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THE GREEN HIGH PERFORMANCE COMPUTING CENTER IN HOLYOKE

The Green High Performance Computer Center has generated a lot of well-deserved excitement for the City of Holyoke and the surrounding region. The center will offer the most cutting edge research capacity to an esteemed consortium of higher education institutions. But its potential for promised future economic spin-off, expansion and job creation is what really matters to Holyoke. Achieving that success will require careful planning, starting with its very location.

The GHPCC should be located at Open Square.

But before I explain my preference, I would be remiss if I did not thank Governor Deval Patrick and his team for convincing the consortium to locate the GHPCC in downtown Holyoke. I would also like to thank the members of the consortium, for giving the people of Holyoke this once in a lifetime opportunity to breathe new life into the Paper City.

Both sites currently under consideration by the consortium and the Governor's office certainly have the acreage to support 130,000 square feet of space, dedicated super computers and roughly 15 full-time workers. But Holyoke needs more than that. The GHPCC is only the first phase of what we all hope is the beginning of an economic renaissance for the Paper City. Open Square has the size, existing conditions and flexibility for the consortium to either lease existing shovel-ready space, or build a new structure. Leasing is the more inexpensive route, which could free up millions of taxpayer dollars (Governor Patrick has promised \$25M in state funding, part of an overall \$80M commitment to build the GHPCC) to be used in other crucial aspects of the project's first phase, rather than demolition.

John Aubin started managing Open Square about 10 years ago. In that time no other developer has brought more businesses and new jobs into downtown Holyoke, but not without its own challenges. In fact, the Open Square experience may offer a window into the reality of what we all hope to gain from the GHPCC. With 50 Businesses now located at Open Square, that still represents only a 20 percent occupancy rate for the entire campus, and still leaves over 550,000 square feet of undeveloped space. Even with 10 solid years behind it, Open Square still has a long way to go to reach its full potential.

Those 10 years have achieved 95,000 square feet occupied by existing tenants with 175 employees representing a myriad of mixed uses, such as High Tech, Specialty Manufacturing, Performing Arts, Retail, Restaurants as well as others. Open Square has already proven it can be the economic anchor that Holyoke desperately needs to move forward. Its successful model of attracting a variety of complementary businesses is exactly what we want to accomplish with the GHPCC. If the consortium decided to lease space at Open Square it would immediately double its current occupancy, making it that much more attractive to potential new businesses. This would help jump-start this most important phase of the GHPCC project for the City of Holyoke, and help make the Center a true economic anchor on a faster schedule.

If Open Square is chosen to host the GHPCC, Aubin has pledged to help fund the Canal Walk extension, in front of Open Square, as part of the connector to downtown, using capital generated from a lease agreement. The Canal Walk is most important to downtown Holyoke, as it will create a much more pedestrian friendly environment that is so crucial to creating a successful retail district. Aubin has also secured up to \$40 million in New Market Tax credits to help leverage private investments in an effort to help us all achieve a vibrant and active downtown.

Open Square has shown a strong commitment to utilize "Green" energy for this project. The GHPCC requires a tremendous amount of power to operate, and the city's relatively inexpensive electric rates offered by Holyoke Gas & Electric are what drew the consortium here in the first place. Open Square has existing Geothermal capacity, plus two water wheels that will provide 500 kilowatts of "clean" electricity. In addition, the amount of waste heat generated by the enormous cooling requirements of GHPCC facility will be enough to heat the entire Open Square campus, reducing the GHPCC's carbon foot print by as much as 10 – 20% and putting it on the cutting edge of Green computing centers.

I must again stress that the GHPCC really offers us just this once in a lifetime opportunity. Due to its tremendous energy demands a future expansion is more likely than a second super-computer center. We must use this juncture to utilize all the tools we have to make it a true economic engine. Open Square is the key to getting this engine started. It offers a unique package of existing space, future growth and a proven business plan that, with the GHPCC at that locale, will spread throughout downtown Holyoke.



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