

FORMER COMMISSIONER SUES TO GET HIS JOB BACK

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Author: CECIL ANGEL FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

As his successor prepared to be sworn into office Thursday, former Wayne County commissioner **Keith Stallworth** filed a lawsuit to get his job back.

In the lawsuit filed in Wayne County Circuit Court, Stallworth said he withdrew his March 13 offer to resign at the March 18 regular meeting of the commission.

He said he also had written a letter to the commission dated March 14 asking to withdraw his resignation.

Stallworth, who took office as commissioner of District 6 in January, offered to step down a week after he pleaded guilty to a felony in connection with a drug case.

In his lawsuit, Stallworth asked a judge to stop the appointment of an interim commissioner. "Plaintiff will suffer irreparable harm if such an interim appointment is made," the lawsuit said.

On Thursday, Cheryl Cushingberry, who was first runner-up in the District 6 race, was sworn in to replace Stallworth.

Bill Johnson, spokesman for the Wayne County Commission, said, "The Wayne County Commission acted in good faith when it accepted his resignation on March 18."

Johnson called Stallworth's lawsuit "a breach of trust with the people in the district and a major breach of trust with the commissioners to whom he had made a commitment to step down voluntarily that day. It's dishonest and it's a travesty."

For Stallworth to sue the commission goes to his character as an individual, Johnson said. "I don't know how this affects his sentencing. This probably would not bode well at his sentencing. It certainly raises some questions at this point as to whether he is a man of his word."

Stallworth, a 46-year-old Democrat from Detroit, pleaded guilty to one count of structuring a financial transaction to evade federal currency reporting requirements, a 5-year felony.

The former state representative and one-time Detroit strip club owner, was one of 14 people indicted June 27, 2001, on charges of money laundering and drug conspiracy.

In exchange for a possible lighter sentence, Stallworth agreed to cooperate in the prosecution of the 13 other defendants.

Contact CECIL ANGEL at 313-223-4531 or angel@freepress.com.

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Page: 6B

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