



## Spring Lake Township Candidate Questionnaire

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Employer: MillerKnoll

Office Being Sought: Spring Lake Township Trustee

*\*Please feel free to attach a separate sheet if the space provided is not sufficient.*

### **General:**

1. What qualifications/experience do you feel you possess that will enable you to fulfill the responsibilities of the elected office you are seeking?

*I have nearly 20 years of experience in Human Resources, where I've developed strong leadership and problem-solving skills. Whether leading teams or managing projects with budget management. I bring a strategic mindset and clear communication to every task. Over the past year as a Spring Lake Township trustee and with more than four years on a school board, I've shown my dedication to public service, integrity, and transparency. My experience has equipped me to analyze complex issues and make informed decisions that benefit our community.*

2. Have you ever run for political office before? If yes, please explain.

*I have not run but was appointed to the Trustee position last year to finish a term.*

3. If elected, what would be your top priorities and why?

- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Ensuring prudent management of township finances and efficient use of taxpayer dollars to fund beneficial projects.
- **Community Engagement and Transparency:** Enhancing resident inclusion through streamed meetings and town hall events and improving digital communication tools.
- **Infrastructure Maintenance and Development:** Focusing on continuous improvements to roads, bike paths, utilities, and public spaces to meet current and future demands.

## **Economic Development, General Policy and Transportation**

1. Please describe your general economic development philosophy for Northwest Ottawa County.

*First, would be always to maintain and support the businesses we have today. I believe in strategically investing in local assets to stimulate economic growth. This means supporting businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, and capitalizing on our natural resources and tourism potential to create a diverse and resilient economy. Additionally, building strong partnerships with local educational institutions, non-profits, and regional agencies is crucial.*

2. Do you support the use of tax abatements and/or special tax incentives to create jobs and spur economic growth? Why or why not?

*I support the use of tax abatements and special tax incentives as a means to create jobs and spur economic growth, but only when they are used responsibly and strategically. These tools can be highly effective in attracting new businesses to our area, encouraging expansions, and driving economic development. We have approved a few over the last year in my tenure and we have seen significant growth from those businesses in a short amount of time.*

3. Affordability and availability of housing for many that earn between 80 and 120% Average Median Income (AMI) is a serious problem in our community. How would you address this barrier to residency?

*This is a challenging issue in our township, but one we must address thoughtfully. We are fortunate to live in an area where people want to reside, which has driven up home prices due to demand outpacing supply. While this is great for current homeowners, it possesses difficulties for those looking to move in or move up from their starter homes.*

*We also face resistance from some residents who are concerned about growth-which is valid. However, it's crucial that we expand our housing options to include affordable rentals, starter homes, and innovative solutions to meet the needs of our community. We can balance these concerns by implementing smart, sustainable housing strategies that respect our community's character and values. People should understand that achieving this goal is aspirational and requires partnerships with developers, who aren't obligated by law to follow our vision. The housing development process is complex, and often difficult to halt or control. My aim is to work collaboratively with developers to find reasonable, balanced solutions that address our housing crisis while maintaining the quality of life we desire.*

4. As we move to a more regional community and in the face of continued fiscal constraints, what are your thoughts on consolidation of services (police, fire, schools, transportation to name a few)?

*I think Spring Lake Township and their collaboration with the Village is already ahead of the game. We have combined most services to streamline costs and efficiency. We just recently joined forces with the village for our police services, getting the Township more police presence than before. We need to continue to look for opportunities to combine resources within the county as fiscal constraints will continue.*

5. How would you propose to fund key community infrastructure needs that have been identified over the next three to seven years?

*We should prioritize projects based on urgency and impact, manage costs through phased implementation, and leverage existing revenue streams. Additionally, we should actively pursue state and federal grants and explore public-private partnerships to fund specific projects, thereby reducing the financial burden on the community.*

6. The Township has experienced a historic growth rate of 50 new single-family homes per year for the last 20 years. Is that the right growth rate? Should it be more? Should it be less?

*Yes, the Township has averaged 50 new single-family homes per year over the last two decades, but this average includes peaks like 2003-2005 which were exceptionally busy years. Also, for about a decade starting in 2008 we had below average new builds as the economy lagged. There is an argument to be made that we are still catching up from that decade of slow development. However, the pace has started slowed again as many neighborhoods have filled up. Opinions on development vary: some residents prefer minimal growth, while others argue that 50 homes per year isn't enough to address our housing shortage.*

*To balance these perspectives, I believe incorporating a mix of diverse housing options and aiming for 25-35 new builds annually is a sustainable approach.*

*Appropriate housing growth is beneficial for our Township. It supports essential services like water and sewer systems, strengthens our school district, and boosts our local economy. New construction also benefits our tradespeople, including carpenters, electricians, and plumbers. Over the past 20 years, we've developed many desirable neighborhoods, and continuing this balanced growth will help maintain our community's vitality and appeal.*

7. How important is manufacturing to the Township?

*Manufacturing holds a special place in my heart and is crucial to our township's economic vitality. I grew up with a single father who spent most of his career on the shop floor at two manufacturing facilities in Spring Lake Township. Watching him work his way up to management gave me firsthand insight into the essential role manufacturing plays in our community.*

*Manufacturing provides stable jobs with livable wages and benefits, supporting not only the workers but also their families and our local economy. Despite the cost pressures from international competition, our local manufacturing sector remains a cornerstone of economic activity.*

*The two companies where my father worked are still in business today, thanks in part to the support they've received from Spring Lake Township, including tax incentives that have enabled them to reinvest, expand, and modernize their operations. These initiatives have helped them grow their workforce and enhance their technological capabilities.*

*To ensure the continued success of our manufacturing sector, we must remain committed to supporting these companies. This includes providing the necessary incentives, fostering a business-friendly environment, and advocating for policies that help our manufacturers compete globally. By doing so, we can sustain a vital industry that contributes significantly to the economic and social well-being of our township.*