

# Town Election watch: Acocella for mayor?

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**By Mark Lungariello**

With his first term as town clerk coming to an end this year, Joseph Acocella will be running for office one way or another. But according to sources, Acocella's name may be appearing on the Republican line in the November ballots, not as clerk but as mayor.

"Stranger things have happened," Acocella told *The Harrison Report* last week. A decision on endorsements is expected from party leaders in the next month or so. Earlier this year, it seemed that Acocella would seek re-election as clerk but his name has been making the rounds in the community as a mayoral hopeful in recent weeks. He had also been mentioned as an early potential opponent for County Legislator Marty Rogowsky (D). Acocella had been quick to dispel those rumors to this newspaper when asked about his aspirations for the county. He did not take that route when approached about the possibility of a race for the mayor seat.

The clerk, 28, is a former Harrison Board of Education member and police department employee. Acocella's name is relatively new to the mix for a potential G.O.P. mayoral endorsement. Up until this point, several names have circulated with Police Chief David Hall viewed as the perceived frontrunner to pick up the Republican line this year.

Acocella said he did not approach government from a standpoint of "I'm going to be president, I'm going to governor or I'm going to be mayor." "I want to do what is best for the community...and to try to restore faith in government," he stated. If that meant that Acocella decided that he ultimately could fulfill his goals through a run for mayor, it would be something he'd be interested in.

Of course, if he were to seek the mayoral seat, Republicans would need to seek another candidate to run for the town clerk seat. No names have been mentioned in that regard and its probable there won't be any names until the point at which Acocella would announce his intentions to seek the mayoral nominations.

Regardless of the ultimate outcome, it is sure to be a heated campaign season. Mayor Joan Walsh (D) is looking for re-election and former Police Lt. Brendan Murphy has also said he will seek the nomination from the Democratic Party. That could possibly mean a Democratic party and a three-candidate race in November.