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NEWSDAY, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2001

Queens Council Changes

First Asian, Hispanic candidates chosen

The Queens delegation to the City Council will look quite different than it currently does with the borough adding its first Hispanic and its first Asian members.

Based on reports late yesterday the borough was set to elect either John Liu or Ethel Chen from Flushing as the first Asian delegate and Hiram Monserrate from East Elmhurst as their first Hispanic member.

"I won," Monserrate declared around midnight Tuesday, three hours after the polls closed.

Monserrate and his campaign workers based his declaration on returns from key election districts, which Monserrate won.

Liu, who had a slight lead over Chen in unofficial tallies yesterday, also declared himself the winner.

"The primary election is over. I have won this race. I certainly want to congratulate Miss Chen," Liu said. "I certainly want to congratulate her on her efforts."

Liu got a tougher race than expected. He was well-financed and widely expected to be the first Asian on the council.

But Chen was within two percentage points of Liu with most — but not all — of the votes counted. Chen's supporters said they would not comment until the results were official.

Anthony Avella in Whitestone also declared victory — and he appeared to be right — over well-financed labor leader Arthur Cheliotes.

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr., 37, of Ozone Park, the son of former congressman from the area, won the Democratic seat in that area with a decisive victory.

Like many, Addabbo, an attorney in Forest Hills, said he toned down his campaign in the two weeks after the terrorist attacks and will continue to out of respect for the many firefighters in the district who lost their lives.

He said about 70 families in the Rockaway area are affected by the tragedy.

"We really have to respect those families' need for time for reflection and time for prayer and we are going to reflect that in our campaign," he said.

He campaigned on such issues as affordable housing and unifying residents in the community. But in light of the tragedy, there are more pressing concerns, he said.

One of his main concerns in the council, he said, would be to put more funding into hiring police officers and replace the firefighters who died.

"The Rockaway peninsula has been damaged greatly with the loss of firemen," he said. "We're out to help anybody regardless of race, religion or political affiliation and we're going to take that positive message right through November."

Allan Jennings seemed poised to upset Anthony Andrews, the Queens County Democratic Organization's candidate, in District 28.

With 76 of 81 precincts reporting, Jennings, of

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South Ozone Park, had 35 percent to 31 percent for Andrews, of Jamaica. Jennings would face Working Families candidate Patrick Jenkins, the executive assistant to Rep. Gregory Meeks, in the Nov. 6 general election.

Three other Democrats trailed in the contest to succeed incumbent Thomas White Jr. District 28 includes Rochdale Village, South Jamaica, South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill and part of Jamaica. Education, economic development and immigration were among the issues most touted in the campaign.

In the 24th Council District in Forest Hills, James Gennaro, a Queens College professor and an aide to the City Council staff on environmental issues, was slightly ahead of Barry Grodenchik, a top aide to Queens Borough President Claire Shulman.

David Reich was not far behind the leaders, but it was a confusing indication that in a multi-candidate race that votes would be dispersed in ways that would be unknown when incumbents would face a single challenger.

Helen Sears had a moderately comfortable lead in her race against James Van Bramer and others in the 25th District in Jackson Heights. Van Bramer would have been the first openly gay candidate in the council from Queens.

District leader Henry McCoy from eastern Queens said the race in the 27th District was still up in the air at midday yesterday.

"We have results from four schools that haven't come in yet," he said, referring to the polling sites in city school buildings.

In that district, organization candidate Leroy Comrie was holding a narrow lead over Helen Cooper Gregory.

Comrie is chief of staff of City Councilman Archie Spigner, who was a driving force behind the candidacy of borough president candidate Helen Marshall, a City Council member from East Elmhurst who will likely be the first African-American to hold the borough's top slot.

If those results hold up, and Spigner could get a borough president elected, but could not succeed in picking his own successor, his political clout in south Queens could be diminished.

"I don't know," McCoy said outside Queens Borough Hall yesterday morning as he showed up to support Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer in the mayoral runoff. "I don't know how it came down to results from four schools."



File Photo by Jamie Scanlon-Jacobs



Newsday File Photo / Michael E. Ach

Anthony Avella, above, appears to have won his City Council primary race in the 19th District. Joseph Addabbo Jr., right, also won in the Democratic primary for City Council.

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