



Spring Lake Township Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Jim Koster

Phone: 616-638-0291

E-mail: jkoster1791@gmail.com

Employer: Spring Lake Township

Office Being Sought: Township Treasurer

**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 16 years of experience as the Township Treasurer. 40 years of experience as a business owner and 52 years with Spring Lake Township Fire Department.

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

Yes 16 years ago for Township Treasurer

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

Here are some of the areas that I believe we need to continue to improve in the coming years, in addition to good, basic, and sound everyday government practices:

- **Continue to support our Fire/EMS and Police programs with financial support and collaboration between neighboring governments.**

- **Continue to support our infrastructure, bike paths and roads with well thought-out and financially responsible preventive maintenance programs.**
- **Continue to support the education and training of our employees and support new technological advances to improve efficiency for the Township.**
- **Continue to update our parks, looking to add features that our community will enjoy such as pickleball, mountain bike trails, better and more soccer fields and baseball fields, and continue to work with the Ottawa County Parks to provide access to the Ottawa County Park lands.**
- **Continue to make Township Government accessible and informative for our residents using social media, live streaming of public meetings, sending written surveys on larger topics to our residents and adding more informational signage to promote participation in changes to the community.**
- **Continue to support and encourage our Spring Lake-Lake Board to monitor and protect our lake.**

Economic Development, General Policy and Transportation

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

Spring Lake Township has over the years created a good mix of Commercial, Industrial and Residential areas. We have tried to promote the City of Ferrysburg and Village of Spring Lake as the commercial corridor, with some extension to the east on M-104. Industrial areas away from residential areas using some type of buffer of light Industrial or multifamily housing.

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?

Yes tax abatements are an important way to insure that new manufacture's and our current manufacturing plants continue to

invest in the Township. This creates local jobs to support our commercial business areas and supports our schools with non PRE tax money.

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 very complex issue that our township and others are faced with. Locations and a limited supply of buildable land make it difficult to build homes within this income range. We need to continue to look for the land and opportunities that will fit the vision of Spring Lake Township to build within these income parameters.

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)?

Spring Lake Township has been a leader in consolidation of services. We have worked with the Village to combine our Fire Department, Department of Public Works and the Ottawa Sherriff Dept., adding and sharing office space and personnel in the Village Hall. This lowers our cost of doing business and helps us keep up with inflation and rising costs. We need to continue to work with our other neighbors to consolidate and save money and still have our individual identity.

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

Spring Lake Township has worked very hard to put plans in place for our Roads, Bike paths, Fire Dept DPW and parks by accessing capital needs. We use a variety of programs such as capital set aside for long-term needs, long-range maintenance plans to manage our spending and budgeting.

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?

7. Fifty new residential living units seem to be the natural average growth in Spring Lake Township. We have had a lot of single-family homes and little recent growth in multi-unit apartments, townhouses and duplexes. Our Zoning reflects where our infrastructure can support growth, this will control our growth.

8. How important is manufacturing to the Township?

Good clean, environmentally safe manufacturing is very important to Spring Lake Area. It provides jobs where people live.

Manufacturing supports the commercial areas of Northwest Ottawa County, school systems and other tax funded units with larger tax dollars. It also takes some of the burden off our residents to pay for infrastructure and community improvements enjoyed by our residents.