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Mayoral Candidates Down to 6 After Deadline Elapses

By The Moscow Times

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Only six candidates, including acting Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin and opposition activist Alexei Navalny, have managed to submit the necessary documentation for registration in the upcoming mayoral elections.

The deadline for accepting candidates' registration papers was 6:00 p.m. Thursday. While eight people submitted documentation to the Election Committee, only six managed to collect the required number of deputies' signatures, the committee's head Valentin Gorbunov said in a reported carried by Interfax.

Thirty-two other hopefuls failed to overcome the so-called municipal filter that requires potential candidates to collect signatures of at least 6 percent of candidates in 110 of the 146 municipalities.

Independent candidates also have to collect signatures of support from at least 73,000

ordinary Muscovites.

Sobyanin — who is running as an independent candidate, but with the backing of the ruling United Russia party — submitted 80,000 signatures of support from Moscow's electorate in addition to the required number of deputies' signatures.

Communist Party hopeful Ivan Melnikov, A Just Russia candidate Nikolai Levichev, and Mikhail Degtyaryov of the LDPR also submitted the necessary documentation to the Election Committee, as did Yabloko's Sergei Mitrokhin and RPR-Parnas Alexei Navalny.

Green Alliance leader Gleb Fetisov, who applied for registration on Thursday, only managed to gain the support of 65 municipal deputies, and the Will (Volya) Party's nominee Svetlana Peunova collected only eight signatures. Therefore, they will be unable to run in the elections.

Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov, who is under house arrest on suspicion of plotting riots, didn't submit his application. He will, however, ask a court to extend the period allotted for him to collect signatures on the grounds that the commission had refused to accept his nomination papers from his representatives until Wednesday.

The mayoral election will take place on Sept. 8. and Sobyanin is expected to win comfortably.

A Levada Center poll published Wednesday indicated that among those who intend to vote, and who have already made their final choice of candidate, 78 percent favored Sobyanin. Navalny was the second-most popular candidate with 8 percent.

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