

## 2015 Sustainable Saratoga Candidate Survey

**CANDIDATE NAME:** Christian Mathiesen

**CANDIDATE FOR (OFFICE):** Commissioner of Public Safety

---

**Question #1: What sustainability initiatives or efforts have you implemented or advanced as an elected official or private citizen?**

As an elected official, I have supported Complete Streets and Sustainable Saratoga initiatives. I brought the resolution to the City Council to limit vehicle idling in the City which was passed unanimously. I have supported Commissioner Madigan's plan to bring a solar array to the City landfill. As a private citizen, I have installed energy efficient light bulbs in my home and my office. I bought a Toyota Prius in 2005 which my daughter now drives. We purchased a Prius V in 2012 which my wife drives. I just leased a 2015 Plug-In Prius and I can drive for nearly 12 miles daily without using any gasoline. I am looking into having solar panels installed in my office on West Avenue and possibly in my home on Friar Tuck Way. I continue to advocate for trails and walkways so that Saratogians can traverse our City without having to rely on motor vehicles.

**Question #2: What, if anything, would you propose to do locally to confront climate change?**

I continue to advocate for trails and sidewalks. I am a strong proponent of the 'City in the Country' concept which reduces suburban sprawl and thus directs residential and commercial uses to our City's core. This in turn reduces reliance on cars and enhances the possibility of mass transit. We can also do better in purchasing vehicles for our City fleet that are more energy efficient or that use electric or other less polluting sources of energy.

**Question #3: The City Council recently adopted a new Comprehensive Plan, which embodies and continues the "City in the Country" vision for Saratoga Springs. According to the Comprehensive Plan: "This concept reflects a city with an intensively developed urban core and an economically vibrant central business district, with well-defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density development."**

**Do you support the "City in the Country" vision?**

I adamantly support the 'City in the Country' concept and have for many years.

**Do you believe that sustainable economic growth can be achieved through this vision?**

I do believe that sustainable growth can be achieved with this concept. In fact, the City of Saratoga Springs is a shining example of this.

**Do you think the “City in the Country” vision should be altered? If so, how?**

I am absolutely opposed to altering the ‘City in the Country’ concept. It works for our downtown and it works for our greenbelt.

**Question #4: What comments do you have about the following priority issues for Sustainable Saratoga?**

**Affordable housing:**

Saratoga Springs has missed the boat on affordable housing. While Chair of the ZBA, I moderated discussions regarding a proposed project for workforce housing that would have been built on West Circular Street. Unfortunately, it failed to gain approval. The Housing Authority did construct a building on Allen Drive that has helped meet this need. However, this effort, while admirable, is only a small step in dealing with a big problem. We need housing in our City for all income levels, not just for the wealthy.

**Managing downtown parking:**

We need additional parking resources for the area behind the City Center. The success of the City Center is crucial to the economy and viability of our downtown which is a cornerstone to the ‘City in the Country’ concept. One solution to consider is a stand alone parking garage that has been tweaked so that it is less of an imposition and takes up less surface area of the existing High Rock Avenue parking lot. Another possibility is a mixed use development that meets the parking needs of the City Center, City Hall, the Dept. of Public Safety, patrons, etc. It is important to remember that there are no wrong answers here. Both approaches have some merit. I have worked to have RFP’s issued so that we at least have alternatives to consider when the City Council is faced with making decisions about this issue. We should have paid parking at least for the existing parking garages which are so expensive to maintain. For the long term and despite strong opposition, we should have paid parking throughout our downtown as a way of recouping the costs involved in providing parking and as a way of controlling the turnover of parking spaces. The present system makes no sense. We have 2 hour parking when we should be encouraging customers to stay and shop or eat for as long as possible.

**Waste management, including plastic bag reduction:**

We can always do a better job with waste management. I would like to see more information on the plastic bag issue.

**Promoting renewable energy:**

I am a strong proponent. I would like to see even more use of wind and solar. We are failing to harness the hot air that comes out of City Council meetings.

**Expanding the city's urban forest, and increasing green infrastructure:**

Expanding the City's urban forest and increasing green infrastructure will significantly improve our community in many ways. I remember the canopy of elm trees that used to characterize most of our City's streets. It is sad that they are gone. We need to replace them with native species that will last into the future.

**Question #5: If elected, what types of sustainability efforts (other than those listed above) would you promote or emphasize?**

I am adamant about making bicycle and pedestrian safety a top priority.