COUNCIL SHAKEUP!

Voters did a major makeover on city council yesterday, sending seven new faces to City Hall.

Five incumbents were returned as alderman, but the rest suffered the wrath of Edmonton voters.

Controversial Ward 4 incumbent Tooker Gomberg was tossed out, finishing fifth in the 17-candidate field.

Jim Taylor, 48, topped the Ward 4 crowd, finishing with 8,250 votes, 441 ballots ahead of Michael Phair, who squeaked by Terence Harding to win a second term.

"This has really been the campaign against all odds," said Taylor, a wills and estates planner.

Ward 4 No fan of rigid politics

Jim Taylor

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Jim Taylor hopes to end the hard ideological split and the unprofessional behavior that in his view characterized the last city council.

The Ward 4 alderman-elect wants to de-emphasize political rigidity and accentuate flexibility and compromise.

"We're not going to agree on every issue," says Taylor, who garnered the most votes in his ward.

"But it doesn't have to become personal and unprofessional. I'm really happy to think we have elected a lot of people for whom rigid politics isn't a huge part of how they make decisions.

"My initial plan is to get to know each of the other members really well."

Taylor declines to box himself into an ideology, saying he wants what's best for the city and is confident the new council will work together to achieve that.

He believes voters sent a clear message Monday about some of the sniping and bad feelings that have surfaced in the past three years. By electing a new mayor and seven new councillors, voters demanded change including changed behavior, he says.

After lunching with the other election victors Tuesday, Taylor was optimistic most of them want change.

"It looks really promising."

Many other councillors, including those who were re-elected, agreed council must strive harder for consensus and deal with their differences more professionally, he says.

TAYLOR FILE

- Has spent much of his career as a wills and estates planner with Ogilvie and Company. Before that he worked with the office of the Public Trustee.
- Has lived in Edmonton 42 years. He and his wife Barb have lived in Ward 4 for 10 years.
- An avid long distance and marathon runner.



"I think what voters really want to see is a city council that makes decisions and then gets things done."

One of the first things the voters want is action on the airports issue and Keillor Road, issues that have dragged on for years.

Taylor believes the referendum results in both cases are clear and unmistakable and council must act on them decisively but with a minimum of bickering.

"The people spoke pretty clearly on both issues," he says.

As far as his personal life is concerned, the long time wills and estates planner is anxious to get back into training. The 48-year-old has been running regularly for 19 years but has had to cut back his practice schedule drastically in recent weeks.