

## Candidate Questions – Mike Jaffe

**Why do you wish to serve in the government of Poetry?**

Response: Poetry is my home and has been for 24 years now. And for all those years I have done my small part to keep it the way I found it many years ago. Serving on the Town Council is just another way of protecting it while serving my neighbors. No doubt, it can be a thankless job at times, but I am no less determined. I believe all of us should do what we can, to better our town. God has blessed me with the ability to serve on the Council and with His help and yours I am seeking a second term.

**There will be much to do in the first term for the Mayor and Town Council. What three things do you most hope to accomplish, if elected?**

Response: This is actually our second Council cycle and I will try and answer in that context. My priorities for the next Council cycle, should I be elected, would be:

- 1) Build unity across the Mayor and Council. This doesn't mean necessarily having the same opinions on each and every topic but rather a willingness to commit to mutual respect, transparency in all of our efforts, and honest consideration of the opinions of other members of the Council and the public.
- 2) Prioritize our time and resources so that they focus on those things that we are legally obligated to do, to those things that the Council and the citizens consider to be in the best interest of all of Poetry and to those things that protect the town's future for as far out as we can see.
- 3) Work toward realistic long-term plans for providing for the financial needs of the town so that we can support things like road repair and replacement, which will require both funding and cooperative relations with the 3 counties that our town and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) spans.

**When you were first considering the possibility of Poetry incorporating, what did you see as the biggest positive from incorporation, and what was your biggest concern?**

Response: I voted FOR incorporation, not because it addressed all of the concerns I and others had but because it seemed to give the community I love the greatest chance of survival as I have always known it. I think of it like throwing up a fence around our town to keep the surrounding towns honest where I didn't think they would be, without a fence to limit their efforts. I also looked forward to driving a stake in the ground to establish us as the town of Poetry, something that was vague and unknown prior.

I suppose my biggest concern was that the politics of being a town would take away from what I enjoyed about the community. Once you establish a town somebody must be in charge (town government) and because humans will be humans, anything we are involved in will be marked by our personal desires and bias. Consequently, as best we can, we need strive to establish a shared vision to give us something to compare our thoughts and efforts to keep us from getting sidetracked.

**What makes you stand out from other candidates?**

**Response:** I wear bib overalls 365 days a year. On a more serious note, I don't see myself as better or worse than the other candidates. I believe each of us bring unique experiences and skills to the role. And selfishly, I believe my experiences and skills have been, and will continue to be beneficial to my role as Council member. I've lived a lot of years now and through a combination of successes and failures have learned a few things that I'd like to think equip me to fill the role I'm seeking. And for those who like formal pedigrees, I have both formal education and many years of experience in the business world building, growing and leading a number of successful telecommunication companies. And from all of that I've learned that experience and people skills were what mattered most. I believe I have both.

**If elected, you will serve a two-year term. What changes to Poetry do you envision over the next two years?**

**Response:** The first thing I would like to work on is eliminating to the extent possible, the newly found divisiveness permeating our Town. Unfortunately, some of the circumstances and personalities that brought us to this point in time have created more division than unity, in my opinion. I suppose the upcoming election will prove me right or wrong on this. I feel like too much of the effort has been focused on performing rather than building a foundation that we all believe in. I'm smart enough to realize that there is nothing I could say or do that 100% of our town would agree with. But I would like to feel more like the Mayor and Council were listening to and considering all our citizens. None of us have the perfect answer but together I believe we can get closer to it. When I consider how it might feel to be on the other side of some of the things happening in our town, I realize how frustrated and left out I would feel. I want to minimize the number of citizens having that experience.

**If you are NOT elected, what would you do to try to help work on ideas or issues that are important to you?**

**Response:** I would continue to stay involved in the Town by attending Council meetings to stay informed and provide my feedback, volunteering to help the Mayor and Council where appropriate and by doing my part to bring our town together wherever possible.

**How would you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in the Town?**

**Response:** Better communication at all levels. I think this starts by being significantly more transparent about the efforts and intentions of the Mayor and Council. Even with the limitations the Open Meetings Act (OMA) imposes on us, we could do a better job of letting citizens know what we're working on and considering. I believe this would start with meeting agendas that have less items, prioritized based on our best guess as to which things are most important to citizens allowing them to participate in meetings without staying up all night. I would also like the agendas items to be more accurate and descriptive of what we are actually going to be discussing and considering. We need to continue to search for ways to improve

citizen involvement in Council meetings and to explore other options for meeting with citizens while remaining OMA compliant.

**What would you describe as your primary leadership quality?**

**Response:** I listen to and consider the opinions of others whether they align with mine or not. Some of my greatest learning and growing as a human being has come from people and ideas I initially saw little value in. God and time have both taught me that everyone brings some value. I sometimes think life is a little like a rock tumbler where we are the rocks that start out sharp and rough but through the process of tumbling, which causes us to constantly bump into each other, we become smoother and more polished. And the grit you add to help the tumbling process is the life events that test us and our relationships. I have many years of leadership experience that I will continue to use to the benefit of the town of Poetry.

**If you are not elected, what would you do to try to help work on ideas or issues that are important to you?**

**Response:** I would continue to stay involved in the Town by attending Council meetings to stay informed and provide my feedback, volunteering to help the Mayor and Council where appropriate and by doing my part to bring our town together wherever possible.

**How would you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process in the City?**

**Response:** I love that this question appears twice because I believe it's that important. And here again I say, better communication at all levels. I think this starts by being significantly more transparent about the efforts and intentions of the Mayor and Council. Even with the limitations the Open Meetings Act impose on us, we could do a better job of letting citizens know what we're working on and considering. I believe this would start with meeting agendas that have less items, prioritized based on our best guess as to which things are most important to citizens allowing them to participate in meetings without staying up all night. I would also like the agendas items to be more accurate and descriptive of what we are actually going to be discussing and considering, complete with better supporting materials. We also need to continue to look for better ways of allowing citizens to interact at Council meetings. And I don't believe that the answer to this is necessarily to do what other towns do. Most of us would agree that we don't want to be like other towns. We want to be Poetry.

**What three things do you hope to accomplish most?**

**Response:** I answered this question above and will repeat my answer here. My priorities for the next council cycle, should I be elected, would be:

- 1) **Build unity across the Mayor and Council.** This doesn't mean necessarily having the same opinions on each and every topic but rather a willingness to commit to mutual respect, transparency in all of our efforts, and honest consideration of the opinions of other members of the Council and the public.

- 2) Prioritize our time and resources so that they focus on those things that we are legally obligated to do, to those things that the Council and the citizens consider to be in the best interest of all of Poetry and to those things that protect the town's future for as far out as we can see.
- 3) Work toward realistic long-term plans for providing for the financial needs of the town so that we can support things like road repair and replacement which will require both funding and cooperative relations with the 3 counties that our town and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) spans.

**Poetry is currently a very rural area with a "country" lifestyle. How much do you think that lifestyle should be allowed to change, and how would you ensure the town stay within the bounds you would set?**

**Response: One of the problems with words and phrases is that they can have slightly different meanings to each of us based on our wants, needs and life experiences. To be truthful, I liked Poetry the way it was 24 years ago when I first moved here. There were less people, more dirt roads and property taxes were a lot lower. But change is inevitable and as much as I'd like to think there's way to stop change, life has shown me different. So, I believe the effort moves over to managing that change to the extent we can so that we stay as close to our shared vision as possible. I would like to see Poetry remain an agricultural bedroom community that is free of industry, high density housing, significant retail and restrictions on its citizens that impose undo limitations on their ability to live the way they choose. To accomplish this, I think the character of the people who are appointed to lead our town government is probably the single most important indicator of success. Laws can be changed. Rights can be violated. Voices can be silenced and people can be "cancelled". But leaders, like myself, with character and integrity and most importantly God at their center, will find a way to achieve the collective vision without giving in to these tactics.**