

Boulder City Council election delivers new slow-growth majority

Young, Weaver, Grano, Nagle and Carlisle win, as incumbent Burton places seventh

By Alex Burness

Staff Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: Wed Nov 08 22:22:18 MST 2017

Results: Boulder City Council

Results posted by the Boulder County Clerk and Recorder's Office as of 2 p.m. Wednesday. The top five voter-getters won election.

Mary Dolores Young: 14,687

Sam Weaver: 14,291

Jill Adler Grano: 13,251

Mirabai Kuk Nagle: 12,424

Cindy Carlisle: 12,122

John Gerstle: 11,335

Jan Burton: 11,063

Mark McIntyre: 10,191

Bill Rigler: 8,581

Eric Budd: 8,450

Matt Benjamin: 7,440

Ed Byrne: 7,025

Adam Swetlik: 1,880

Camilo Casas: 1,062

Jill Adler Grano, Mirabai Nagle and Cindy Carlisle will join incumbents Mary Young and Sam Weaver on the Boulder City Council, following an election in which voters overwhelmingly supported the slow-growth, limited-density side of local politics.

Jan Burton, meanwhile, placed seventh out of 14 candidates and in the process became just the second incumbent in 20 years to lose a re-election bid.

She could not be reached for comment on Wednesday.

There were five seats available, and Young, Weaver, Grano and Nagle — the top four vote-getters, in that order — all won four-year terms.

Carlisle, the fifth-place candidate, won a two-year term. She previously served as a council member in the 1980s and said she was inspired to run again after reengaging with Boulder politics while campaigning for ballot measures 300 and 301 in 2015.

Carlisle was on a five-candidate slate endorsed by the citizen groups PLAN-Boulder County and Together4Boulder, among others. That slate did very well this election, placing four people on the council, while the fifth, John Gerstle, was the leading vote-getter among the nine candidates who lost.

Confirming the fact that incumbents in Boulder historically have an advantage as candidates, Young and Weaver easily won re-election, each placing at least 1,000 votes ahead of everyone else.

Carlisle and Gerstle are well established in the local political scene. The latter rose to some prominence earlier this year when the City Council voted not to renew his term on the Planning Board due, many speculated, to his relatively conservative views

on growth and development.

But Nagle, a native of Boulder and volunteer firefighter who works at her family's small business in the foothills, was much more of a newcomer than the rest of the candidates on her slate, and at least 17 years younger than all of them.

"I'm still a bit shocked," she said Wednesday of her victory. "I'm pleasantly surprised, I'm pretty shocked and I'm honored."

Grano stands out among the five winners, as the majority of her endorsees supported a crop of other new urbanists, supportive of more aggressive creation of housing, none of whom placed higher than seventh.

But she does support municipalization, which won her some favor with groups such as the Sierra Club, which otherwise would have been unlikely to look her way.

The six leading vote-getters all support municipalization — [Boulder's bid to form a municipal electric utility](#). The tax that funds the bid was narrowly approved by voters this week.

The majority on the nine-person council will now swing in the favor of groups such as PLAN and Together4Boulder, and the city's politics are likely to change as a result.

Council members Andrew Shoemaker, the current mayor pro tem, and Matt Appelbaum, former mayor, will depart this month as new members take office. Many felt they, along with Aaron Brockett, Bob Yates and Jan Burton, comprised a majority on the last council.

Those five voted in the majority to oust Gerstle from his Planning Board role, and they also supported reviewing the [controversial Hogan-Pancost parcel](#) this fall, to the chagrin of the minority members.

But a shift is now likely. The next council will feature only three members — Brockett, Yates and Grano — who are reliably supportive of creating more housing units, and on a faster timeline.

Carlisle said at an election party Tuesday night that she expects a "turning of the tides."

This year's election was deeply polarized, with the most powerful citizen groups almost all supporting one of two identical candidate slates. The four people who were not on either slate placed 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th, respectively.

Matt Benjamin, a newcomer to Boulder politics who placed 11th, finds the polarization unhealthy, and said many voters he talked to feel the same way.

"I heard an overwhelming displeasure with the binary that people felt they had been given," he said. "I heard that people in many ways felt Boulder had descended into two-party politics."

Alex Burness: 303-473-1389, burnessa@dailycamera.com or twitter.com/alex_burness

Close Window

Send To Printer