

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CANDIDATES GUIDE

2008

Thomas F. Spuhler – Planning Board

No Photo
Available

Background and qualifications:

My Westford planning experience is extensive: I was appointed by the Planning Board to the Comprehensive Master Plan Committee, where I have chaired both the Land Use and Transportation subcommittees for the last two years.

I was previously appointed to the Master Plan Implementation Committee, serving as driving force behind the Performance Standard bylaws passed by Town meeting in 2005. I am a past board member of the Westford Conservation Trust and Westford's trails committee. To keep the public informed, I have produced the broadcast of Planning Board meetings on local cable for the last five years. I am ready to take advantage of what I have learned over the past few years and believe serving on the Planning Board is the next step for doing this.

I have been trained in the mathematics behind traffic analysis, have studied Westford's zoning bylaws extensively, and have been involved with many different aspects of town government. I have also explored other communities' approaches to planning and have tried to see what made these communities work. I understand smart growth concepts and other community-quality tools (see www.tomspuhler.com) and I have a strong interest in preserving open space.

1. How do you balance development with maintaining the character of Westford?

Westford is a scenic New England town that needs to maintain its character and quality of life. I believe that development does not have to degrade either. We can have it both ways. Appropriate, well-planned development can and should enhance our community. I believe that we can add jobs and attract businesses while maintaining Westford's character, protecting our drinking water and keeping our infrastructure up to date. The Performance Standards I helped get passed are an instrumental planning tool to help reach these goals.

We need to continue the planning process we started with the new Master Plan. We need to focus on identifying the needs of the community, seeking out and attracting the kinds of high-value projects which provide the goods, services and employment opportunities sought after by the community, and use the tools and the monies offered by the state to make these high-value tradespeople flourishing and protective members of the community.

2. What single issue most influenced you to run for planning Board and how would you address it?

I would say that my primary motivation is helping to provide the town with development opportunities that we all want while protecting the resources we all value. My community planning experience and the satisfaction of having taken part in the legislative

process have given me the understanding that we can have the development we want and preserve our quality of life too. Community service is not so much an obligation, but an opportunity.