

Mayor's candidates win three council seats

Eason grabs North Ward victory as Perkins loses re-election bid

By John Zucal Managing Editor, Orange Transcript

Election Day may have brought benefits to Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr., as three of the four candidates he supported were victorious in balloting conducted within the city's four wards.

Among the winning candidates he supported was Linda Jones-Bell, who unseated incumbent Councilwoman Lisa Perkins in the East Ward. Jones-Bell received 332 votes to Perkins' 311, with Darryl Harrington a distant third with 92 votes.

All vote totals are tentative pending a count of provisional and absentee ballots by the Essex County Clerk's Office.

In the West Ward, incumbent Councilman Hassan Abdul-Rasheed fought off a strong challenge from Andrea Elliott, who sought an at-large seat in the 2008 council election. Abdul-Rasheed will receive a second term after he gained 209 votes to Elliott's 178.

Council President Edward Marable Jr. easily outpaced his three opponents to secure his second term in the South Ward. Marable received 301 votes, while April Gaunt-Butler, daughter of former Councilwoman Vivian Gaunt, posted 162 votes. Murphy Wilson had 152 votes and Derrick Griggs tallied 122 votes.

The lone candidate who received support from Hawkins, Antoine Desormes, was defeated when Councilwoman Tency Eason fought back a challenge from him and former Councilman Donald Page to gain a third term. Eason received 342 votes, Desormes totaled 271 and Page gained 151.

In forms filed with the state Election Law Enforcement Commission filed shortly before the election, Desormes, Jones-Bell and Abdul-Rasheed received in-kind assistance from the year-old Orange Essex Revitalization PAC, a group formed in 2009 by Hawkins' mother, Linda Cofer. Marable received a statement of support from Hawkins which was posted on his campaign website.