



*Educate.
Advocate.
Act.*

Sustainable Saratoga

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September 17, 2019

Dear Candidate,

Sustainable Saratoga is a not-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable practices and the protection of natural resources through education, advocacy and action, for the benefit of current and future generations in the Saratoga Springs area. The November 5, 2019 election offers an opportunity to raise and discuss pressing issues relating to sustainability in this region.

Our supporters are interested in knowing your plans for addressing key sustainability issues confronting our community. We would like you to respond to the questions below by October 8, 2019. Please email your answers back to us at info@sustainablesaratoga.org in digital form. If you have any questions, please email us or call us at 518-620-6139.

As a 501(c)(3) organization we do not, and will not, endorse any particular candidate for an elected office. Your responses and those of other candidates will be posted on our website and Facebook page and emailed to our members and friends verbatim and without any comments.

Thank you in advance for your participation and responses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Art Holmberg".

Art Holmberg

Chair of Sustainable Saratoga



The Comprehensive Plan of the City of Saratoga Springs, adopted in 2015, is a unified set of policies that will guide the future development of the city. The Plan consists of nearly 250 recommended actions and a Future Land Use map that indicates the desired location, uses, and intensity of development. Key elements of the vision of the Comprehensive Plan include the “City in the Country” concept, and the importance of sustainability in all aspects of city management and development.

1. What steps will you take toward achieving sustainable economic development in the City, including diverse and affordable housing (both rental and ownership)?

My administration has taken substantial action toward achieving sustainable economic development in the City, including diverse and affordable housing, and will continue to do so. We have supported at least four large initiatives: Promenade, NPR, Stonequist, SoBro, making way for hundreds of new homes of varying costs and styles. I will continue to provide my support by way of staff, funding resources, establishing partnerships, and working with the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority. In addition, it is possible to consider legal requirements to allocate new housing resources towards diverse housing growth.

2. The City Council recently adopted a resolution with a unanimous vote to support policies consistent with the Paris Climate Change Agreement. What policies and programs will you implement to improve the environmental health and resiliency of our community, including any policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with this resolution?

The Paris Climate Change Agreement is a document that must be implemented on every level, from international down to the individual. Municipalities help individuals realize goals, and the City of Saratoga Springs is ready willing and able to step up under my administration. The City, with my backing and leadership, has supported and will continue to support projects such as solar, utility options, recycling, multi-modal transportation options, lower emission vehicles, green building growth, dedicated open space, and NYS laws in the best interest of climate change issues. My department is responsible for the City’s full-time employee dedicated to sustainability issues -- with our encouragement, she has surpassed all expectations for productively, initiative, and just plain passion for the issues.

3. In 2016 the City Council adopted a recommendation that calls for the creation of a unified and efficient parking management plan and policy for downtown. What steps do you think should be taken to implement or amend that plan, and what are the other major transportation and mobility issues you think should be addressed?

I am committed to a unified and efficient parking plan. This means a variety of options and payment plans. Let it be said: there is no such thing as free parking – the cost of parking is



borne by either the property owner via taxes or the user via user fees. This City, like every city of its stature and success, should have user paid and unpaid, on street, off street, parking deck, valet, and multi-modal transportation options, to name a few. We have had numerous parking studies completed and have plenty of information to consider – with reasonable updates, it is time to organize and implement a plan. While this matter is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Safety, I stand fully prepared to support any action towards a unified and efficient parking plan.

4. The Greenbelt is the outlying rural area around the City's urban core.

- Do you support adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan that would change allowable uses or increase or decrease allowable densities in the Greenbelt?

Not only am I required by law to stand by our 2015 Comprehensive Plan, I support by action and performance all provisions for the promotion of the greenbelt, open space, and encouragement/ incentives for affordable and diverse housing. The Comprehensive Plan clearly outlines respectable policy objectives for density limitations, and I will defend all Zoning Ordinance provisions which are in compliance with these requirements. Moreover, if required to modify the Comprehensive Plan (which must be done very, very thoughtfully), I would limit any modifications to retain the quality and character of the Greenbelt, one of our defining characteristics that has environmental importance, quality of life, invaluable aesthetic, and economic value to the City of Saratoga Springs.

- What kind of actions, if any, do you think the City should take to protect the watershed and Saratoga Lake from the deleterious effects of development?

This question is one for the experts in the Department of Public Works (DPW), Risk and Safety, and the Water department. That said, I will continue support all actions taken to protect the watershed and Saratoga Lake from the effects of development. I have provided 100 % approval for all measures taken by DPW and encouraged by the Saratoga Lake Saratoga Lake Protection and Improvement District (SLIPD). The watershed is not limited to the Saratoga lake, and while our geographic "ownership" of the Lake may be limited, it does not keep our City from negotiating high standards.

5. The Comprehensive Plan calls for action on key sustainability issues facing our community, including affordable housing, parking, trails, energy conservation, environmental protection, recycling and waste reduction, and multimodal transportation. However, the City Charter does not assign responsibility for these issues to any specific City department.

- What actions will you take to establish leadership and make progress in these areas?



These issues require collective action of all departments; it is appropriate that the responsibility is distributed across departments. We all know that it may not be accomplished overnight, but I am committed to take direct action on those issues under the jurisdiction of my department: Planning and Economic Development, Community Development, Building, Parks, Open Lands, Historic Preservation, and Sustainability, Mayors Office, Communications and Mail, Human Resources, and more. I include them all because there are actions that can be taken on every level.

Further, as Mayor I have and will continue to press and support all departments to make sustainable options a number one priority. I will support a budget that demands no less and continue to find ways to make all City programs and initiatives sustainable.

- For which of these specific areas will you pledge to assume responsibility, if no other council member has already assumed responsibility?

I pledge to assume responsibility for all areas that are within my direct jurisdiction. I pledge to support and encourage all areas that are within the jurisdiction of other departments. This has been my course since the beginning of my tenure, and will continue to be until its end.

- Could a non-profit like Sustainable Saratoga play a role in achieving your agenda?

Non-profits like Sustainable Saratoga are critical for information, advocacy, representation, critic, and support. The City could not progress without the voice of its collective citizens, and what they bring to our table with integrity and expertise. Both our agreements and disagreements inform the process, and we could not do the good work we accomplish with your participation.

