

September 20, 2023

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 Saratoga Springs.

The upcoming November election offers an opportunity to discuss pressing environmental issues in our area. Our supporters are interested in knowing your plans for addressing the key sustainability issues confronting our community. We are requesting your responses to the questions below by October 4, 2023. Please email your answers back to us (kelsey@sustainablesaratoga.org) in digital form.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, we do not endorse any particular candidate for an elected office. Your responses and those of other candidates will be posted on our website, shared to our social media, and emailed to our members verbatim. We will not provide any comments on the responses.

Thank you in advance for your participation, and please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Trudell Executive Director Sustainable Saratoga

Helsey Tuell



1. Sustainable Saratoga believes that to be more sustainable as a city, we need more diverse and affordable housing. If you agree, what type of efforts would you support to achieve this objective? If you disagree, please explain why. Yes, I do believe that Saratoga Springs needs to have more diverse and affordable housing. While serving on the City Council, I tried to bring about inclusionary zoning for large projects. I wasn't able to get enough support from other Council members despite our efforts. Also, I wasn't able to find financial institutions that would commit to financing for inclusionary zoning projects, which was disappointing because Inclusionary zoning has worked well in other municipalities. I am encouraged by the nearly complete workforce housing project being constructed near Allen Drive and Tait Lane as well as the proposed project adjacent to Saratoga Harness Track. Developers need to be encouraged by Council members and the land use boards to construct more affordable residential units. The emphasis on luxury units over the past 20 years is overdone.

2. Saratoga Springs participates in the No Mow May movement encouraging residents, homeowners, businesses, and municipalities to reduce the frequency of mowing to provide habitat and food for pollinators. Rate your support for changing municipal mowing practices to encourage native plantings and natural habitat and for banning insecticide use on municipal properties.

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Do Not Support Highly Support

Comments: I do encourage native plantings, natural habitat and much less use of insecticides both on municipal properties and private property. In all honesty, I do mow in May because, if I don't, the lawn becomes so high that it is difficult to manage in early June. Also, I worry about ticks on our property if the lawn gets too high. We are adjacent to undeveloped woodlands. I am not a person with a perfect lawn. I almost never water my lawn. I do fertilize at times but I do little else as you can observe if you visit my property at 28 Friar Tuck Way.

3. Saratoga Springs' Complete Streets Policy is to ensure that road projects are planned and designed with safe, convenient travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. Rate your support for the Complete Streets Plan.

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Do Not Support Highly Support

Comments: I was one of the members of the Coty Council who voted for Complete Streets. I continue to support it and I am painfully aware of the areas of the City where we are failing to meet those goals. I supported the Geyser Road Trail while serving on the City Council between 2012 and 2017. But, I continually insisted during those years that other areas of the City needed a similar solution. I mentioned outer Grand Avenue frequently as I am personally aware of the challenges those trying to walk or ride bikes along that roadway. We have lived on Friar Tuck Way since 1988. Outer Grand Avenue, Pine Road and Kirby Road should have trails and sidewalks. It is a safety as well as a quality of life issue.

There are other parts of the City that have similar problems with safe pedestrian and bike access.

While serving as Commissioner of Public Safety, I had a pedestrian crossing study conducted. Eleven enhanced pedestrian crossings were proposed as a result of that study but funding was available for only some of them. The enhanced pedestrian crossing that was supposed to be installed on the very wide Union Avenue at Clark Street has still not been completed, though others have. A great example of what we did accomplish would be the enhanced pedestrian crossing on Lake Avenue near Ritchie Place for safe access to the East Side Rec. .

While serving as Commissioner of Public Safety, we had a traffic study done of downtown. The result was much better traffic flow, less polution due to vehicular idling at stop lights and better safety for pedestrians attempting to cross at intersections (though not perfect).

While serving as Commissioner of Public Safety, I had stop signs installed on Ludlow Street and the corner of Jumel Place because residents felt that the corner was getting dangerous for kids in the neighborhood. I also fought and eventually won a battle with those in our department after I identified the dangerous intersection on West Circular Street at Beekman Street, South Franklin Street and the Railroad Run Trail. That stop sign has tamed that intersection as well as reduced speeding on West Circular.

As Commissioner of Public Safety, I battled with the NYS Department of Transportation over numerous areas in the outer district of our City which were under their control. I advocated for lower speed limits on outer Church Street, outer Washington Street, and outer South Broadway. I pushed for a traffic signal at the busy, dangerous Outer Washington Street/Slade Road/Brook Road intersection and for improvements of intersections at both ends of Gilbert Road. I continue to recommend these changes.

4. Saratoga Springs has a long history of tree-lined downtown streets which provide much desired aesthetic value in addition to promoting clean air, clean water, and cooler temperatures. Rate your support for the continued funding of urban tree plantings to expand Saratoga's urban forest.

0 1 2 3 4 5!!! Do Not Support Highly Support Comments: I have lived in Saratoga Springs since I was 3 years old. At that time, most of our streets were lined with majestic elm trees. Tragically, there are only a few of the many hundreds of elms left. Our street trees provide great aesthetics as well as helping with air pollution and summer-time heat. We should plant many more street trees and then we must take good care of them and not subject them to high levels of salt in the winter. It is important for the Public Works Dept. to have experienced arborists.

5. In 2016, the then City Council adopted a report of the Downtown Parking Task Force, which called for several steps including an "Office of Downtown Parking Management," a volunteer advisory board, and the selection of a professional parking management firm to design and implement a plan. Rate your support for implementing the recommendations in this report for a downtown parking management plan.

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Do Not Support Highly Support

Comments:I was one of the Council members who voted for the Downtown Parking Task Force after sitting through two nights of presentations by inner city traffic and parking consultants. This proposal can help make downtown parking more responsive to the needs of business people, residents and visitors.

6. Saratoga Springs is known as the "City in the Country." Sustainable Saratoga believes it is critical for the city to codify zoning and planning standards, protect the Greenbelt and open space, and support sustainable growth principles. The city's current zoning ordinance (the UDO) allows development in the Greenbelt that risks urban sprawl. Sustainable Saratoga has supported amendments to the UDO to continue to protect the city's Greenbelt. Rate your support for amending the UDO to limit development and retain rural character in the city's Greenbelt, including the rural gateways into our city.

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Do Not Support Highly Support

Comments: I am a former member and two year chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals (2000-2006). I attended many meetings of all previous Comprehensive Plan Committees and I attended and participated in numerous regional and state-wide meetings and conferences on planning and zoning. I have great respect for the concepts that have been developed as our Comprehensive Plan has evolved. While on the City Council, I fought hard against attempts to

diminish our Comprehensive Plan. There are many investors and businesses that would like to 'cash in' on our green belt. It is a constant battle as evidenced by the tense interchanges that took place during discussions which occurred as the 2013-2015 Comprehensive Plan Committee deliberated. I could tell you lots of stories of Council members being pressured to undermine our Comprehensive Plan. It is extremely important that the next Mayor be a person who understands how important the Comprehensive Plan is to the quality of life and success of our City. I also will support changes to the UDO which seem contrary to the well established concepts of our Comprehensive Plan.

7. Sustainable Saratoga advocates for limiting the amount of garbage and food waste that enters the landfill. Currently our downtown business district has no recycling bins for the public to dispose of recyclables, and the city of Saratoga Springs is lacking a municipal community compost collection service. Rate your support for the addition of public recycling bins downtown and the development of a community composting program.

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Do Not Support Highly Support

Comments: I do suggest supporting recycling bins throughout the City for people to dispose of recyclables. However, I am not sure what you are referring to when you cite a lack of municipal community compost collection service. Unlike surrounding communities, Saratoga Springs does a great job of picking up yard waste which is composted for future use. It may make sense to eventually have residents separate garbage from trash so that it too can be collected and composted. Such programs are being started in other communities. It might be be best to integrate such a program with the county's transfer stations.

Christian E Mathiesen