

Eason, Williams picked to lead City Council

By Chris Sykes
Staff Writer

North Ward Councilwoman Tency Eason was elected by her colleagues as president of the City Council during their July 5 reorganization meeting. They also voted, somewhat reluctantly and possibly belatedly, to have At Large Councilwoman Donna K. Williams serve as council vice president.

Eason replaces West Ward Councilman Hassan Abdul-Rasheed as council president and Williams replaces South Ward Councilman Edward Marable as vice president. The 2010-11 council session was Abdul-Rasheed's first stint as president. Marable served as the council president in the 2009-10 session.

The council's decision marks Eason's second time as president; she has also twice served as its vice president.

"The council needs direction and hopeful-

ly I will be able to provide and bring people together so that we can get this city moving in the right direction," said Eason. "We need to get back to where we were before as a council. It means communicating with one another, collaborating with city departments and administration officials, and working together to move the city forward and doing what is right."

Eason said she firmly believes "Orange can be better" than what it has shown in the past, at least at the city government level. She said she wants to be a part of making that happen.

Williams added she also wants to be a "change agent" on the council. She said she was grateful to Eason for supporting her in her bid to become vice president because the outcome of the selection process was in doubt as the vote was taken.

"Tency nominated me, but Elroy and Ray-

field did not vote for me," said Williams, referring to Elroy Corbitt and Rayfield Morton. "It was a tense moment because there was no guarantee I was going to win the vote. I voted for myself, Tency voted for me and Linda Jones-Bell voted for me."

Abdul-Rasheed also voted against Williams, which lead to a 3-3 tie before Marable's decision. Marable passed on the vote during the council's poll, then came back and voted for Williams.

Williams said she realizes her slim margin shows she has much to do to convince her colleagues who voted for her that they were correct. She added she hopes to win over her fellow members who voted against her.

"After the vote I felt like President Obama for a minute. Just like him, during the battle with Hillary Clinton for the Democratic Party nomination, I didn't get everyone's vote of approval. I said during my remarks

that I hope to get the chance to show people what I'm all about and what I want to do for Orange going forward," Williams said. "I think we have independent voters who are going to vote with their consciences and what they believe is the right thing to do.

"I understand why the vote went the way that it did. I think leaders should lead, but a great leader leads by following, too," Williams continued. "What we have on the council are seven leaders with their own ideas and agendas. But the challenge is to see if we can find common ground."

Eason said she plans to lead the council by setting a good example for its members.

"Leadership is not about the council itself; it's about leading the council in the right direction," Eason said. "We've got to come together, get on the right page and show that everything we're doing is for them."

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