

News | updated: 11/5/2014 7:16 PM

# Wheaton bursting with pride for new lt. governor



Lieutenant governor-elect Evelyn Pacino Sanguinetti speaks before Bruce Rauner makes his entrance at an Election Night celebration Tuesday.

Mark Welsh | Staff Photographer



**Jessica Cilella**

Wheaton leaders say they're thrilled Councilwoman Evelyn Pacino Sanguinetti will be Illinois' next lieutenant governor, but they're less certain of filling her spot on the city council.

Sanguinetti's first 4-year term on the Wheaton City Council is up in May and it's expected she will resign well before then, considering the swearing-in for lieutenant governor takes place in January, officials said.

City Clerk Sharon Barrett-Hagen said if Sanguinetti resigns, the city will have 60 days from her resignation to appoint someone to the at-large position.

"Illinois statute does not allow us to leave the spot vacant," she said. "As we have done in the past, we would solicit applications or resumes from people who are interested in filling the position on a temporary basis."

Regardless of whether Sanguinetti resigns, her seat, along with Councilman John Prendiville's at-large seat, will be up for grabs in the spring election, Barrett-Hagen said.

City Attorney Jim Knippen said state law clearly forbids people from holding two elected seats that would create a conflict of interest, such as DuPage County Board and DuPage Forest Preserve.

He was unsure, however, if Sanguinetti would legally be able to hold on to her Wheaton City Council seat after she takes on the lieutenant governor position. It's "pretty hard" to think that she would want to keep both positions, Knippen said.

Contacted Wednesday, officials from Governor-elect Bruce Rauner's campaign said she was unavailable for an interview.

The campaign did announce, however, that Sanguinetti has been named chairwoman of Rauner's gubernatorial transition team.

"I look forward to working with the Governor-elect to build an administration that reflects our state's diversity and is prepared to lead on Day One," Sanguinetti said in a statement.

Sanguinetti largely campaigned in Rauner's shadow, while Gov. Pat Quinn's running mate, Paul Vallas, was frequently on the trail serving as an attack dog.

Still, people who know her say they believe Sanguinetti was able to sway voters who otherwise would not have voted Republican.

"I think she expanded the appeal of the Republican party, obviously her being a woman and a Latina," said fellow city councilman, Todd Scalzo.

Pat Fee, first vice president of the Illinois Federation of Republican Women, said Sanguinetti was adamant about meeting with women and Latinos on the campaign trail.

"She's proud of being Hispanic, she's a great mentor to the Hispanic community," she said.

In addition, Sanguinetti was probably able to garner votes because she is a "very upbeat,

positive lady" who is committed to everything organization she is involved in, Fee said.

"I'm sure that it's going to be hard," Fee said of Sanguinetti leaving behind her council seat, adding, however, that she is "the type of woman who never forgets who helps her, her roots."

Wheaton Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kerry O'Brien said Sanguinetti's move reminds her of a similar situation that occurred in 2012, when Jeanne Ives, made the move from city councilwoman to state representative.

"It's not the first time our city council has lost someone to a higher political position," O'Brien said. "I guess that just makes me feel proud that that's the caliber of people we have in our town."

Once Sanguinetti leaves the city council all the seats will be filled by men.

"In my tenure, it's always kind of been that way," said Mayor Michael Gresk. "There are plenty of capable women out there, I know there are. It's a question of time and commitment."

The city will solicit applications for Sanguinetti's position, should she resign, but from Nov. 17 to 24, residents are welcome to file to run in the spring election for her seat.

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