

## Full Greensboro City Council election results coverage

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

(By [Mark Binker](#))



Photo Caption: City Councilman Robbie Perkins (right) and Greensboro Mayor Bill Knight conduct a television interview at the old Guilford County

GREENSBORO — Mayor Bill Knight will defend his seat against Councilman Robbie Perkins in the November general election after the pair outdistanced former Councilman Tom Phillips in Tuesday’s primary.

Perkins led the five-way primary with 48 percent, according to complete but unofficial returns. Knight trailed with 33.7 percent of the vote. Phillips took 11 percent.

The past two years were Knight’s first in elected office. A favorite of Guilford County’s tea party affiliate, the retired CPA still identifies himself as “not a politician” in his campaign literature.

His tenure has been marked by conflict, particularly over the proposed reopening of the White Street Landfill, which was scuttled after intense public protest.

Knight said the city still needs to discuss how to cut the cost of garbage disposal and what is to be done with the landfill property. He emphasized that he was not proposing another run at reopening it.

“There’s four more weeks, and there’s some work to be done,” Knight said of the campaign.

He said he was not particularly surprised to find himself in second place.

Perkins and Phillips have been critical of the push to reopen the landfill.

They were on the City Council that voted nearly a decade ago to limit operations there.

The race is nonpartisan, but political organizations often back candidates.

Phillips, a financial adviser with Merrill Lynch, had positioned himself as a fiscally conservative alternative with better communications skills and better command of how the city ought to operate than Knight.

“I knew it would be a long shot,” Phillips said. “I’m just amazed that Bill Knight has the number of votes he does. I guess people don’t watch City Council meetings.”

Despite some differences in philosophy, Phillips threw his support behind Perkins for the general election.

“I’ll support him because he at least he knows what a mayor is supposed to do,” Phillips said.

Although he is a registered Republican, Perkins is seen as the most liberal of the three front-runners. Critics question whether his work as a commercial real estate broker creates too many conflicts with the zoning decisions the council regularly makes.

Perkins said his campaign would focus on job creation and ensuring that local leaders work together to market Greensboro to potential job creators.

Asked what the difference would be with him as mayor, Perkins said the council would work more collaboratively and trust staff members more to do the work.

“We’re going back to the council-manager form of government,” Perkins said.

He said the council on which he serves experiences too much strife. Asked if Knight was responsible for that strife, Perkins held back.

“I don’t know that it’s one individual, but the council needs to work together as a team,” Perkins said.

“The mayor is the leader of that team.”

Asked the same question about the differences between his second term and what Perkins brings, Knight pledged that openness would be a hallmark of his work and said the council needs to work better as a team.

Told that Perkins leveled the same criticism about teamwork against him, Knight said, “Well, he needs to show that.”

The two other candidates in the race were Chris Phillips, a Republican who said he was moved by the tea party to get involved, and Bradford Cone, a Democrat who said he wanted to give voters an alternative to GOP candidates. Neither mustered more than 4 percent of the vote.