

2015 Sustainable Saratoga Candidate Survey

CANDIDATE NAME: Peter Martin

CANDIDATE FOR (OFFICE): County Supervisor

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

As a member of the County Trails Committee, I have supported and cosponsored resolutions seeking extensions of the Zim Smith Trail and the Champlain Canalway Trail and development of the Hoosic Hudson Partnership, as well as funding of a municipal Trail grant program from the county. I worked with the Saratoga Springs Planning office to ensure that a request was submitted to the County (which I expect will be funded) for the Crescent Avenue trail connector- a part of the Greenbelt Trail. I have traveled to several of the County- owned reforestation areas to observe and recommend improvements for trails in these areas. I have participated in meetings of the Saratoga Greenbelt Trail Committee. I have met with members of the Back Country Horsemen to discuss development of Equine trails in the County Forest area adjacent to the Moreau State Park. I have discussed alternative transportation and mass transportation initiatives with CDTC and CDTA. I served as liaison between the County and the City of Saratoga Springs concerning a plan to transfer and enhance the recycling station at Weibel Ave. I have participated with "Treetoga" and planted street trees in the spring and fall.

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

We can promote the use of solar and other forms of alternative energy, both by governmental entities, by private businesses and by homeowners. The two initiatives in Saratoga Springs currently, for home solar panels and for remote net metering of large solar arrays, are exemplary. We should consider expansion of the HEAP program (providing grants for home winterization). We should effectively promote the use of Mass transportation, especially along the major north-south corridors (Rt. 9, 87 and 50) to Albany, Colonie and Schenectady.

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?

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

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

I agree with and support the vision statement in the Comprehensive Plan. As stated in the plan, the guiding principles driving the Plan, “present a sustainable framework for a healthy, productive and creative City in the Country.” Vision alone will not sustain economic growth, but it is an integral part. As an elected official, I will continue to work with citizens, property owners and developers to further this vision. There is considerable pressure on the edges of our greenbelt from development in some surrounding towns. It would be advantageous for Saratoga Springs if these towns adopted compatible plans that support this vision.

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

Affordable housing:

This is an important issue without an easy answer. I believe that Saratoga Springs cannot achieve a sufficient stock of affordable housing if we concentrate on single family detached structures. The solution could involve a major change of mindset away from our automobile centered lifestyle. Affordable housing in a concentrated urban area cannot include adjacent parking for multiple cars per household. Therefore, the issue of affordable housing is interlinked with the issue of affordable and convenient mass transportation.

Managing downtown parking:

I attended the forums sponsored by Sustainable Saratoga in February that addressed the issue of parking and analyzed programs developed by other municipalities. The presentations reconfirmed conclusions stated by Dr. Shoup in his book, *The High Cost of Free Parking*, and provided some suggestions. The commissioner of Finance recently introduced a revenue study that included some of these suggestions. The mayor has recommended forming a work group to examine parking problems and solutions. We should seek the assistance of CDTC and determine which of these suggestions can best serve the citizens of and visitors to Saratoga Springs.

Waste management, including plastic bag reduction:

The city has promoted recycling and composting of lawn debris. It is missing an opportunity adopted by some other municipalities to expand the composting efforts to kitchen scraps, etc. I agree that single-use plastic bags present a major problem to our environment and our health. I would encourage an agreement among retailers to charge a fee for disposable bags and reward consumers who bring reusable bags.

Promoting renewable energy:

Our city, by itself, cannot solve the problems of climate change, acid rain, or atmospheric pollution. We can, however, work toward these goals. We should be a model for other cities with plans to reduce energy consumption and promote the production of energy from alternative sources.

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

The urban forest is a part of our character – part of what distinguishes Saratoga Springs from less desirable cities. We should undertake the effort necessary to increase a diverse inventory of native species trees.

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

We should insure that our youth have good exposure to and experiences with alternative forms of transportation. Safe Routes to School is a good start. We need to find new and increased funding for this program as well as intelligent mass transportation programs that will change the automobile centered mindset that past generations grew up with.