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Hearing set on issue of West Seneca downsizing

By Helen Jones NEWS STAFF REPORTER

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The effort to downsize government in West Seneca is headed to court.

During a news conference in West Seneca Town Hall on Tuesday, regionalism activist Kevin Gaughan said State Supreme Court Justice Joseph Mintz on Friday will hear the question of whether November's ballot should include a proposition to reduce the West Seneca Town Board from five members to three.

Gaughan said the court date is a response to a recent Erie County Board of Elections action invalidating as deficient petitions that were submitted to the West Seneca town clerk in early September.

"I'm confident that any judge that's going to hear this is going to say citizens have the right to make this decision on their own," he said.

Over a six-week period this summer, 35 volunteers gathered more than 4,000 signatures to place the downsizing issue on the ballot in November.

After it was filed with the town clerk, town resident Daniel

T. Warren filed an objection to the petition. Gaughan said Town Clerk Patricia C. DePasquale then forwarded the petition, which had more than 4,000 signatures, to the Board of Elections.

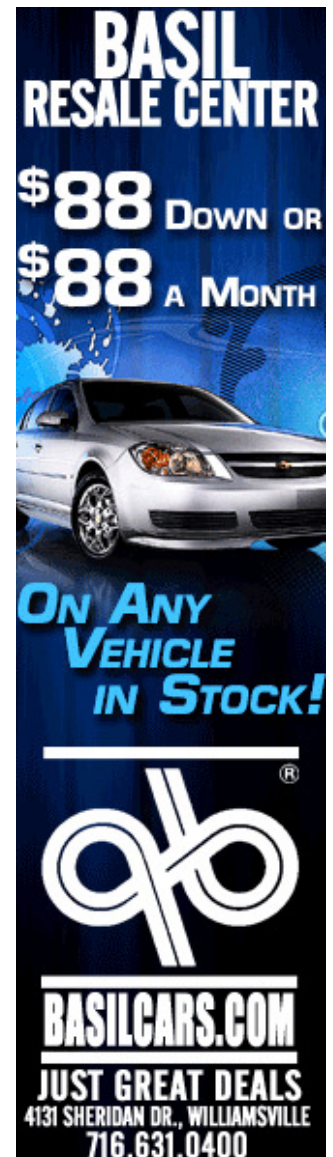
Named in the action is the town, DePasquale, two commissioners on the Erie County Board of Elections and Warren.

Court papers were filed Monday on behalf of West Seneca resident Dennis Mavromatis.

"One thing is clear," Gaughan said. "The Erie County Board

of Elections has no [legal] role" in reviewing the issue or even ruling on it.

Gaughan said most challenges to petitions are based on the number of valid signatures needed and the signatures



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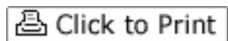
gathered over six weeks were 10 times the amount needed.

“Because we had overwhelming support, [they] fell back on this transparent attempt to deny citizens the right to decide for themselves.”

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