

# Overland Park City Council 2021

Response ID:19 Data

## 1. Candidate Information

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### 1. Candidate Name

Jim Kite

### 2. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 10427 CAENEN DR

City/State/Zip : OVERLAND PARK

### 3. Phone Number

9134382183

### 4. Email Address

kite4opks@gmail.com

### 5. Campaign Website

www.kite4opks.com

## 2. Candidate Background

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### 6. Occupation/Work History (last 5 years - 25 words or less)

I have been with Sprint since 1986. During that time I have worked in public and government relations, contract negotiations, finance

### 7. Please list political, community and business organizations with whom you have been affiliated and any leadership positions you have held.

Tyler Jaycees President

Lions Club

Athens, TX Chamber of Commerce Ambassador

Chairman of the Public Information Committee of the Texas Telephone Association

Deacon, First Presbyterian Church Tyler, Texas

Elder, West Highlands Presbyterian Church President of the West Point Parents Club of Greater Kansas City

Overland Park Council Member Ward 3

Public Works Chairman

Overland Park City Council President

Volunteer Johnson County Department of Corrections over 12 years.

## 3. Issues and Policy

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### 8. List your top three policy issues? (100 words or less)

1. Evaluate the street maintenance program and relative funding by means of the Infrastructure Advisory Board that I initiated.

2. Enhance the sustainability programs of Overland Park through the Comprehensive Plan Initiative for 2022.

3. Continue active engagement with the EDC and the development community to maintain Overland Park's momentum of growth.

**9. What are your views on the services and value the City's citizens receive for their local tax dollars? (100 words or less)**

Often when we think of city services, we think of police and fire and other emergency services. Overland Park's Emergency services are award-winning. Those are critical to our city, our services include so many more facets. For our mill levy, the lowest for any "Class A" city in the state, Overland Park also provides beautiful parks and green spaces, maintains a robust city infrastructure, oversees planning, development, and property maintenance. The list goes on. For City, Services A-Z go to: <https://www.opkansas.org/city-services/city-services-a-z/>

The city services are already a great value, but I will continue to strive for improvement.

**10. Regarding the City's budget, a 1-mill property tax increase to fund the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force has been proposed for 2022. Do you support the task for recommendations? Do you support increasing the mill levy for this purpose? Discuss why/why not and how you would fund the recommendations if you support them but not the mill levy increase. (100 words or less)**

I absolutely support the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force and believe they should be fully funded. As OP already has by far the lowest mill levy in the state and has the strongest financials as well, a 1 mill increase will assure these new services are available without impacting existing services. We will still have the lowest tax rate in the state, by far.

**11. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the City's proposed budget for 2022?**

I support the 2022 budget as presented by the city manager and his staff.

**12. What role, if any, do you believe the City should play in economic development to bring jobs and capital investment to the community? (100 words or less)**

I believe that the city should invest in the economic development of the city where it is appropriate. Appropriate investment would include judicious use of the tools provided to the city which allow it to better guide development. Downtown OP is an obvious example of this process. I have been supportive of a majority of the recent developments presented to the city council, but have also reserved the right to vote "no" in regard to those that are not in the best interest of the public.

**13. As the City considers future development and redevelopment projects, describe your views on how the City should best manage and balance growth? (100 words or less)**

As we move into the future, it is important that the people of Overland Park look to greener, more sustainable ways to grow our city. We can't continue to simply sprawl toward the Oklahoma border. We must continue working toward making our city more walkable, bikeable, and dense. We need to seek solutions regarding the development of more moderately priced and varied homes that are attractive in today's market. This will help OP attract a thriving workforce that will enable growth for the next 20 years.

**14. What do you believe are the greatest challenges the City faces over the next ten years and how would you address them? (100 words or less)**

The greatest challenges over the next 10 years are likely to be aging infrastructure, the expanding role of public safety services, and sustainable development. I have implemented The Infrastructure Advisory Board to study and make recommendations regarding infrastructure maintenance for the future. The expansion of medical services provided by the OPFD must continue as well as the initiation of the recommendations of The Mental Health Task Force in conjunction with OPPD. As noted in a previous question, the city must be actively engaged in the development process to ensure future sustainability.

**15. Do you believe the current city manager form of government we have is appropriate for Overland Park or would you favor a "strong mayor" form of government? (100 words or less)**

An article entitled "Council-Manager or 'Strong Mayor,' the Choice is Clear," succinctly answers this question like this, "Council-manager government encourages neighborhood input into the political process, diffuses the power of special interests, and eliminates partisan politics from municipal hiring, firing, and contracting decisions." Therefore, with a council-manager form of city government, each council member has equal voice to represent their constituency, giving diverse groups

a greater opportunity to influence policy. With a strong mayor form of government, this power is relinquished to the mayor. I believe the choice is clear, the current form of government in Overland Park is appropriate.

**16. It is estimated that replacing chip seal road resurfacing with a method similar to surrounding cities will cost more than \$20 million per year. Do you favor eliminating the chip seal process, and if so, how would you pay for the increased cost? (100 words or less)**

The Infrastructure Advisory Board that I established with the Public Works Director will be looking at the street maintenance issue in the coming months. Chip Seal, although unpopular with some, is a viable method and our public works department has taken great strides in improving the process in the last 2-3 years. The level of complaints has been greatly reduced, however, the advisory board may recommend limiting its use to certain street types and/or replacing it completely with more expensive methods. If so, there will likely be a budgetary impact that will have to be considered.

**17. What specific proposals do you have to support the goal of providing access to affordable housing throughout the City? (100 words or less)**

It is important as we continue to grow and develop our city that we not only focus on developments of single-family homes but create an environment for a more diverse housing stock. The OP Community Development team must be actively engaged with each development project effort to assure the objectives of more affordable housing are considered. These developments will likely be denser such as townhomes and small-lot homes.

**18. Since its founding in 1960, Overland Park leaders have had a long history of visionary planning. What do you believe the City should do today to ensure the City's prosperity for the next 60-years? (100 words or less)**

During the visioning process with "Forward OP" hundreds of diverse voices from our city coalesced around the idea of keeping Overland Park a vibrant and prosperous city into the future. A few key ideas emerged as essential to our success. We must continue to be a welcoming place to a diversity of cultures, both human and business. We need to encourage an engaged community. We should continue to build a high-quality, sustainable and attractive city. We need connectivity of streets, highways, trails, etc. And, finally, we must anchor it all with a strong and diverse economy.

**19. Do you believe the City of Overland Park is headed in the right direction?**

The City of Overland Park completed a visioning process called "Vision OP," in which a diverse group of hundreds of Overland Park residents gave their input regarding how the city should move forward into the future. As a city council, we have been and will continue to take our direction from the mandate of this document. "Vision OP" calls for Overland Park to be welcoming, engaged, attractive, high quality, sustainable, connected, and economically strong.

This bar that was set by our community. The numerous awards that the city has received related to quality of life stand testament to our success.

**20. Do you believe the City of Overland Park City Council is responsive to the needs of the community? What is your approach to governance?**

I do believe that the City Council of Overland Park is responsive to the needs of the community. I, personally have spent many hours on the phone speaking with people from my ward. I have answered many emails. I meet with constituents in person over coffee, in their driveways, or elsewhere. I know my fellow council members do the same. We welcome your calls. We are often able to answer questions directly and when we can't we are able to either get you an answer or refer you to the department or person you need to speak to.

**21. Why are you seeking this public office?**

I love Overland Park. It is my home. I raised a family here and intend to remain in this community once I retire. I have committed the previous 8 years to the community and believe that as a city council we have accomplished important things together with our friends and neighbors. I have a passion to continue serving my Ward 3 friends and neighbors as well as the greater city as we implement the vision set out by the "Forward OP" action plan.

**22. What do you believe makes you uniquely qualified to serve in this position and most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race?**

My 8 years of experience distinguish me and qualify me to serve in this position. I have served on all 4 of the standing committees of the city council as well as on the Environmental Advisory Council. I have built collaborative relationships with neighborhood and homes association leaders, city staff, the chamber of commerce, legislators, and more. My professional experience in finance, project management, and community relations have contributed to my success. My passion and long-term interest in the details of city government and my record of service to this city qualify me as the best candidate for this position.