

The General Election will be held on June 8.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Responses have been edited for space.

See next week's edition, June 3, for mayoral and other candidates.



Vanessa Caldwell
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman-at-Large
DEMOCRAT

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: Become familiar with how public office will affect my ability to become personally involved with areas of city concern; Meet city employees; Talk with my fellow policy leaders and key staff members about the processes and methods used to effectively work together. Review city budget and the most recent city audit or annual financial report Become well versed in city's comprehensive plan
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: Making sure newly annexed gets the all the benefits of the city of Olive Branch; Making sure it remains safe and in the Top best places to live in the country; Destigmatizing mental health.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: Potholes, Beautification programs, getting resources and equipment to all first responders and helping bring well paying jobs to the area.



George Collins
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman-at-Large
REPUBLICAN

UNAVAILABLE FOR RESPONSE

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A:
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A:
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A:



Michael Chandler
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 1
DEMOCRAT

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: Rigorous orientation with the City Staff to further understand (board) decisions and planning over the last 6-12 months; Work with the new mayor, board and staff on current plans and budget priorities -- particularly as they would impact Ward 1; and Extend communication to the neighborhood associations and business blocks in Ward 1 so I can better understand their concerns.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: Ensure that residential development keeps a good and promotable brand while retaining high value; Exercise incentives and marketing strategies for business growth to the scale of the (a) 2040 plan and (b) recent annexation decisions; and Research and lobby for Federal and State funds to bolster infrastructure.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: Making sure City Staff is well paid, trained and funded for growth; Investment in city maintenance.



Gil Earhart
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 1
REPUBLICAN

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: Address the need and cost for a comprehensive road program. We have some staff positions that need to be addressed and budgeted for both at the department head level and support staff. I will assist the new Mayor with his questions about budgeting these items as we must have a fiscal year 2021-2022 budget approved by the last meeting in September.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: Revitalization of Old Towne. Signage along our main arteries of 1/22 and Staline, Highway 305, Goodman Road, identifying where our city begins and ends. Improve our Property Maintenance Code.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: Essentially, anything that brings a higher quality of life and better value of the tax dollar for our people. This would include better commerce, traffic control and flow, and addressing the items that I have previously mentioned.



Theresa Isom
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 2
DEMOCRAT

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: I'd like to have the opportunity to review all of the financial reports and go through all of the plans they have. The ones that are immediate, I would try to go ahead and start working on.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: I would like to keep the home value up in Ward 2 and all of Olive Branch. Making sure that whatever infrastructure we bring in meets the standards of our area. Also, looking at some type of community center or recreational facility for the youth in this area.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: I'd like to find a way to keep money in Olive Branch so that way we don't have to go to other cities to do our shopping. Improve the streets that are in need of repair. Look at some types of fine dining restaurants and those types of things to bring money back into the city.



Pat Hamilton
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 2
REPUBLICAN

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: Due to the extreme weather temperatures all of our roads have suffered and many need repaired. I will take a personal tour with our City Engineer and evaluate all needed repairs.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: After 12 years in office serving as Alderwoman I am keenly aware that the continued growth of our City depends on our residential and commercial development. I will strive to see that our City remains a safe and desirable place to live.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: City improvements encompasses all areas of municipal responsibilities:
 1. Police education and upgrade equipment.
 2. Recreational facilities (our parks and game fields)
 3. Roads - many need resurfacing and widened.



Jarvis Cook
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 3
DEMOCRAT

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: My first order of business is to build a team of representatives from each neighborhood to work with me who are also passionate about improving, maintaining, and promoting the City of Olive Branch. I will work with these individuals to identify the areas in their neighborhoods that need immediate attention from the City.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: My desire is to bring Ward 3 together. I believe that the people of Ward 3 would like to have an alderman who is available to hear their concerns and produce results. I commit myself to be the Alderman they need. I plan to ensure that infrastructure concerns in Ward 3 are addressed and that problems are corrected in a timely fashion.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: City Improvements are changes a community makes to redesign or reconstruct areas which have unsightly or unsafe signs of age and disrepair as well as developing value-added infrastructure, zoning, and policy which produces tangible, measurable improvement on key indicators as well as fostering a greater sense of wellbeing among citizens.



Joy Henderson
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 3
REPUBLICAN

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: In the last 6 weeks as I have been out knocking on doors and talking to the people in ward 3, there are three major complaints that I am hearing - 1. is the infrastructure; 2. the speeders up and down their streets; and 3. the rentals in their neighborhoods.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: As Olive Branch is continuing to grow and see new business as well as new roof tops, I will continue to vote for the peoples best interest and ensure that our tax dollars are spent wisely. I want the city to continue to focus on growth and safety. My heart has always been in keeping opportunities for our youth and our Senior Services. I think we can expand on that as well.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: There will always be room for city improvements. It will be a continuous process to keep up with city maintenance and with street repairs. This will be a top priority for me. Other priorities will include: SAFETY FOR OUR CITIZENS, PARK IMPROVEMENTS, and QUALITY JOBS.



David Wallace
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 4
REPUBLICAN
UNOPPOSED

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: We've already in the process of approving the street projects. I want to see to it that we get that under control and get some of the streets repaired as quickly and efficiently as we possibly can. Maintain the controlled growth where it's efficient and beneficial maintaining the small town feel as much as we possibly can as well.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: Keeping the city and ward as safe, clean, and efficiently ran as possible. As much growth as we can, sustainable growth where it's not overly done. Keep a watchful eye on things and make sure things are beneficial for the city. Part of my goal is to see to it that we maintain low taxes. I like that we run a fiscal conservative government.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: To me, city improvement is great infrastructure, streets, public safety, thriving economy, and safe neighborhoods.



Dianne Dodson
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 5
DEMOCRAT

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: We have to see what the budget is like and go from there. Make sure that we have a sufficient amount of officers according to the number of citizens we have.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: Keep Olive Branch safe, keep our neighborhoods safe, keep our economy growing by bringing in the top companies.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: Fixing streets and infrastructure. I plan on keeping Olive Branch a safe and nice place to live.



Jan Aldridge
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 5
REPUBLICAN

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: I would like to get a plan for our drainage issues around the city.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: We're pretty much developed in my ward. There may be some more businesses coming. I would like to see our streets get improved. The drainage issues is the biggest problem my ward has.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: Having the community come together and have more things and activities, for the children especially. Beautify our town and maybe making Old Town a more vibrant area where we have more activities and bringing in more revenue.



Dale Dickerson
Running for:
Olive Branch Alderman Ward 6
REPUBLICAN
UNOPPOSED

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: We have to plan our budget. A lot of that will depend on if we have a big turnover in the board. A lot of the first 90 days will depend on who else is on the board and who is in the mayor's seat. Depending on if we have any appeal on annexation, we'll have to start getting ready to absorb the area and be with that new area.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: For my ward, I want to try and do as much street paving and street repairs as possible. The rest of our infrastructure is pretty established, but we have quite a bit of need in street paving and possibly widening part of Alexander road between just south of Staline Road and DeSoto Road.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: We are looking at doing some improvements on our gas supply line, where we had some customers that lost service in the super cold weather we had. We're looking at plans to increase the size of our gas line so that doesn't happen again. We're looking at widening some roads to relieve some of the traffic issues in the city. The gas infrastructure and increasing the streets capacity are the biggest pressing points right now.



Brandy Gull
Running for:
Southaven Alderman-at-Large
DEMOCRAT

UNAVAILABLE FOR RESPONSE

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A:
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A:
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A:



George Payne
Running for:
Southaven Alderman-at-Large
REPUBLICAN

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: The first 90 days after election are important and busy for every municipality because you have to dive straight into the 2022 Budget. As always, our goals are to be able to provide cost of living raises to our employees, fully fund our first responders, continue to allocate monies to improve infrastructure, add at least five additional police officers per a commitment we made last year, and do it all without raising taxes on our citizens. This budget must be approved and voted on by September 15.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: My long term goals include continuing to grow our Parks Department and make Southaven more than just a youth baseball destination.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: To me, "City Improvements" mean the same as "Home Improvements". It is an investment in yourself. If the City doesn't invest in itself, how can we expect for business' and citizens to invest in the City.



Kristian Kelly
Running for:
Southaven Alderman Ward 1
REPUBLICAN
UNOPPOSED

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: The first ninety days of this term will be right in the thick of preparing the budget. I will push for more neighborhood parks spending and making sure the overall budget is balanced, fair, and achievable like we have these past eight years. I will also aide in preparations for our first ever Fall Festival!
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: Citizen and business engagement. We have amazing people living in Ward 1 and I want to help them get involved in City happenings. I am going to organize more events to bring people together to increase morale and pride in Southaven!
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: Peace of mind. I strive to provide the best in public safety, wise financial decisions, infrastructure, and freedom to live as you choose. If the overall look of our City improves through owner's pride, we've done our job.



Nathan Reed
Running for:
Southaven Alderman Ward 2
DEMOCRAT

- What changes will you make in the first 90 days of your administration to better the community?
A: There's a lot of things I want to accomplish. One of the things that I really want to push for is better streets for the west end, especially west of Hwy 51. The attention that's been given to that area as far as infrastructure and safety has always fallen to the wayside. My first 90 days would definitely be more attentive to making sure they have speed bumps, safe walkways, and street lights.
- What are your long term plans for your ward?
A: My long term plan is to have more community engagement. I want people that need to have a voice have their voices and concerns be heard.
- What is your definition of "city improvements"?
A: City improvement would be more citizen engagement. Getting people more involved with what's going on. I think that needs to be addressed, not just on a political level but on a normal level too. I think we need to be engaging more in schools in our ward. I would love to see more engagement with students and senior citizens as well.