

OVERLAND PARK CITY COUNCIL MEETING

May 19, 2025

Mayor Curt Skoog called the Overland Park City Council meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Mrs. Holly Grummert, Council President; Mr. Jim Kite; Mr. Richard Borlaza; Mr. Logan Heley; Mr. Scott Mosher; Mrs. Melissa Cheatham; Mr. Gregg Riess; Mr. Drew Mitrisin; Mr. Chris Newlin; Ms. Inas Younis; Mr. Jeff Cox; and Mr. Sam Passer.

Also present were: Mrs. Lori Luther, City Manager; Ms. Kristy Stallings, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Kate Gunja, Assistant City Manager; Mrs. Danica Trexler, IT Support Specialist; and Ms. Jesica Pierce, Recording Secretary. Approximately 7 people were in the audience.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Curt Skoog led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mayor Curt Skoog opened the public comment period.

Dr. Jay Lehnertz, 8637 Broadmoor, former City Councilmember, stated he is 83 years old and he quoted the poem by Dylan Thomas, do not go gentle into that good night, old age should burn and rage and close the day, rage against the dying night. The Council is committed to shared roadways, though he believes the automobiles are placed ahead on a shared roadway. When Metcalf was still a Boulevard, a pedestrian could reasonably expect to safely get to the other side. With the conversion of Metcalf into a modern Interstate, it is impossible to cross the road. It is not easy to retool a City that began as an extension to Kansas City, Missouri, though Overland Park has grown and has moved to a new urban context. There should be shared roadways and spaces where pedestrians, bicycles, and traffic are important. He noted he does not have a solution, though he has a recommendation that he believes will go far in the right direction. He would ask the City Manager create a plan to clearly mark crosswalks, similar to Boston, Massachusetts, which paints crosswalks green and has clear signage. It is safer to walk in Boston and New York City with prohibited right turns at red lights. He believes retired Councilmembers should retire and be seen but not heard, though he noted he has made an exception two times; once was several years ago to support the bike program, and again now to ask the City to mark the crosswalks better. Metcalf currently has no marked crosswalks. This should not only apply to Metcalf, but to other streets as well.

With no further comments being made, Mayor Skoog closed the public comment period.

MAYOR CURT SKOOG

PROCLAMATION – Proclaiming May 20, 2025, as Overland Park's 65th Anniversary.

Mr. Jim Kite stated the City of Overland Park was officially incorporated 65 years ago on May 20, 1960. Overland Park has grown into a vibrant and thriving City; home to diverse businesses, cultural attractions, and a strong sense of community. Overland Park has consistently ranked among the best places to live, work, rent, own a business, and raise a family in the United States. The growth and success of Overland Park has been attributed to the efforts and contributions of residents, businesses, and community organizations who have fostered a spirit of innovation and civic engagement throughout the City's history. Mayor Skoog proclaimed May 20, 2025, as Overland Park's 65th anniversary in Overland Park and called upon the community to celebrate Overland Park's history, acknowledge present achievements, and look forward to future endeavors.

Mayor Skoog stated he would like to recognize former Councilmember Jay Lehnertz and former Mayor and former County Chair Ed Elert. Overland Park is made of the land no one else wanted in 1960, and it began with 28,000 people. The awards the City wins for being the best place to live, work, play, retire, and start a business, is due to the work this Council's predecessors have done as a City. He invited former Mayor Carl Gerlach, though he was unavailable to attend the meeting this evening.

Former Mayor and County Chairman Ed Eilert stated for 65 years, Overland Park has been an important part of his life. He grew up on a small farm in northeast Sedgwick County, attended Kansas State Teacher's College in Emporia, Kansas, which is now known as Emporia State University, and he did not know about Overland Park until he met his wife, Jan, who was a native of Overland Park, and whose parents purchased a home in the area in the late 1930's. He remembers the first time he came to Overland Park in the late fall of 1960 where he turned off the roadway at 87th Street driving east near a drive-in movie theater. In the area of Switzer, there was a baseball stadium called Signer Field. Many things have changed since then. He was married in Overland Park in 1962 and their reception was at the John Francis restaurant. The wedding party stayed overnight at the White Haven Lodge. The restaurant and lodge are no longer in Overland Park. The people involved in building this community since 1960 are noteworthy, including the previous Mayors and Councilmembers who built the foundation for this City. He would not forget the staff, who continue to be highly professional and qualified. The first City Manager was hired in 1960, who held the position for 33 years and set the standards for the professional management of this City. Other City Managers have followed with the same high quality professional standards, and employees throughout the City are the same. He thanked everyone who has been partners the past 65 years as now this is one of the greatest cities to live, work, and raise a family thanks to the work of the Councilmembers, Mayors, and professional staff.

PROCLAMATION – Proclaiming May 2025, as Mental Health Awareness Month.

Mr. Chris Newlin stated mental health is fundamental to the overall health and wellbeing of all individuals. Mental health conditions affect people of all ages, backgrounds, and socio-economic statuses. Stigma surrounding mental health can prevent individuals from seeking help, and support and raising awareness of mental health can help to break down the stigma, promote understanding, and encourage individuals to seek help when needed. The City of Overland Park is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all its residents. Mayor Skoog proclaimed the month of May 2025 as Mental Health Awareness Month in Overland Park and urged all residents to educate themselves and others about mental health conditions,

treatment options, and available resources. Together, we can create a community where everyone feels empowered to prioritize their mental health wellbeing and seek help when needed.

Mr. Newlin stated tonight is the fourth anniversary of giving recommendations to the Council on behalf of the Mental Health Task Force, where they spent a year educating themselves and creating recommendations for the City to follow; including the top priority, which was establishing a behavioral health department within the police department to help on calls. This has become the award-winning Overland Park Crisis Action team.

Mr. Greg Nawalanic stated he had the privilege of serving on the Mental Health Task Force before he transitioned to the Mental Health Advisory Committee. The importance of this type of proclamation is not lost on himself as a clinician and everyone on the standing advisory committee, as well as those who served on the task force or have lived experience around the importance of mental health care. They have members that have the lived experience of having lost family members to the struggle with substance abuse and mental illness. There are clinicians like himself who are on the front lines every day and there are administrators who understand the importance of policy and budgetary decisions that are made at a local and national level. There are people who work as advocates in the school system who see the impacts of mental health and wellness on the youth of the community.

The overarching realization they had at their last meeting was that they would like to see a mental health presence in the court system. They recently met the behavior health specialty court clinician Eliza Rink, and the importance of her role cannot be underscored. It is important to have clinical eyes when individuals who struggle with mental health issues find themselves before a judge. It is important to have someone there who can clinically weigh in for these people. The committee recommended for the diversion program to be more transparent and now they have a clinician in the courtroom who is able to understand the situations and circumstances that led that individual to be there and identify a way to intervene to prevent them from finding themselves back in a courtroom again. He thanked the Council for this recognition, and reducing the stigma of mental health is something they work tirelessly to do. When the COVID-19 pandemic took place, everything was remote and this program began in the middle of that situation. It is nice to be able to come together and meet now, though the pandemic served a benefit to allow individuals to acknowledge that they may be struggling because everyone was struggling in some way during that time. This was a big step forward.

He is worried about some of the verbiage being used, particularly at high levels of government. The community needs to be moving forward in a positive direction. The work the committee does and the support they enjoy from this Governing Body and the City of Overland Park is something they do not take lightly, and they highly appreciate the partnership with the Council and look forward to it continuing.

NEW APPOINTMENT TO THE CODE BOARD OF APPEALS:

Jeff Johnson – Term 12-01-2024 to 12-01-2027

NEW APPOINTMENT TO THE LEGACY OF GREENERY COMMITTEE:

Zane Miller – Term 2-01-2025 to 2-01-2027

Mrs. Holly Grummert moved to approve the new appointment to the Code Board of Appeals and the new appointment to the Legacy of Greenery Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Logan Heley, which passed by a vote of 12 to 0.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT HOLLY GRUMMERT

Mrs. Holly Grummert stated the 2024 Annual Development Report is now available. Overland Park permitted 583 new housing units in 2024, 384 single homes, 39 townhomes and duplexes, and 160 apartments, coming to 17.1 million new square feet of development, equaling \$2.4 billion. Overland Park continues to evaluate options to remove barriers to housing and encourage new development. The 2021 Johnson County Housing Study cited the need to build new housing units for growing demands. The study recommended constructing an annual average of 1,420 units per year. Private developers have also built public infrastructure in 2024, coming to approximately 37,000 square feet of pavement, 4.9 miles of curbs, 2 miles of storm sewers, 50 streetlights, and 0.75 miles of sidewalks. More details are available at opkansas.org.

CITY MANAGER LORI CURTIS LUTHER

City Manager Lori Curtis Luther stated the emergency operations staff is monitoring the City's weather conditions. They anticipate another round of storms tonight, possibly severe, between 10:00 p.m. and midnight. There are staff members that are working on a few downed trees, traffic signal outages, and minor flooding concerns. The City will continue to monitor those situations and will keep residents updated should anything change throughout the night.

The 69 Express project is moving forward with 80 percent of the pavement complete, and nearly all 25 bridges are rebuilt. The project team is launching an engagement process for the community to learn more about how the express lanes will work in early 2026. If residents have questions related to this project, they are encouraged to visit the 69 Express booth at the Overland Park Farmers' Market where members of the team will be on May 24, June 21, and July 12, to share updates and answer questions. They will also be at the Downtown Overland Park Car Show on June 12, 2025. The City will keep residents updated as staff works with the project team to host more community engagement events throughout the year.

Mayor Skoog stated as the 69 Express project has moved farther north for spring and summer, there is more effect on Interstate 435. He encourages all residents and those affected to search for information in person at these events or at the 69 Express website.

CONSENT AGENDA:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – Committee Report

BID TABULATION – Byrne and Jones, Inc., for the 2025 Bike/Hike Asphalt Construction and Overlay project, in an amount not to exceed \$529,856.12.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Committee Report:

WAIVE BID PROCESS AND AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE – ICOR
Technology, using a General Services Administration (GSA) cooperative purchasing contract, for two new Explosive Ordnance Disposal robots, in an amount not to exceed \$334,975.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Staff Report:

COUNCIL MINUTES – February 3, and February 17, 2025.

EXPENDITURE ORDINANCE NO. 4C – Outlining the expenditures from the General Operating Fund and the Capital Project Fund for April 25 through May 8, 2025.

FIRST AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT – Yellow Dog Networks, Inc., for a Security Vulnerability Monitoring Platform for an additional three-year period in an amount not to exceed \$361,755.

AGREEMENT AMENDMENT – Civic Plus, LLC, to provide website services for a five-year period in an amount of \$1,196,990.

Mrs. Grummert moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Heley, which passed by a roll-call vote of 12 to 0.

REGULAR AGENDA:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – Committee Report:

Logan Heley, Chair

Mr. Heley stated the committee met earlier this month and their business was voted on with the Consent Agenda.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – Staff Report:

No report.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – PARKS AND RECREATION – Staff Report:

No report.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Committee Report:

Melissa Cheatham, Chair

No report.

PUBLIC SAFETY – POLICE DEPARTMENT - Staff Report:

No report.

PUBLIC SAFETY – FIRE DEPARTMENT – Staff Report:

No report.

PUBLIC WORKS – Committee Report:

Jim Kite, Chair

No report.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Committee

Report:

Chris Newlin, Chair

Mr. Newlin stated they will have their monthly meeting in Conference Room No. 1 on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, and the agenda is substantial.

PUBLIC WORKS – Staff Report:

No report.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Staff Report:

Chris Newlin, Chair.

No report.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Staff Report:

No report.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS –
REGULAR AGENDA:**

No report.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

No report.

PLANNING COMMISSION - REGULAR AGENDA:

No report.

OLD BUSINESS:

No report.

NEW BUSINESS:

No report.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:53 p.m., Mayor Skoog declared the meeting adjourned. Minutes transcribed by Jessica Pierce.

Curt Skoog, Mayor

ATTEST:

Elizabeth Kelley, City Clerk