by Daniel Stein-Sayles
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NEW YORK — The mayoral race isn't the only one shrouded in doubt after Tuesday's primary elections: Three City Council contests have yet to be called.

The Associated Press has yet to name a winner in the areas represented by City Council districts 19, 27 and 36, because they are too close to call. Those districts cover parts of north and southeastern Queens, as well as the Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights sections of Brooklyn.

Observers had long expected that the race for the 19th district in Queens would be close, with five Democratic candidates angling for their party nomination.
The current councilman, Dan Halloran, chose not to run for re-election after being indicted in a bribery scheme.

As of Thursday night, with 99 percent of precincts reporting, lawyer Paul Vallone led former spokesman for state Democrats Austin Shafran by just 144 votes, according to WNYC's race tracker.

Vallone has declared victory in the race even if the AP hasn't. Austin Finn, a Vallone spokesman, seemed convinced that his candidate will eventually be declared the winner of the tight race.

“At the end of the day, the numbers will show what we learned last night — Paul Vallone is the Democratic nominee for the 19th City Council District,” he told the Queens Tribune.

Shafran, however, is not ready to concede, saying his campaign will explore every option available to them.

“There’s a very thin margin separating the top two candidates. Every voter in this community deserves to have his or her votes counted,” Shafran told the Queens Tribune. “That’s why we’re going to explore all possible legal remedies until every vote is counted.”

The winner will face Republican Dennis Saffran in November's general election.

The other close race in Queens took place on the other side of the borough, in Southeast Queens' 27th City Council District, where six Democratic candidates faced off for their party's nomination in a bid to replace term-limited Councilman Leroy Comrie.

Daneek Miller, a union president and community advocate who is Comrie's hand-picked successor, celebrated with the term-limited councilman Tuesday night even though the AP hadn't called the election in Miller's favor.

Miller and rival candidate Clyde Vanel were separated by 394 votes with 98 percent of the precincts reporting as of Thursday night. Joan Flowers, another candidate, finished in third — just 78 votes behind Vanel.

Vanel told the Queens Courier that it would "be crazy to concede now."

Like Vanel, Kirsten John Foy is not ready to concede in his quest to become Bed-Stuy's councilman.

"We're going to count every vote," Foy told DNAInfo.com early Wednesday morning. "I think it's premature to celebrate, it's premature to mourn. It's not over."

The race to replace term-limited Albert Vann in the 36th City Council District is the closest in the city. Foy, the former director of intergovernmental affairs and community affairs under Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, was trailing District Leader Robert Cornegy Jr. by 94 votes as of Thursday night's unofficial election results. Ninety-eight percent of precincts had reported.

Cornegy said he believes he won the election, celebrating with supporters and Vann who

endorsed him earlier in the campaign.

"We won, and I guess there's a moral victory in it," Cornegy told DNAinfo. "But the margin of victory is very close."

The winner of the Democratic primary will face Republican Veronica Thompson in November's general election.

The official election results for all of the city races won't be announced until next week after paper and absentee ballots are counted.