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Incumbents win Oak Ridge Council to remain intact

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Oak Ridge City Council incumbents Tom Beehan, Willie Golden, Jane Miller and David Mosby were successful in their bids for re-election in Tuesday's city elections.

Willie Golden led the voting totals with 2,819 votes, followed by Tom Beehan with 2,597; Jane Miller with 2,490; David Mosby with 2,306; Ellen Smith with 2,218 and Martin McBride with 1,225.

Although unsuccessful in her bid to win a seat on Oak Ridge City Council, Ellen Smith took a positive approach. "I predicted that the vote would be close. I'm pleased that we did well with a grass roots campaign against heavily-funded incumbents. Naturally I'm disappointed, but not discouraged from trying again in two years," Smith stated.

The Magnolia Tree Restaurant was the gathering place for Smith's campaign during the election returns. "Much of the effectiveness of my campaign was word of mouth. I was happy to have such great support and help. I was running for the community and not myself. The most positive aspect was the support from the community and making a lot of new friends."

Smith would like to see City Council meet more than once a month and conduct less business in work committees. "I think the city views them more like a board of directors. I'd also like to see Council reduce spending - for example, the money spent on lobbying contracts," Smith said.

Martin McBride was philosophical about his loss. Speaking from Mr. Gatti's, where McBride supporters watched campaign results, McBride said, "I wanted the election to be about issues and offer a choice between incumbents and new ideas. The voters showed that they're comfortable with the current council. I'm about doing things but I respect their decision. I'm surprised at the outcome, given the tumultuous activity by council in the last three years."

The loss has caused McBride to reassess his role in politics. "I got involved in politics because of 9/11. I've organized two major referendums and run for office twice. Campaigns are expensive and time-consuming. I'm not in this for personal glory and I'll re-evaluate if I've accomplished what I set out to do - this may be the end of the road for me," McBride said. "I wish the candidates the best. I wanted Oak Ridge residents to be given a choice - because some people felt hopeless because they did not feel that they could influence city government."

Tom Beehan went to work and tried to treat election day like a regular day. "Most of my campaign work has been done. I had a plan that started in January and feel like I'm on target. I'm glad the weather was good for a good turnout," Beehan said.

Scott Fraker/Staff Jane Miller, center, is pictured with her niece Lauren Eiler and mother Marie Miller at her home on Capital Circle election night. "This is the most exciting part of the campaign," Miller stated.

Beehan is now ready to move forward. "We've laid out a plan. We plan to continue to stabilize taxes and focus on housing; housing is critical. I also expect for Council to take a closer look at crime. I think people will see that this council has a team approach - this council works well together."

Jane Miller spent the day visiting polls. "This is the most exciting part of the campaign. I'm glad that the weather was good and that I received good support. Council is on the right road of progress. I'd like to see some dreams come to

fruition. We have some economic development projects, the Secret City Festival, strategic plan and the high school. There's lots to do and I'm ready to get on with it," Miller said.

Willie Golden felt good about the day and spent it visiting polls and meeting people. "I want to stay positive for the next term - keep the tax rate stabilized, (and) kick off the Highland View Redevelopment project so we can use it as a model for other neighborhoods in Oak Ridge. I want Council to keep up the positive energy. We have much to look forward to with the mall and housing developments. I'm looking forward to continuing to serve Oak Ridge," Golden said.

David Mosby is optimistic about Council's future. "I want to continue along the path that Council has established. It's important to maintain the competitive property rates and work on improving the quality of life in Oak Ridge. I hope to better refine the strategic plan so that Oak Ridge residents continue to see the value in it and the quality of life here," said Mosby.

Mosby began his day at 6 a.m. greeting everyone coming into the Y-12 complex "for a nice change, different approach," and visited all of the precincts, encouraging everyone to exercise their right to vote.

"I'm looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting busy for Oak Ridge. Regardless of the outcome I would remain active in the Oak Ridge Community," Mosby said.

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