



Tuesday, April 2, 2024

Meet Your City Officials – Fifth Ward Councilman Kole Hilsabeck

Kole Hilsabeck’s commitment to serving others began when he was still a teenager, but it was a chance meeting with then-Mayor John Slight that led him to public service as Boone’s Fifth Ward councilman.

“I was brand new to Boone – I think I’d only lived here six months – and we were at a wedding that the mayor happened to be at, as well,” Hilsabeck recalled. “There was a conversation about the Fifth Ward and that the incumbent wasn’t going to run again. After we got home, I was talking to my husband and said, ‘I’ve always wanted to be involved in city policy and politics, and I think that’s something I could do.’”

He continued, “When I moved here, I really wanted to get to know the town and people, and I also wanted to help make it the kind of town where I wanted to live and would be proud to call home. And, I thought, ‘What better way to do that than to just dive right in and serve on the city council.’”

Hilsabeck found that many people in the Fifth Ward appreciated a fresh face and new perspective, and he believes those attributes contributed to his victory.



**Fifth Ward Councilman
Kole Hilsabeck**

Hilsabeck serves on the Public Safety and Transportation Committee and is the city’s representative on the Boone County E911 service board. He believes those assignments are a natural fit for him after years in the health care sector. He also serves on the Policy and Administration Committee and represents Boone on the Central Iowa Regional Housing Authority.

As a former emergency room professional, Hilsabeck has been particularly interested in ways to improve EMT response times throughout Boone County.

“I truly love the public safety committee and I really wanted to serve on the E911 board because I feel that I can really make an impact on them, and I’ve come to enjoy them, especially because my husband was on the Boone Police Department,” Hilsabeck said. “I felt that I had a little bit of background and that I could pair them together.”

Hilsabeck also supports the efforts of council colleagues, various organizations and the public to develop Boone to a destination community that draws more tourists to attractions such as the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad and James H. Andrew Museum.

“Boone has so much to offer and I do hope we can work on that because I feel like people do come from states away to stay in Boone,” he said. “Making the quality of life for the people who live here goes right along with that. One way to do that is to keep fighting the good fight.”

Part of that process, he believes, is a focus on Boone’s need to improve its housing stock by demolishing abandoned, dilapidated structures and encouraging the development of housing that meets the needs of today. That includes housing stock that will attract new residents and broaden the city’s economic base.

“I think this is an opportunity to get the west side up and coming again,” he said, pointing to Ames where businesses have been moving away from North Grand Mall and the downtown to its south side. “My theory is that people do that, but then the new area dies down and eventually people make their way back. If we can get a couple more businesses to move over here to the west side and back to the downtown, that could be the start.”

Hilsabeck said he was not an organizer of Boone’s first gay pride event held last year, but he “fully supported it” and was pleased to see a large turnout. “I want to give a voice to people who didn’t have one in the past and deserve it. Even if I’m the only vote on (an issue) sometime, I want to make sure that, at least, those people have a voice.

Hilsabeck’s husband, Cole, is an officer with the Iowa State University Police Department. They enjoy outdoor activities, including walking their dog, Rue, and travel.

###