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## Johnson holds off Kim in bid for second mayoral term

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SARATOGA SPRINGS — Scott Johnson will return to City Hall for a second term as mayor after winning Tuesday's election.

Johnson, a Republican, ran on a platform of continuing his work to maintain civility in City Hall while working to protect the city's tenuous finances.

"Two years ago I stood before you and used a word to describe a 542-vote margin," Johnson said in declaring his victory. "The word was 'wow.' What word do we use now?"

Johnson, one of few native Saratogians running for office this year, said he was proud to be mayor, and to be elected to a second term.

"We can do even better in the next two years, we can build consensus and tackle tough issues," he said.

Johnson secured his second term over Democratic challenger Ron Kim, commissioner of Public Safety, with a wide margin, taking 4,256 votes to Kim's 2,833.

"In two more years, we can triple the margin," he said.

Johnson's first term was marked by his work to advance an indoor recreation on the South Side, now under construction on Vanderbilt Avenue. The project had been stalled for several years, and Johnson was criticized by Kim, who called the project the wrong priority.

Johnson defended the project, pointing out that it was bonded by the previous City Council — which included Kim, then in his first term. In going forward, Johnson said that he will continue to focus on accomplishing the city business through building consensus.

"I am proud of the past two years. We know our problems, and they are nearly insurmountable, but we can start to address them by building consensus," he said in remarks to assembled Republicans at the Holiday Inn.

In losing, Kim offered profuse thanks to his family, his campaign supporters, Public Safety Deputy Eileen Finneran and his fellow Democrats, Peter Martin and Kevin Connolly.

“I can never say enough thanks to all the people ... that have contributed to getting me this far. I certainly appreciate all the help, assistance and hard work that so many people have contributed. Thank you all. I won’t ever forget this.”

Kim added, “This community is in good hands as long as we have people like Peter and Kevin stepping up to the plate and running for these offices no matter what happens in the end.”

Unresolved contracts with several city unions have also dogged Johnson during his first term. There has been speculation that the unions waited to negotiate their contracts in hopes of getting a more favorable deal by negotiating with Kim — who was endorsed by two city unions — should he have won.

“To my labor friends who are here in the room,” Johnson said, “I want to work for you, I want to work with you, but it has to be a give and take. It has to be part of the solution, not the problem. A give and take will make this a better Saratoga.”

Johnson ran on the Independence and Conservative lines as well as the GOP line.

Johnson said that he intends to keep Deputy Mayor Shauna Sutton in his administration for his second term.

“With a new council, we can put the politics of division behind us,” he said.

As a result of his loss, Kim will lose his seat on the City Council at the end of the year.