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Longtime Bellevue Councilman Degginger won't run for re-election

Grant Degginger, a former Bellevue mayor who is completing his 12th year on the City Council, announced Friday he won't run for re-election. Two political newcomers filed Friday to battle for his seat.

By Keith Ervin

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Two political newcomers filed Friday to run for Bellevue City Council as long-term Councilmember Grant Degginger announced he wouldn't seek re-election.

Degginger, a former mayor and planning-commission member, is in his 12th year as a council member. His surprise announcement comes as two factions battle for control of the council, which is split over Sound Transit's future light-rail route through the city and funding of road improvements to support redevelopment of the Bel-Red Corridor.

Retired attorney John Stokes, a citizen activist who has promoted ballot measures to fund schools and parks, will face attorney ██████████ an attorney who opposes Sound Transit's proposed Bellevue Way Southeast rail route and is backed by developers Kemper Freeman and Kevin Wallace, a council member.

Stokes said he hasn't advocated a particular light-rail route but said Friday he thinks enough study has been done for Sound Transit and the city to agree on a route. ██████████ has raised more than \$24,000 since February, according to PDC reports. Stokes has reported no contributions.

Degginger, 55, raised more than \$21,000 for his re-election before deciding not to run. Announcing his decision on the day of his youngest son's high-school graduation, Degginger said he wanted to take a break after "burning the candle at both ends" during 20 years on the Planning Commission or City Council.

Alluding in a statement to a bitter divide among council members who have accused each other of

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conflicts of interest, he said the council "seems to have lost its way" over the past year and a half.

Previously, Degginger said in an interview, council members "always respected each other's views and carried themselves and comported themselves with a high level of dignity for the process in doing the public's business. What I'm seeing now is a sense that all is permitted, folks can have their surrogates say anything to anybody. I have seen vile emails with language that my mother would not approve of."

A new council majority elected in 2009 reversed some of the previous council's policies, including its support for Sound Transit's proposed light-rail route along Bellevue Way Southeast and a funding plan for Bel-Red road improvements.

An investigator hired by the city earlier this week absolved Degginger of an alleged conflict of interest between his law firm's work for Sound Transit and his support of the transit agency's preferred rail route.

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