



LAWRENCE BOARD OF REALTORS®

3838 W. SIXTH STREET / LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66049

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2023 CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Brad Finkeldei

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Biographical Information

Occupation: Attorney

Previous Government Experience: Served on Planning Commission for 6 years (2006-2012), and City Commission for 4 years (2019 - present)

Involvement in Community Activities: Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, 2012-2016, Board Member (President, 2015); Lawrence Family Promise, Board Member, 2010 – 2019 (President, 2013-2018); Ballard Community Services, Board Member, 2000 – 2019 (President, 8 years); St. John’s Catholic Church Finance Committee, 2010 –2019 (Chair, 2013-2019); Ethel & Raymond Rice Foundation, Trustee, 2017-present; Douglas County American Red Cross, Board Member, 2001-2003 (Chair, 2003); Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center, Board Member, 2014 – 2016; Lawrence Bioscience & Technology Business Center (BTBC), Board Member, 2014-2017, 2019-2020; Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Board Member, 2014-2016, 2022; Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC), Board Member, 2013- 2014

Positions on Important Issues

Priority Issues:

1. What are your three top public policy priorities if you are elected to the City Commission?

We have an urgent and critically important need to expand our housing stock for all price points. We must continue to invest in affordable housing projects but we also must find ways to expand our workforce and market housing. This can be accomplished most readily through increasing density of housing throughout the community, developing projects on recently annexed land, as well as by annexing new land adjacent to our city limits. Completing the important work of re-writing our Development Code to reach our community wide housing goals is a critical step to get increased density. In the meantime, we have funded through the CIP, utility and street projects that will open new areas to be annexed and housing built. We must continue this multi-prong approach to be successful.

Housing Policy:

2. What does “housing affordability” mean to you? It is expanding housing at all price points, so that housing can be affordable for all persons, from permanent affordability to workforce housing to market housing.

- 3. Several studies, local and state-wide, have confirmed that Lawrence has insufficient housing inventory to meet market demand. As a result, Lawrence has seen housing prices rise faster than neighboring communities. How would you suggest Lawrence address this availability and affordability gap?**

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- 4. The Lawrence Board of Realtors® believes that everyone in Lawrence should have access to safe, affordable housing and that everyone should be able to experience homeownership within their means. Meeting the demand for moderately priced housing is difficult. The City of Lawrence has identified Affordable Housing as a major priority. Do you support development policies that increase the cost of residential development? Please explain.**

No. Indeed we need a development code that reduces the cost of creating housing, not increases it.

Would you support new development policies that would incentivize new residential development meeting market demand to supply workforce housing at \$250,000 or less? Please explain.

Generally speaking I would be in favor of such policies, but would need to know the specifics before committing.

- 5. The City of Lawrence recently passed Ordinance 6690, providing protections in housing based on source of income and immigration status. The Lawrence Board of Realtors® raised several concerns regarding how the ordinance will impact sales transactions and Landlords of Lawrence have filed a lawsuit challenging the ordinance. What is your position on source of income and immigration status protections?**

I thought the changes made addresses the primary concerns of the Realtors, and thus supported its adoption. I have been asking for feedback from the real estate community (landlords, attorneys, and title companies) on any issues they have had since it went into effect on June 1, and to date I have heard of no issues (but if they do arise I would be willing to address them)

How do you feel about going further to limit a Landlord from using a background check and/or credit history to evaluate rental applicants?

At the moment I do not support additional regulations

- 6. Lawrence has experienced unprecedented growth in the unhoused population in the last several years. What role do you believe the City should play in addressing this issue?**

Prior to 2023, the city of Lawrence never provided direct services to the homeless. In response to a growing need and the inability of non-governmental entities to handle the issues of homelessness facing our community, the city commission dedicated dollars and resources and stepped into the emergency

sheltering space as their portion of the community's goal to reach functional zero. I like the city's commitment to be part of the solution to this nationwide problem. That being said, tackling this problem was new to the city and its employees and thus there has been significant struggles and growing pains along the way, which I certainly hope, and trust, we will improve upon as we continue this difficult work. Although the Community Plan to End Homelessness is not yet complete, I do support the direction it is heading and understand that it will take the entire community, not just the city, to make significant progress on this difficult issue.

7. *The City is currently undergoing a review and re-write of the Land Development Code. What changes to zoning, design, historic preservation, or other requirements in the Land Development Code to you think would encourage housing development?*

The goals of the new code is to implement the vision of Plan 2040; advance further housing availability, especially affordable housing; and streamline the review and approval process. An full list is too long for this format, but the new code should include fewer zoning districts, more flexibility in zoning districts, reduced dimensional requirements, more allowance for mixed use, more density by right, ADUs by right, reduced or eliminated parking regulations, simplified application process, reduced procedural requirements, reimagined historic regulations, just to name a few.

Energy Efficiency

8. *In March 2020, the City of Lawrence adopted Ordinance 9744, establishing a goal of 100% clean, renewable energy in all municipal operations by 2025 and city-wide by 2030. The Kansas Legislature pre-empted this ordinance during the 2021 session with the Energy Choice Act. What is your opinion regarding clean energy policies and how should we balance environmentally conscious policies with the rising cost of housing and utilities?*

I support the goal, but understand it is a goal that will require technological developments to allow us to accomplish it. For example, since we passed the goal, Black Hills has created a pathway to still receive natural gas but to use renewable energy to meet the 100% clean requirement. It is projects that this, working with our partners and encouraging adoption of technologies, that will allow us to reach our goal.

Economic Development:

9. *When appropriate, do you support the use of economic development incentives (such as industrial revenue bonds, tax abatements, rebates, community improvement districts, etc.) to attract or retain jobs and economic development investments in our community? Please explain your answer.*

Yes, I have supported the use of incentives on multiple occasions while on the commission. I think we have a process that helps measure the positive impact of such investments, and when such positive outcomes are ensured, I will generally support the incentive.

10. *How would you propose to balance the need for economic development and increasing density in our City with preservation of the City's character and historic resources and monuments?*

I believe there are many examples around the country of balancing density and historic character, especially along the east coast cities, towns and villages. You do not have to stop growth and density in

order to preserve your history. We need policies that allow both.

City Budget Issues and Property Taxes:

11. In terms of your priorities on the City Commission, how highly would you prioritize your commitment to decreasing, or limiting future increases in the mill levy rate?

I have not voted to increase the mill levy and do not see supporting any increases in the future. Indeed, now that we have corrected the structurally unbalanced budget we have had since COVID I see opportunities in the future to reduce the mill levy (with the caveat we may need to increase the mill levy to support fully staffing the new fire stations – that is something yet to be determined)

Thank you for your valuable time and cooperation in completing this candidate questionnaire. Your response will be greatly appreciated and will be distributed to our membership so they can make an adequate judgment on the merits of the candidates. Please return this questionnaire to our office by July 14, 2023.

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