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Voters in Troy keep moderate in office after Daniels' recall

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In a special election Tuesday in Troy, residents chose to keep the interim mayor, Dane Slater, in what pundits viewed as approval of the city's moderate turn since the recall of Troy's former tea party mayor, Janice Daniels.

Slater won with 6,393 votes, or 50.4% of the total. The closest challenger, Marty Knollenberg, had 5,820 votes, or 45.9%.

"It's a happy night after some extremely hard work by so many people," Slater said. "I'm going to do everything in my power to bring this City Council together and move this city forward."

Slater, 62, a former councilman, had been serving as mayor by appointment of the council since soon after the recall last fall of Daniels, a political newcomer who had never held elective office.

While Daniels was mayor, Slater often differed with her on council votes and was seen as a political opponent by her tea party backers.

Knollenberg, 49, a former state representative for Troy and Clawson, came with a famous last name by virtue of his father, Joe Knollenberg, who served six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"The turnout was significantly higher than we anticipated," Marty Knollenberg said. "We had targeted a much smaller number of voters, so obviously there were a lot of people we couldn't reach."

Knollenberg, also a former county commissioner, ran unsuccessfully in November for Oakland County treasurer.

"If there's another opportunity for me to serve the public, that's up to the citizens to decide," Knollenberg said Tuesday night.

Daniels was recalled in November after controversies arose over her statements about gay people and opposition to a transit center supported by Gov. Rick Snyder.

Although Daniels was silent during the campaign, her followers and opponents took sides in the race, Lansing-based political consultant Bill Ballenger said.

"Slater is the candidate of those who hated Daniels and pushed for the recall," said Ballenger, editor of Inside Michigan Politics.

Knollenberg's support flowed from former Daniels partisans, "the tea party types and Libertarians" with strong anti-tax and anti-government sentiment, Ballenger said.

Four minor candidates together pulled less than 4% of the vote in the special election, which had a 22% voter turnout.

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