

Democrat John **Fernandez** and Republican Kirk White will face off in the fall for mayor of Bloomington.

In a tight finish in the Democratic primary, **Fernandez** beat Charlotte **Zietlow** by only 31 votes, winning 2,132 to 2,101.

White beat his Republican opponent by a more comfortable margin, winning 54 percent of the vote to Smith's 46 percent. White took 2,139 votes to Smith's 1,799.

With foreheads sunburned from standing outside polling places all day, the two mayoral candidates came face to face shortly after final totals were announced.

"Good job. You ran a clean race," **Fernandez** said, extending his hand.

"It will be a good race this fall, too," Republican White promised, clasping his opponent's hand.

"What a night. It was so close I've been biting my nails," **Fernandez** said, shaking hands with well wishers at Election Central in The Herald-Times building.

"It was a very spirited primary and we were able to address what I thought were very solid issues in the city," White said, trying to talk while four microphones were jammed in front of him.

Standing close by, White's girlfriend Janice Holmes and **Fernandez's** fiancée Karen Howe chatted while trying to avoid the crush.

Making her entrance to applause, **Zietlow** said she fought a good battle, had excellent supporters and didn't know what she could have done differently.

"I'm getting closer. I lost by 75 points the last time," **Zietlow** said, flashing a smile.

Eight years ago, **Zietlow** squared off against incumbent Mayor Tomi Allison in the Democratic primary, losing that time by 75 votes.

"This time, it was just 30 some votes," **Zietlow** said. "If I keep running, by the time I'm 100, I might win."

Asked if she might toss her hat in the ring for the mayoral race four years from now, **Zietlow** responded emphatically, "No. -But of course, I've said that before."

At the Smith headquarters, campaign chairman Jeff Canada said the Republican candidate had gone into seclusion with his wife.

But before he did, Smith and some of his campaign organizers paid a visit to White's headquarters, offering congratulations and support.

"I think John and I both agree that Mr. White ran a fine race," Canada said. "There was a lot of publicity and a lot of interest and a lot of people out there working on both sides."

As Monroe County Republican Party Chairman, Smith will now begin working on pulling the party together for the November election, Canada said.

"We are going to put some of the bitterness behind us and heal some of the anger and get everybody working as a team," Canada said. "The big plan is for a Republican win in November."

Watching the **results** come in at Election Central, White's campaign chairman Joyce Poling had a huge smile

on her face.

"Kirk ran an issues-oriented campaign and I think the people in this community respond to a candidate who addresses their concerns," Poling said.

Standing nearby, **Fernandez** workers James McNamara and Jill La Fon kept one eye on a calculator and the other on a computerized vote tally.

"I am just floored," La Fon said, hugging McNamara when the **results** showed their man had won.

This election wasn't the first time the two 34-year-old candidates had been in politics together.

White and **Fernandez** were on the city council together until 1993 when **Fernandez** resigned.

A little over a decade ago, the two also were in politics at Indiana University. White served as student body president while **Fernandez** was in the student senate.

Watching from the election sidelines, 14-year-old Brandon Brummett stopped the two finalists and asked for their autographs.

"They are both good guys," the Edgewood High School student said.

The autographs will be safely planted in a scrapbook. "And I know I have the next mayor's signature," Brandon said triumphantly.

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