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A statement by members of Kingston Transition on the Kingstonian Project

A just transition to a renewable energy economy is the primary purpose of the Transition movement. Transition is a worldwide movement with origins in England. Kingston New York's Transition group goes back to 2012. Within the last year the group has picked up momentum as a result of the dire climate situation we find ourselves in. As we find our voice, we feel the need to comment on the project known as the Kingstonian.

A project of the scale and significance of the Kingstonian requires thinking that is appropriate to the times in which we live. The perspective of the Transition Movement is particularly focused on the issue of climate change and resource use (especially fossil fuels).

To come directly to the point: This is not a time for business as usual. This is a time of climate crisis. This is a time of grotesque income and wealth inequalities. The public dialog needs to acknowledge these facts, which is the background intention of this statement.

Some features that would potentially make the project suitable for the Kingston community:

- net zero construction
- geothermal
- solar capture
- rainwater capture
- public EV charging

Based on the scale of the project, and the lack of green construction considerations, along with the need to account for impacts such as 300 additional cars and their emissions to Uptown, **we feel a positive declaration of SEQR is warranted.**

An important component of the SEQR analysis process is the examination of alternative project designs that can reduce or minimize the environmental impacts identified, while still meeting the goals and benefits of the project. In the case of the energy and climate change concerns raised above, the EIS would examine energy consumption, production, and greenhouse gas emissions in the context of state, county, and city energy and climate goals and analyze potential mitigation measures. These measures might include high-efficiency design and construction methods, energy efficient equipment, and incorporation of renewable energy. Without analysis and, where appropriate, incorporation of these measures, there is a significant risk, in light of the stated greenhouse gas goals (a reduction of emissions from buildings of 23% by 2030) and Ulster County's forthcoming climate action goals, that the building will be obsolete within a few years after opening and require costly modifications.

The statement by a member of the project development team, as reported in the Kingston Times, along with several project supporters, that a positive declaration will kill the project amounts to trying to bully the city into subverting the transparent, public process that SEQR intends. The suggestion that a positive or negative declaration will be postponed for some time,

as the developer works on studies that it hopes will demonstrate to the Planning Board's satisfaction that the impacts are minimal evades the public scoping process SEQR requires, which aims to get all issues on the table upfront by casting a wide net for input, and instead amounts to a back room deal process in which only some agencies and individuals have a role in specifying which issues need to be addressed. We urge the Planning Board to acknowledge the plainly significant impacts of this project and conduct the transparent, public process intended by SEQR.

We also support and concur with the many voices in the Kingston community, such the Kingston Tenants Union, calling for the addition of affordable housing units to the project. Considering the project is slated to leverage \$6 Million in NYS publicly funded dollars, we believe it is imperative that the interests of all tax paying citizens be considered equally in this development. Access to affordable housing for all citizens is a key component of a resilient and equitable local economy.

The City of Kingston and Ulster County have publicly committed to fighting climate change locally, including a proposed Green New Deal by newly elected County Executive Pat Ryan. It is our belief that a project of the significance of the Kingstonian should be part of the solution, not part of the problem. This project could be a model and an opportunity for Kingston to demonstrate how buildings should be built in the 21st Century and, as well, how resilient communities are built in that process.

Signed, Kingston Transition

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