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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SUSTAINABLE SARATOGA PROPOSES CITY CENTER GARAGE LEASE REVISIONS

Saratoga Springs, NY - March 31, 2016 - For more than three years, Sustainable Saratoga has advocated for an alternative to the City Center's standalone parking structure proposal, and for a use of that City-owned property that better conforms to zoning guidelines and widely accepted sustainability practices. We understand that the lengthy process that has unfolded has been frustrating for all concerned, and no less frustrating and disappointing for us, given the potential of this large property in our downtown. It is clearly time to move to a conclusion. As you know, our first choice was for the Council to complete the RFP process and designate a preferred developer to produce a comprehensive development plan for the entire City-owned parcel. Given though that this apparently is not in the cards, we respectfully request that the City Council consider the following recommendations for significant improvements to the standalone garage proposal.

At this late date, the Council still has some very realistic options that would better meet the community's needs, through reasonable amendments to the proposed land lease agreement:

1. Eliminate the parking deck over Maple Avenue. The lease grants an easement for a small pedestrian bridge but it should not grant one for the very large bridge with car parking over the street.
2. Require the "civic" agora space on the High Rock Avenue façade to be enclosed and leased as a year-round commercial space so it provides more vibrant economic benefit and better meets the intent of the T-6 zoning guidelines.
3. Require a similar enclosed shallow leasable commercial space along the Maple Avenue façade so it stimulates economic activity and while being much more aligned with the T-6 zoning guidelines. We think it is critical that the Council require some mixed use on the property, which the City Center could lease out as commercial space, or opt to let the City or some other private real estate management entity do the leasing.
4. Require a community solar array on the roof of the parking garage to provide renewable energy for the City Center and other neighbors. This would demonstrate the innovation and sustainability awareness that the community expects from public agencies, without compromising on the number of parking spots. What a fabulous, high profile opportunity to start making the vision put forth by the City's solar committee a reality!

While these amendments aren't the best possible solution for the site, they are far more suitable and sustainable than the standalone garage. The City Council has both the right and responsibility to determine the uses on its own property, through a lease arrangement. We believe these amendments will not cause significant delay and only slightly reduce the number of parking spaces. They will lead to a mixed use structure that better conforms to existing zoning guidelines and will contribute to an even more vibrant downtown.

About Sustainable Saratoga: Sustainable Saratoga is a not-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable practices and advocates for smart growth land use principles and procedures. The organization has adopted and published smart growth positions for Saratoga Springs.

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