goals question, he listed the following:

- We have had 9 straight years of no tax increases, we must have 10, 11 & 12.
- Remain the 5th lowest taxed municipality in Montgomery County — or get better.
- Keep our AAA bond rating.
- Continue our constant investment in the Whitpain Police Department and the Centre Square Fire Company.
- Limit development/continue to invest in parks, open space and walkability.
- Traffic — get through the 202 widening as quickly as possible. This is not the entire answer to traffic concerns but it is a large part of it."

In answer to the question about the biggest issue facing Whitpain right now, Wollman said it is outside political agendas that threaten the quality of life in the township.

"We must reject these outside political agendas and the people who bring them," he said.

Information is available at the [SupervisorKenWollman](https://www.facebook.com/SupervisorKenWollman) Facebook page, he said.

Primary Election Day is Tuesday, May 21.

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