

Mitchell wins state House race

Campaign to replace Boone

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Tiffany Mitchell kept state House District 32 in Democratic hands on Tuesday, defeating Republican Vineeta Lower to replace the retiring state Rep. Deborah Boone.

"I ran my race the old-fashioned way, on voters' doorsteps, talking to them about the things that most impact their lives," Mitchell said in a statement after winning 49.4 percent to Lower's 43 percent. "Volunteers for my campaign knocked on more than 15,000 doors, and I person-

ally knocked over 7,000. I plan to bring that same neighborly work ethic to Salem to tackle the biggest issues that our community faces."

Mitchell, a state social services worker, scored an upset victory in May in a tight Democratic primary against Tim Josi, a Tillamook County commissioner and former state representative backed by regional industries and incumbents, including Boone, D-Cannon Beach, and state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose. Josi came in third after John Orr, a local attorney and employee of Trails End Recovery.

Lower, a teacher, faced no challengers in the Republican primary. Josi crossed the political aisle after losing

in the primary and endorsed Lower, who eventually picked up many of his backers in local industry, along with state Republicans.

"Even though the results tonight weren't what we were hoping for, I will always remain committed to serving our community," Lower said in a statement. "I'd like to congratulate Tiffany on her victory and hope that she will be committed to representing the unique and diverse interests of our district. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone that helped our campaign. I'll always be thankful for their support."

Independent Brian Halvorsen and Libertarian Randall Carlson were a distant

third and fourth.

While Lower's campaign was backed largely by business interests, Mitchell's support came primarily from labor unions, along with environmental and women's groups. The Service Employees International Union — Mitchell's union — provided her largest donations. Nearly half of her financial support came in the form of in-kind contributions from groups campaigning on her behalf.

Mitchell focused her campaign on popular progressive social issues such as making health care and housing more affordable, while raising taxes on the wealthy and corporations to provide more revenue.

Lower centered her cam-

paigned on improving infrastructure and education, but provided few policy specifics.

Boone's decision not to run for re-election after 14 years in office created a competitive campaign for the open seat. The House District 32 race attracted more cash contributions than the \$272,000 combined over the past three election cycles, according to the National Institute on Money in Politics, a nonprofit tracking campaign finance.

Mitchell took in about \$260,000 worth of cash donations as of Tuesday, along with \$240,000 worth of in-kind contributions. Lower gathered \$118,500 in cash to go with \$64,500 worth of in-kind contributions. Josi had gathered



Tiffany Mitchell

more than \$113,000 in cash in the primary, while Orr's campaign took in less than \$20,000.

Neither Halvorsen nor Randall recorded any contributions.

Johnson, meanwhile, sailed to re-election Tuesday against Constitution Party candidate Ray Biggs from Columbia City in state Senate District 16.



Astoria Planning Commissioner Joan Herman, left, smiles as election results are displayed on a screen behind her at a watch party.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Herman tops Zilli for Astoria City Council

Race for Ward 3

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Astoria Planning Commissioner Joan Herman on Tuesday won the race to represent downtown on the City Council, defeating state forester Ron Zilli.

Herman will replace City Councilor Cindy Price, who had originally planned to run for mayor but withdrew for family reasons. Price supported Herman in the radio programmer's bid for the Ward 3 seat, contributing to her campaign.

"I really thank the voters for putting their trust in me," Herman said after winning with a 66.7 percent to 33.1 percent margin. She also thanked Zilli for running a good campaign.

"If I had not won, he would have made an excellent councilor," she said, adding, "It reflects well on our community that there's enough engagement that people want to serve. It's not an easy thing to take on or undertake lightly."

Housing remains her top priority as she moves away from the campaign and begins contemplating the council seat. Preliminary results of a county-wide housing study are now available, containing data Astoria leaders can begin to examine, Herman said.

Zilli said the race was a good experience overall and wished Herman luck.

"For never having done this before, I learned a lot," he said. "I feel better connected to the city for having gone through it."

They both felt it was important for Astorians to have a vari-

ety of candidates to choose from in city races.

The campaign was Herman's first time running for public office, though both she and Zilli applied for an open seat on the Planning Commission after Commissioner Dave Pearson announced he was stepping down to take a new job outside of Clatsop County. Mayor Arline LaMear appointed Herman to the position.

Both Herman and Zilli are longtime residents and say managing future development, especially in the dense downtown area, is key.

Zilli, in his role with the Oregon Department of Forestry, noted his deep understanding of state and local governmental processes, while Herman has worked as reporter in Astoria and hosts a public affairs show that takes a deep

dive into local politics. She has long been a familiar face at many city meetings.

For both candidates, many of the city's concerns come back to housing. Zilli saw a solution through careful development to the east, while Herman wanted the City Council and city staff to look at vacant or underutilized parcels where, in some cases, developers have considered building hotels.

They also hoped to address "the hole" at Heritage Square near City Hall, where a portion of the city block caved in after heavy rains in 2010.

Herman will be the sole woman on the City Council next year. LaMear, Price and City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill gave women a majority on the council for the first time after the 2014 election, but opted not to run for re-election.

Rocka holds off Drafall for Astoria City Council

Race for Ward 1

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Roger Rocka held off David Drafall on Tuesday night in the race for the Astoria City Council Ward 1 seat.

Rocka, a former director for the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, will replace City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill, representing the city's west side.

"Now my job is to do a good enough job so that people who voted for me won't think they made a mistake," Rocka said after taking 55 percent of the vote to Drafall's 44.3 percent.

Learning will be his top priority, he added, a process he will jump right into on Wednesday when the city will kick off public vetting of its Uniontown Reborn project, seeking community input on everything from traffic configurations to land use planning in the historic neighborhood.

Rocka will join the City Council at a time when questions about the future of Uniontown are front and center.

"I'm standing behind him fully," Drafall, a hairdresser and longtime volunteer, said after seeing Rocka's lead.

Drafall still hopes to be involved with the city in some capacity and plans to talk to Mayor-elect Bruce Jones about other city boards he could serve on.

The two men expressed their admiration for each other throughout the campaign and Rocka hopes Drafall will stay involved in city work.

"Four years from now, maybe he'll run again," Rocka said.

Both men ran for similar reasons. They saw burgeoning development interest along the waterfront in Uniontown and worried about how the city would manage future growth.

Drafall, in particular, felt Uniontown had been largely ignored when it came to efforts to revitalize the city, with much of the focus going to downtown instead.



David Drafall is a hairdresser and longtime volunteer.

It was Rocka and Drafall's first time running for public office.

Drafall was the first to announce his bid for the seat. Nemlowill, elected in 2014, had not yet decided if she would run for a second term. She officially decided not to run at the end of August.

Rocka filed after he heard Nemlowill would not run again. He wanted to preserve the values and knowledge she brought to the council, he said.

Throughout the race, Rocka pointed to his long experience with the city and contributions such as his work in fighting against a proposed liquefied natural gas terminal and helping develop the Astoria Riverwalk.

Drafall, however, noted that, as a younger man, he would be able to have more longevity with the council. Rocka has said he would only serve for a single four-year term.

"This election has been really easy for me," Nemlowill said at a City Council meeting Monday. "All I had to do was vote."

All the candidates running for City Council were at the meeting and she thanked them for running for public office.

"It's not easy. It's a real big sacrifice," she said. But she was pleased to see good competition and solid candidates.

"Competition is probably causing the candidates a lot of anxiety right now but it pushes people," she said. "It makes us stronger and I believe that it makes our democracy stronger as well."

Wev claims county commission race

Edges Roscoe for District 3 seat

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Pamela Wev, a land use consultant, defeated Peter Roscoe, founder of Fulio's Pastaria, in the race for county commission District 3.

Wev will become the second newcomer next year on the five-member board, replacing Commissioner Lisa Clement. Former Warrenton Mayor Mark Kujala won District 1 in the May primary and will replace Commissioner Scott Lee, the board's chairman.

Wev edged Roscoe 52.7 percent to 47 percent.

During the May primary that also featured Doug Thompson, a property manager, Wev picked up the most votes. She earned less than the majority, however, leading to the first runoff for a commission seat in 10 years.

District 3 covers parts of Astoria, Miles Crossing, Jeffers Garden, Lewis and Clark, Youngs River, Olney,



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Pamela Wev is a land use consultant.

Green Mountain and parts of Walluski.

"I am humbled that the people of the third district have placed their trust in me to represent them," Wev said in a statement. "My thanks to Peter Roscoe for his campaign. I will represent all people of the district and I look forward to speaking with Peter on the issues that resonated with those who supported him."

Roscoe conceded early that Wev was likely going to win.

"What can I say?" Roscoe said. "She won and I didn't. That's my reaction."

For nearly two years, the

board — like Wev and Roscoe — has been split on the role of commissioners versus the county manager in terms of staff oversight, leading to several public and private clashes. Wev's election gives a new majority to those who believe commissioners have not been given enough opportunity to monitor staff more closely. The new commission will also lead the search for a new manager after County Manager Cameron Moore's retirement early next year.

"(Residents) told me during the campaign that they want to see a commission focused on collaboration, connectedness and civility, and I will keep those goals in mind as I conduct myself as their commissioner," Wev said.

Wev hopes infighting will no longer be a factor on the commission, she said.

"The dynamics of every group changes depending on who's there," she said. "I think that remains to be seen."

While not disagreeing with each other, the most clear issue-based difference in the campaign came during a debate discussion on forestry.

Roscoe said timber companies are more environmentally conscious than people think, while Wev focused much of her answer on the need for supervision of the industry.

But experience, rather than specific issues, was the dividing line in the campaign.

Roscoe, a former Astoria city councilor who has served on several local boards, touted his lengthy local background. Wev, who served in former Portland Mayor Vera Katz's administration, stressed her range of government involvement.

"One of the things I heard a lot on the trail, as they call it, is that people like new ideas," Wev said. "I've heard people say a lot that they like my resume and experience outside of Clatsop County."

Roscoe, who identifies as a moderate Democrat, said he was hopeful that unaffiliated voters would push him to a win over Wev, the vice chair of the Clatsop County Democratic Central Committee.

"I felt my only real chance was for unaffiliated voters to turn out in numbers," Roscoe said.