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Victors, losers sort out election

Growth controls likely to tighten

MATTHEW EISLEY, Staff Writer

The political landscape in Wake County's two biggest cities changed dramatically Tuesday when voters elected predominantly slow-growth candidates, increasing the likelihood of significant change in the way Raleigh and Cary pay for development.

One day after the election, N&O reporter Matthew Eisley got the reactions of three of the winners: incoming Cary Mayor Harold Weinbrecht; incoming Raleigh City Council member Nancy McFarlane; and, re-elected Raleigh Councilman Philip Isley.

Weinbrecht, 51, a SAS programmer, unseated incumbent Ernie McAlister despite being outspent 5-to-1.

McFarlane, 51, a politically unaffiliated pharmacist, defeated better-financed District A incumbent Tommy Craven.

Isley, 40, a pro-growth lawyer who ran unopposed, will be the only Republican on Raleigh's eight-member council.

Q: How do you feel about the elections?

WEINBRECHT: "It was just fantastic. ... The passion behind it is exciting."

McFARLANE: "I feel really encouraged, especially because it was a grass-roots effort that touched so many different people in different neighborhoods."

ISLEY: "Oh, mercy. I'm very depressed. It was a bad day. I felt like somebody died."

Q: What do the results mean for your town?

WEINBRECHT: "I think people in Cary feel they'll now have more down-to-earth representation of our citizens. And I hope it'll mean that when candidates run in the future, they'll realize it doesn't take \$150,000 to win."

McFARLANE: "Raleigh citizens are very concerned with the way the city is growing. I think this will make ordinary citizens feel that they have more of a say."

ISLEY: "I believe we have the potential to be more liberal than San Francisco or Chapel Hill. Extremism on either end is not healthy."

Q: What effect is likely on growth policies?

WEINBRECHT: "We're going to assess how we can change our growth policies to better protect Cary's neighborhoods, roads, and schools."

MCFARLANE: "As Raleigh grows, we're going to put more emphasis on making sure we have the infrastructure in place first -- our limited natural resources like water, and also roads and schools and parks."

ISLEY: "[Raleigh is] going to double or triple impact fees -- that's a given. I think you'll see a growth-moratorium proposal. We're a popular place to live; people want to move here. I'm afraid we're going to kill the goose that lays the golden egg."

Q: Do the winners risk overreaching?



Weinbrecht

WEINBRECHT: "That's one of my concerns. In the '90s, Cary was growing too rapidly. Then in 1999 we slammed the brakes on too hard. And in 2003 they hit the gas again. We need to get some balance and let our infrastructure catch up."

McFARLANE: "I don't think we're going to have a moratorium on growth. We want to look at a sound economic future for Raleigh. With growth come good things -- there's more jobs and opportunities. But poorly managed growth causes water shortages, traffic congestion, and other problems."

ISLEY: "Somebody's going to overreach. It always happens. It might happen here, too. I hope people will think independently. I certainly have."

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