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March 27, 2015 – PRESS RELEASE - SUSSMAN & WATKINS, GOSHEN, NEW YORK

Three Orange County Residents Sue to Enjoin Demolition of Orange County Government Center

Three Orange County residents have today filed a lawsuit seeking to stop the imminent demolition of critical components of the Orange County Government Center in Goshen, New York.

Submitting that the building is an iconic example of a major strand of late 20th century American architecture and that it can be renovated for a private, tax-producing use while a new Government Center is erected elsewhere on the 24.1 acre county owned parcel, the three plaintiffs, Frank Carbone of the Town of Newburgh, Vincent Ferri of the Town of Wallkill and Stephan Brander of the Town of Woodbury are asking a state supreme court judge to restrain the county from demolishing any part of the building pending a further hearing on the merits of their case.

The 42 page complaint chronicles a history of profound government ineptitude and a repeated executive proclivity to override clear legislative votes which have favored retaining the building, whether for a government center or another use. In light of the recent proposal by NYC architect Gene Kaufman, plaintiffs favor converting the building to an arts center and building another government center on adjacent county-owned land.

Michael Sussman, plaintiffs' attorney, summarized their contentions: "Plaintiffs have brought this action to enjoin a profound public waste, committed over years by the leading government officials

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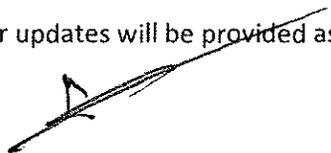
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in Orange County who have continuously misled the public, violated the public trust and now are poised to unnecessarily expend tens of millions of dollars to destroy the integrity and primary architectural features of an iconic building after rejecting an alternative which promoted the shared objective of a new Government Center at much less cost, while bringing to the Village of Goshen and Orange County a vibrant arts center which will be both tax-producing and a stimulant to a local economy depressed by years of their misdeeds. Judicial intervention is now required because, absent it, the defendants will imminently begin demolition of the Government Center, implementing and finalizing a course of conduct which plainly qualifies as “waste” in violation of section 51 of the General Municipal Law. Moreover, the County has thumbed its nose at SEQRA and the project it now is implementing is plainly *ultra vires*, exceeding the scope of anything the legislature approved or the county assessed as part of its required SEQRA review.”

Sussman further explained that he has submitted legal papers to the Clerk of Court, sent them to the county attorney and hopes to be heard promptly on the request for a temporary restraining order to prevent harm to the building. Further updates will be provided as possible.

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