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## Meet Your City Officials – Third Ward Councilman Elijah Stines

Elijah Stines' career has taken a few unexpected turns over the years, including one that led to his role as Boone's current Third Ward councilman.

Born in Cherokee and raised in Holstein, Stines graduated from Galva-Holstein High School in 2002 and set off for the University of South Dakota, where he majored in psychology and mathematics.

"I was planning on being a clinical psychologist. I was going to major in psychology, but then I also liked math and I knew there was a lot of more scholarship money for mathematics. So, I double majored in math, and I ended up liking it a lot more," he said. "That's why I went to graduate school for mathematics instead."

After completing his master's degree in mathematics in 2008, Stines was accepted at Iowa State University, where he earned his doctorate in the same discipline. Meanwhile, his wife, Katie, put her journalism degree to work at the *Boone News Republican*.

Discouraged by rental prices in Ames, the couple went house hunting in Boone. After looking at about a dozen houses, they found the one they liked and bought it. "We had two kids there – Avery was born in 2011 and then Edith in 2014 – and we figured we needed a bigger house," Stines said.

The move to the new home also meant a move into the Third Ward. That's when Stines' life took another unexpected turn in 2017 when he ran for the city council. "Someone thought I would be a good fit for the council and they asked me if I'd run. Service has always been important to me – I'm an Eagle Scout and president of the Lions Club and I always want to do what I can to help out the community – so it was in that vein that I ran," he said.

Third Ward concerns that have been or remain on Stines' priority list include the recent repaving of South Marshall Street and the upkeep of McHose Park, Herman Park and Linwood Cemetery. "All of them are located in the ward and it's a high priority to make sure the parks are well maintained and funded so people can enjoy them," he said. "Beyond that, I happily help out people in all parts of the city and I get contacted about things that happen everywhere in town. At the end of the day, I just try to help solve some problems."

Stines said his cornerstone philosophy as an elected official is to be a "representative who really listens empathetically to the concerns of the citizens."

"My goal is to create a culture that people feel that they have the ability and right to communicate – to let both their positive thoughts and concerns be known – and they can be sure that we take them seriously," he said. "Having a positive culture and space for constructive communication is really, really important, especially in a small town."

Stines said the best part of serving on the city council is "the gratitude, the appreciation that people have when I'm able to help them with something that's important to them."

He continued, "The hardest part is not being able to do everything that you want to do, whether it's because of time constraints, money constraints, or just not having the ability as an individual to tackle everything."

Stines, who is the associate chair of ISU's mathematics department, believes his professional background complements his council work and enables him to take an analytical approach to the city's budget and issues. But, he added, "At the end of the day, it's still a public service position, and working with people and their concerns has a more human element. That's always the most important part of the job."

Stines has served on the Policy Administration Committee through his time in office. He also serves on the Human Services Grant Committee and was recently assigned by Mayor John Slight to the Utility Committee.



**Third Ward  
Councilman Elijah  
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