

Greetings, Grey Forest Neighbor!

My name is Michael Phillips, and I am looking forward to representing you on Grey Forest City Council.

The road to Texas: As a native son of Phoenix, Arizona, I graduated from Arizona State University in 1994 with a Bachelor of Arts in Russian and a Certificate in Russian and East European Studies. I joined the U.S. Air Force as a Russian linguist in 1996, and had the honor of serving all over the world, including Kazakhstan, Thailand, Uzbekistan and four years as a Defense Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia. My assignments as a Russian interpreter included work supporting the U.S. effort to secure and destroy the former Soviet Union's chemical and biological weapons. Another highlight was leading the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission's efforts to uncover information the former Soviet Union may have about missing American personnel in Southeast Asia for the Defense Department's Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office. My leadership experience ranges from working solo in Central Asia to being Squadron Superintendent for over 400 Airmen at Fort Meade, Maryland.

Putting down roots: I was lucky enough to be assigned to Lackland Air Force Base in 2016. As 2019 approached, I realized it was time to retire, and I planned on heading back to Arizona to be near family. But in 2018 I met the love of my life, Jessica, and she turned out to be the reason I needed to stay put. Even better, as a long-time San Antonio resident, Jessica has been using Kurt Youngblood Framing for years. When I told her I wanted to stay here, she found the Youngblood place on Hilltop and told me, "Have I got the place for you." After 23 years of what felt like sprinting in the Air Force, I was delighted to settle down in beautiful, tranquil Grey Forest.

The road ahead: A large part of what drew me to the military was a desire to work in public service. Though I was sure I had scratched my "public service" itch, after a year or so, I found myself going to city council meetings and looking for ways to serve. This led me to volunteering my time to this amazing community. I've enjoyed serving in many ways, including:

- as a Madla Park volunteer;
- on the Grey Forest Public Safety Committee;
- on the Grey Forest Police Disciplinary Review Board;
- as a sponsor of Grey Forest Open Studios;
- as the Grey Forest Open Studios Planning Committee Chair, during which time we enjoyed our best-ever fundraising year and provided our largest-ever scholarship awards to two very talented local high school art students!

Like many of you, I want to see more executive experience at City Hall. With my background as a leader and diplomat, I can provide that. I will do my best to focus the efforts of city leadership on the issues that you have been telling me matter most to you:

- Getting us back to 24/7 *local* police coverage, with officers who know us;
- Providing the kind of environment needed to attract and retain quality city employees, staff, and volunteers;
- Strengthening relationships with nearby communities;

- Ensuring open communication and welcoming all voices when conducting city business;
- Promoting common goals for UNITY and a spirit of harmony in the community.

Most importantly, I want to hear about what matters to you, as well as your ideas for improving our city. Feel free to email me at MichaelPhillips@unityforourcommunity.org, or if you see me out in the yard, give me a shout!

I appreciate your vote for Grey Forest City Council Place 4, whether voting early (22-30 April), or on 4 May, 2023.