

Ben Fulmer

From: Caroline Long <CLong@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Caroline Long
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 11:23 AM
Subject: City of Asheville Board Appointments
Attachments: bdapptments1.doc

Good morning,

Please see the attached document for current openings on City of Asheville boards and commissions. Please contact mburleson@ashevillenc.gov with any questions.

Thank you,

Caroline Long
Administrative Assistant
Community & Economic Development
Phone (828) 232 - 4505
Fax (828) 350 - 0012

Caroline Long
Administrative Assistant
Community & Economic Development
Phone (828) 232 - 4505
Fax (828) 350 - 0012

Ben Fulmer

From: cibonc@gmail.com on behalf of CIBO
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2015 3:06 PM
To: CIBO
Subject: CIBO NEWSLETTER 12/18/15
Attachments: news121815.pdf

Attached is your copy of the CIBO Newsletter for December 18, 2015. If you have difficulty accessing the attachment, please contact the CIBO office at 254-2426 or by return email.

Ben Fulmer

From: Janet McAfee <jmacnorris@gmail.com> on behalf of Janet McAfee
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2015 3:14 PM
To: chrispelly@avlcouncil.com
Subject: Short Term Rentals

Dear Councilman Pelly,

I have been disappointed to hear comments suggesting that the recent elections were a mandate for STR's. I believe that is a mistaken view and that the election more likely reflected the haranguing that went on demonizing anyone who supported the possibility of something other than just a park at the vacant lot which came to be known as St Lawrence Green.

I believe you will find that there are many voters who oppose unrestricted STR's. I live in a neighborhood, 5 Points, where most streets are exceedingly narrow, and many sidewalks are lacking or in significant disrepair. Many existing housing structures are also unkempt or in a state of disrepair. We are one of the last semi-affordable areas close to the center of town and allowing conversion of existing housing stock to STR's will only reduce the number of affordable homes in this neighborhood.

If STR's are allowed in any form in our neighborhood, I believe they should be closely regulated with regard to numbers, proximity, and condition standards, with off-street parking required.

Our neighborhood, as other neighborhoods, have some vocal supporters of STR's, but please understand that our neighborhood is deeply divided on the subject of STR's. This should not be about the volume attained by either group but about what is best for the neighborhood.

Thanks for your consideration.

Janet McAfee
16 Spears Avenue

Ben Fulmer

From: David Rodgers <rodgersdl@gmail.com> on behalf of David Rodgers
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2015 9:21 AM
To: councilgroup
Cc: Gary Jackson;Tuch, Shannon
Subject: Fwd: Won, Winning, Wondering

Mayor, Council Members and Staff,

Do you think I should buy two homes currently sheltering two families and move my mom and aunt into them to operate mini-hotels? If you change the Homestay ordinance investors like me will start cannibalizing our housing stock. Net to the city will be 8 or 10 people looking for a place to live and I'll import two folks not currently living in Asheville.

With all of the time and money spent trying to create more housing for citizens how can we seriously be considering sheltering tourists in homes? It only benefits the hotel proprietor and maybe the smart real estate investor finding tenants to pay higher rents with the agreement they can sublet. Tourists obviously can and do pay a lot more per night.

We have had a 500' separation requirement for years to limit the impact on neighborhoods. The house size in the Homestay Ordinance is 2500 sq ft as most homes of this size are on larger lots. Allowing an unlimited number of smaller homes where folks live literally just a few feet from their neighbors will have a lot of negative impacts.

I am adamantly opposed to changing the Homestay rules for many reasons and even I can see the appeal of the above scenario for my own personal benefit and that of my relatives. The net to the city though is we lose housing options for those who live and work here and in turn this drives prices up.

This is not a weird crazy scenario I am making up. As a real estate broker I am hearing more and more of people looking to do similar things. I can point out real examples where this has already happened.

Google "ski towns short term rentals affordable housing" and see what is happening to workforce housing in high demand tourist towns. It is a crisis. We have 27,000+ tourists EACH DAY in Asheville / Buncombe on average according to the convention and visitors bureau. If we open up our residential housing stock to tourists prime residential neighborhoods will become largely tourist occupied. Citizens of Asheville will be pushed out.

Please, at the very least keep the 500' separation rule in the ordinance that currently puts at least a small limitation on the number. Ideally I urge you to not make any changes to the ordinance and table this issue for a year or more.

Below is an email Council Member Bothwell sent outlining his desires for Homestays and looking ahead to legalizing STRs. None of this makes sense in an environment where we don't have enough housing.

Maybe the best action is none. I am sure whatever you decide to do Tuesday night will be changed soon by Raleigh and or the courts.

I appreciate your consideration of this.

All the best,

David L. Rodgers

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cecil Bothwell** <cecil@cecilbothwell.com>

Date: Sat, Nov 14, 2015 at 6:29 AM

Subject: Won, Winning, Wondering

To: rodgersdl@gmail.com



We the people just won a round

Won: Voters go for St. Lawrence Green

In Asheville's Nov. 3 election, 70 percent of voters supported candidates who support a green civic space opposite the Basilica St. Lawrence and the Civic Center in downtown Asheville.

The next step, slated for a January vote by City Council, will be to suspend efforts to sell the Haywood Street Property and engage the Asheville Design Center to begin planning.

The Buncombe County Board of Elections (and NCSBE) report multi-candidate race results in a somewhat uninformative way - in that the percentage of votes reported for each candidate is not the percentage of voters who voted for the candidate, but the portion of votes cast.

For example **Keith Young** won the recent City Council race with 6,315 votes, which the BOE reports as 18.1%. This suggests that only 1/5 of voters supported Keith. **But in fact he was the choice of 52% of the 12,113 voters** (who each cast up to 3 votes). This number is not precise, because some voters may have cast less than the three they were accorded.

But setting aside the slight variability due to non-three-vote voters, it is clear that supporters of St. Lawrence Green garnered 70 percent of the ballots cast. (Young, Haynes and Lee were flat out supporters, Mayfield a supporter if private funds could be garnered to create a civic space. So the top four finishers were pro-park.)

This is not far off from the results of the phone poll I conducted in September in which 86 percent of respondents supported a green space on the property - and I would suggest that the difference can easily be accounted for due to the Sierra Club mailers which sought to paint all three of their endorsees as supporters of the St. Lawrence Green idea, despite some candidates' clear statements to the contrary.

Winning: Short Term Rental rules getting better

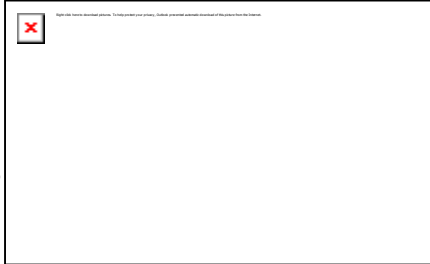
Thanks to the recent election it appears that sanity will soon raise its head in Council consideration of HomeStay and Short Term Rental regulations. **Election winners Keith Young and Brian Haynes have expressed support for permitting City residents to rent out their properties short term, and Mayor Esther Manheimer has indicated she is ready to include Accessory Dwelling Units as legal short term rentals.**

But we may not get there this week. (Young and Haynes will be sworn into office on Dec. 1).

On Tuesday, Nov. 17, modification of HomeStay rules is on the agenda. What I expect to see that night is a spirited discussion of proposed changes to HomeStay rules, but at present the votes will probably go toward tightening restrictions. The proposal being brought forward is to reduce the number of bedrooms, impose more parking restrictions, and so forth.

I will be arguing that reduction in the number of bedrooms available is pointless. If a family of three all want private bedrooms, why should the City impose an artificial restriction on an otherwise legal rental?

I will argue against the strange restriction on the location of parking places. The proposed rules prohibit parking within the required set-back on lots - but many homes on narrow lots already have driveways within the setback. Cars already park there. Why are short term tenant's cars somehow more objectionable than home-owner's cars?



The use of Accessory Dwelling Units as STRs will have to be addressed in separate legislation, and won't be considered until after the new Council members are seated. I have every expectation that we will find a way to make this a use by right, but there are some legal hurdles along the way.

Wondering: Should Asheville suspend Economic Development efforts?

My experience on Council and wide ranging reading have led me to question whether it is a proper function of a city to offer development incentives to businesses. **Is it really of value to current residents to underwrite relocation of employers to Asheville, or expansion of businesses already here? It seems to me the evidence is lacking.**

Over recent decades big businesses have worked states and cities into a bidding war for their attention. This is not a traditional role for municipalities, and the only way we are going to stop the game is to stop the game.

There is no way to judge whether the incentive plans "work" because there is no baseline for comparison. Since most Ashevilleians seem to be of the opinion that growth is outpacing our ability to cope, perhaps the best way forward would be to suspend all economic development efforts (currently about \$2 million per year) for a period of time to see what happens. We could build a lot of sidewalks and greenways, pave a lot of roads, and so forth with that money. Are we really gaining?

Think about this: we see a shortage of affordable housing. The economic incentive argument is that we bring in businesses that pay better than the hotels and restaurants that are such a big part of the local economy. Fair enough. But those hotels and restaurants will still need employees. If we bring in 500 jobs that pay a median wage twice that of the tourist businesses, it may provide "better" jobs for some of the current low-paid workers, but it also brings in 500 people competing for housing with more money to spend. So the new workers continue to bid up rental rates, leaving the necessary hotel/restaurant staffers even further behind in the affordability race. (Not to mention that most incoming businesses seem to bring their own higher-paid execs - so that the REALLY good jobs are not going to locals.)

It simply isn't clear to me that spending tax payer money that way is good for our current citizens.

Bothwell for Buncombe | POB 1877 | Asheville, NC 28802 | <http://cecilbothwell.com>

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Ben Fulmer

From: Dave Nutter <dnutter@aol.com> on behalf of Dave Nutter
Sent: Sunday, November 08, 2015 3:08 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;williamkyoung@hotmail.com;bsad28@gmail.com;Julie@mountaintrue.org;lindsey@southernequality.org;ric.hardlee@live.com
Cc: gjackson@ashevillenc.gov;cball@ashevillenc.gov;tokolichany@ashevillenc.gov;aglines@ashevillenc.gov;smerten@ashevillenc.gov;smonson@ashevillenc.gov;spowers@asheville.nc.gov;jstaudinger@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Democracy provokes thought

Last week's telling city council election seems to make policy transitions the order of the day. I agree with those outlined as possibilities by the Mayor in this morning's newspaper, including ones pertaining to Saint Lawrence Green instead of mixed-use public-private redevelopment across from the U.S. Cellular Center and Basilica of St. Lawrence, short-term rentals in the city and using the discretionary powers of the Council to decide on smaller as well as larger development projects.

As one individual voice, I would also like to offer the following hopes:

I hope the Saint Lawrence Green direction, which I believe is persuasive, will be carried out cooperatively, creatively, proactively by the city and harmoniously, with significant private funding contributions. As a practical matter, I do not think it can be implemented in any other way.

I hope the short-term rental regulations being finalized will not only welcome these uses to Asheville but will also be careful about sensitive neighborhood density conditions;

Also regarding density in the city's residential areas, I hope that Affordable Housing policy will not go too far in enabling higher density as the primary method of achieving a significant percentage of affordable units again because neighborhood density is a precious and irreplaceable thing;

I hope that greater use of Council discretion in expanding the use of conditional zoning for smaller development projects will not provoke an issue of contract zoning; and,

I hope the artists and existing industry in the River Arts District will be protected and retained by density, primarily height control, limitations in the planned zoning amendment and that the area west of the railroad tracks will remain in the form-based zoning area.

Best,

Dave

David G. Nutter, AICP, Principal, Retired
Nutter Associates, Community Planners & Development Professionals
169 Flint Street,
Asheville, North Carolina 28801 USA

Tel 828-505-8242 Cell: 828-279-1820
For large files: google drop-box

Ben Fulmer

From: Sam Speciale <sgspeciale@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sam Speciale
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2015 9:38 PM
To: Asheville City Council
Subject: St Lawrence green space

I am outraged to see the Council party to an ad to sell off the space vacant across from the St Lawrence Basilica without vigorous public discussion and with what even looks like aiding and abetting any "poor-in-the-mouth" developer to create another hotel monstrosity. Do you not recall the story of killing the goose that lay golden eggs? Most tourists do not come to Asheville to see another outsider-owned hotel or multistory parking garage! Doing away with city perks like a green space will ultimately drive away those tourists you seem to desire beyond rational city planning.

Preserve the unique character of this city that does not need more hotels, in spite of what line the Chamber of Commerce might be feeding you and certainly not squandering an opportunity to add a pocket park to this section of downtown.

And is this how you provide for the tax-paying citizens of this city? With sweetened offers like

- *City-owned Acreage*
- *Adjacent to US Cellular Center*
- *10 Story Potential*
- *City may offer incentives including tax credits, parking, regulatory approvals, etc.*

The latter give-away negates your arguments against creating a PUBLIC green space for citizens and tourists alike to enjoy for decades to come long after some of these ugly hotels will be gone. If this is the best your staff can come up with, Council needs to seriously consider replacing some or all of existing staff responsible for this travesty. Let them better do this kind of "planning" in a city like Atlanta.

Samuel Speciale, PhD
Asheville

Ben Fulmer

From: Peter Brezny <pb@purplecat.net> on behalf of Peter Brezny
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2015 2:11 PM
To: Peter Brezny
Subject: Imagine a public park in front of the civic center

Dear friends,

I hope you'll consider signing on to this petition, and contacting your favorite, or all, council members directly to show your support for NOT developing the lots in front of the basilica and Civic Center and turning it instead into a public park.

<https://www.change.org/p/asheville-city-council-imagine-st-lawrence-green>

Sincerely,

Peter

Ben Fulmer

From: Joey Robison <JRobison@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Joey Robison
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2015 12:58 PM
To: Marc Hunt;Jan Davis;Gwen Wisler
Cc: Alex Carmichael;All Department Directors;Anne Marie Doherty;Brenda Mills;Caroline Long;Cathy Ball;Christy Edwards;councilgroup;Dan Phairas;Gary Jackson;gracecurry1@charter.net;Jaime Matthews;Jeff Staudinger;Joey Robison;John Sanchez;maxlalexander@gmail.com;Nikki Reid;Sam Powers;sarah.urbannest@gmail.com;Shannon Tuch;Stephanie Monson;Tom Downing;Tony McDowell
Subject: CORRECTED and additional meeting materials for tomorrow's PED meeting - with my apologies
Attachments: Land Use Incentive Policy as amended 8-26-2014.pdf; Staff Report - 4-21-15 LUIG Revisions.pdf; PED_Agenda_04-21-2015.pdf; PED_March17_2015_Draft-Minutes.pdf; Staff Report - 04-21-15 Parking Studies.pdf; Staff Report - 4-21-15 Riverfront Office.pdf; Staff Report - 4-21-15 68-76 Haywood Street.pdf

Good morning Councilors,

I apologize for the confusion, but the packet I sent out on Friday was missing the Haywood Street staff report. I've attached that document here as well as a corrected version of the LUIG staff report, along with the remainder of the packet for your convenience.

I am also including the current Land Use Incentive Policy as requested by Councilor Wisler. The additional parking information requested will be available when Ken returns to the office on Thursday.

Again, I'm sorry for my error and the inconvenience.

Thank you,

Joey Robison

Executive Assistant, Planning & Multimodal Transportation
City of Asheville | 828.232.4517 | www.ashevillenc.gov



PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

April 21, 2015 | 3:30 PM

CITY HALL, 1ST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES	3:30
2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
a. Riverfront Office Update; Stephanie Monson Dahl	3:35
b. Haywood Street; Sam Powers	3:45
3. NEW BUSINESS	
a. Parking Study Update; Ken Putnam	4:00
b. Report out on LUIG; Sam Powers	4:15
4. PUBLIC COMMENT (5 CITIZENS, 3 MINUTES EACH)	4:30

NEXT MEETING: May 19, 2015

ADJOURNMENT **4:45**

For more information on the Planning & Economic Development Committee, please contact Cathy Ball at 828-232-4517.

Joey Robison

Executive Assistant, Planning & Multimodal Transportation
City of Asheville | 828.232.4517 | www.ashevillenc.gov

Ben Fulmer

From: Joey Robison <JRobison@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Joey Robison
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2015 4:06 PM
To: Marc Hunt;Jan Davis;Gwen Wisler
Cc: Alex Carmichael;All Department Directors;Anne Marie Doherty;Brenda Mills;Caroline Long;Cathy Ball;Christy Edwards;councilgroup;Dan Phairas;Gary Jackson;gracecurry1@charter.net;Jaime Matthews;Joey Robison;John Sanchez;Judy Daniel;maxlalexander@gmail.com;Nikki Reid;Sam Powers;sarah.urbannest@gmail.com;Shannon Tuch;Stephanie Monson;Tom Downing;Tony McDowell
Subject: Materials for the April 21 PED meeting
Attachments: PED_Agenda_04-21-2015.pdf; Staff Report - 4-21-15 PED HCD LUIG Revisions.pdf; Staff Report - 04-21-15 Parking Studies.pdf; Staff Report - 4-21-15 Riverfront Office.pdf; PED_March17_2015_Draft-Minutes.pdf

Good afternoon Councilors,

Please find the agenda for the April 21 PED meeting attached and below. The staff reports and draft March minutes are also attached. We look forward to seeing you on Tuesday at 3:30 in the 1st floor conference room of City Hall.

Thank you,

Joey Robison

Executive Assistant, Planning & Multimodal Transportation
City of Asheville | 828.232.4517 | www.ashevillenc.gov



PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
April 21, 2015 | 3:30 PM
CITY HALL, 1ST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

- | | |
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| 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES | 3:30 |
| 2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS | |
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3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Parking Study Update; Ken Putnam 4:00

b. Report out on LUIG; Sam Powers 4:15

4. PUBLIC COMMENT (5 CITIZENS, 3 MINUTES EACH) 4:30

NEXT MEETING: May 19, 2015

ADJOURNMENT 4:45

For more information on the Planning & Economic Development Committee, please contact Cathy Ball at 828-232-4517.

Ben Fulmer

From: Cathy Ball <cball@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Cathy Ball
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 5:04 PM
To: Marc Hunt;Gwen Wisler;Jan Davis
Cc: councilgroup;Gary Jackson;Dan Phairas;Sam Powers;Judy Daniel;Shannon Tuch;Nikki Reid;Joey Robison;Christy Edwards
Subject: PED Agenda for February 18
Attachments: PED_February18_2014_Agenda.docx; Staff Report PED_Short Term Rentals.docx; Staff Report PED_Update on 68-76 Haywood Street.docx; Staff Report PED_MSDs.docx; CBD Approved MSD.pdf; Large Scale MSD.pdf; MSD MAPS.pdf; Staff Report_PED MOU 98 Desota Street.docx; 98desota.pdf

Council PED Members,

Please find the attached PED Agenda and staff report for the February 18, 2014 meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions. We will get this information posted to the web.

Have a great weekend.

Cathy

Cathy D. Ball, PE
Assistant City Manager
Development and Infrastructure
City of Asheville
P.O. Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802
(828) 259-5939
cball@ashevillenc.gov

Ben Fulmer

From: Dave Nutter <dnutter@aol.com> on behalf of Dave Nutter
Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 4:38 PM
To: chrispelly@avlcouncil.com
Subject: Historic Preservation Master Plan
Attachments: RFPforPreservationPlan082813.pdf; Heritage Strategies LLC HPMP Proposal.pdf; Asheville_Preservation_Plan_Schedule (1).doc

Chris:

I enjoyed the our good conversation over lunch.

As I mentioned, I'm attaching information about the HRC Asheville-Buncombe County Historic Preservation Master Plan project - (1) the RFP we issued, (2) the Heritage Strategies, LLC proposal we found to be the best and (3) the project schedule.

The project is off on a good start with last week's intensive series of focus groups.

I'll look forward to future discussion as the master plan proceeds.

Best,

Dave

attachments

David G. Nutter, AICP, Principal, Retired
Nutter Associates, Community Planners & Development Professionals
169 Flint Street,
Asheville, North Carolina 28801 USA
Tel 828-505-8242 Cell: 828-279-1820
For large files: dnutter3@gmail.com

Ben Fulmer

From: Bethany Dellinger <bethanydellinger@gmail.com> on behalf of Bethany Dellinger
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 3:48 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: support the plaza

Dear City Council,

Please support the St. Lawrence Piazza Plaza proposal today. A European-style plaza would bring much needed class to that area of downtown, as well as provide a lovely view of our historic Basilica. Who doesn't long for beauty and the sense of community a historically-in-tune plaza would provide, verse the utilitarian commercialism of yet another hotel? Think of St. Marco Square in Venice. Why can't Asheville have a hip and welcoming spot to linger before or after one of the many performances at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium?

Greenville, SC has done a wonderful job of highlighting the Reedy River which runs through downtown by creating a green park and multiple community gathering spots along the way, making it a downtown with a "destination." Can't a plaza such as the one proposed by St. Lawrence's be Asheville's own stand-out destination?

Let's give Asheville an artistic landmark worthy of the mountains that draw locals and visitors to our city in the first place.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bethany Dellinger

Ben Fulmer

From: James P <jamesofalltrades@gmail.com> on behalf of James P
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2012 6:00 AM
To: cecil@braveulysses.com;chrispelly@avlcouncil.com
Subject: An idea for Public/Private split of area across from Basilica

Mr. Bothwell and Mr. Pelly,

I live in Weaverville and only work in Asheville but feel there is a great opportunity I haven't heard presented. I couldn't attend the meeting so hopefully this does not come too late, but I have not yet heard a suggestion for Public and Private split development of the area across from the Basilica St. Lawrence.

Public/Private Split - My main suggestion in this matter is to **keep a portion of the site in public hands to create a park** and use the funds generated from the sale of the rest of the site to build it. In McKibbon's proposal as well as the Basilica there is a large open area - that large open area should be retained by the city for public park space. When large crowds gather before events and after events at the Civic Center they often spill over into the street. Having a community area across from the Center is a good place for them to gather - but it would be under constant threat should this be private land - in the hands of the Basilica or McKibbon.

The McKibbon group seems to have the best idea for the site - being next to the (formerly known as) Asheville Civic Center is the **perfect** place for a hotel. That's the saddest fact lost in this debate. It is just off the highway and right across from a primary attraction for out of town visitors. This should result in less cross-town vehicle traffic for people visiting the Civic Center and should bode well for the profit viability of a hotel in that location.

Asheville Community Values - McKibbon has strong finances and with a split sale of the land they will have more to spend on the hotel and this affords Asheville an excellent opportunity to get them to agree to things which will benefit both their profit and image and Asheville's tax base and image (i.e. LEED level design, Photovoltaic array). I see they're already working with the Asheville Design Center - a big kudos to them for that. I would suggest a meeting with other Asheville groups such as: Mountain Bizworks, WNC Alliance, WNC Green Building Council, Asheville on Bikes, Asheville Arts Council, and a representative from the Basilica. There should also, perhaps, be a wiki created to share and vote on ideas submitted by the public (example: food truck parking during events, hotel bike rental program, solar...) to be integrated into the design if possible and desirable.

If these Asheville-values groups can agree on a design with McKibbon it will be something Asheville can be proud of, if they can't agree – turn McKibbon down.

Thank you for your time,
James Pritchitt

P.S. My ideas which I'd like to put forth more specifically here but keep separate from what I feel is the more important overall idea above:

- **Spilt the site**, allowing McKibbon the hotel deal but keeping the portion nearest the basilica for an open public park. The funds from selling the other portion of the property can be used towards building the park and continuing hotel revenue will fund its maintenance.
- Must be **LEED Certified**. This can be a selling point for both the hotel and Asheville. The money will come

from the reduction in land they must purchase.

- **Photovoltaic array:** Work with Sundance Power Systems (buy local) to install at least a \$200,000 PV array. The site appears well positioned for solar capture. This can also be an amazing selling point for the hotel and Asheville, funding as above.
- **Food trucks:** Dedicated parking area and agreement to allow a couple of food trucks to operate during Civic Center events.
- **Electric Vehicle** charge station parking in the parking garage, open to the public.
- The McKibbin hotel must "fit" Asheville in style. They are already working towards this, but should be held to it in writing.

If you can get these things, perhaps other ideas after working with the groups mentioned, you can proudly go in front of people and tell them that you got Asheville a new park and worked with business on an environmentally conscious community oriented hotel and business space. A seed planted that will yield fruit for years to come. The hotel can advertise not only its proximity to the Civic Center, but its community involvement and having a public park right at its door, and also advertise its environmental accomplishments of LEED certification and solar power (can advertise kWh produced, CO2 offset). **A big win for Asheville's image, environment, tax base and McKibbin's image and bottom line.**

Ben Fulmer

From: Doug Abernethy <asheville@me.com> on behalf of Doug Abernethy
Sent: Monday, September 10, 2012 10:06 PM
To: Gordon Smith; AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Re: Public park

Think of it this way. Would you all have the courage to do the right thing and save land for say... The parkway or a national park if it came up today? Maybe the park will not reap the financial benefits you seek, but aren't there some things much more important? Please reconsider your stand on a park. Just saving the land for a green public park would be noble. Heck, we will plant the grass! Take a progressive stand for your citizens and the powerless.

Doug Abernethy

Sent from iPad

On Sep 10, 2012, at 9:42 PM, Gordon Smith <gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com> wrote:

Thanks, Doug, for your interest in this issue. Downtown development brings out strong opinions, and I've heard a lot of them regarding the Haywood Street property. Everyone involved cares about the future of the city, and everyone wants an outcome we can be proud of for generations to come. Please forgive the length of this message. There's a lot of information to cover!

Current conditions and opportunities

We know that the current situation is undesirable for everyone. Surface parking and dilapidated buildings create dead space in our city center. It's blight, and the city should not support it.

The process of putting city-owned land up for sale began in 2005 as a way to support affordable housing in Asheville, and Asheville continues to have an acute affordable housing crisis.

Proceeds from a land sale could go immediately to the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). The AHTF loans money at low interest to builders who will help create affordable housing in our city limits. The great thing about these loans is that the money comes back to the fund, where it can be reallocated again and again. AHTF funds can immediately begin building hundreds of affordable housing units for working people in Asheville.

This will create construction jobs, and the resulting buildings will add to our city's tax rolls, allowing additional investments in parks, police, and transportation. Affordable housing and corridor density are crucial to making our local economy stronger and more sustainable over the long term.

Further, it is only through building on that site that we're going to connect Haywood Street and the Grove Arcade via the Civic Center and beautiful Basilica of St. Lawrence for residents and visitors alike.

In response to some of the many ideas out there:

-- Leaving the area as surface parking would continue the current dead space problem without helping with affordable housing needs or pushing towards creation of a plaza.

-- Creating another city park would (1) postpone the series of river parks and greenways currently underway; (2) create no property tax revenue or fulfill other economic development goals; (3) leave affordable housing needs unmet; (4) be financially impossible without a broad partnership that is currently not being contemplated by anyone; (5) be very costly in a time when parks budgets are stretched to the max.

-- I have enormous respect for the people who attend the Basilica of St. Lawrence, and I fear they may not know all of the facts about what's been going on. The Basilica was one of nine entities that were deemed qualified, along with the McKibbon Group, back in 2007. The Basilica did not submit a proposal when the process was open. Matt Mores, who was representing the Basilica at the time, was interested in seeing a nine-story hotel on the site.

Earlier this year, after an initial letter demanding that the City take or leave an offer less than half of what was being offered by The McKibbon Group, the Basilica representatives began broadcasting urgent warnings of dire consequences. In response to these concerns, the Asheville Design Center offered to mediate discussions between McKibbon and Basilica representatives. A different Basilica representative, Lou Bisette, was brought to the table. These discussions were fruitful, producing six agreed-upon design principles. Then the Basilica abruptly withdrew from these talks and released Mr. Bisette, bringing back their original spokesman, Matt Mores. The McKibbon Group and the Asheville Design Center remain open to resuming those discussions.

The Basilica does not have a contract with the Kessler Group, whom they suggest will do their building, and my understanding is that they do not have the necessary funding to bring a project to completion.

Changes in representation, walking away from negotiations about design principles, shifting desires for what should be built, the lack of a firm agreement with a developer, and the lack of capital – All of these things lead me to having less confidence in the Basilica's ability to achieve a desirable outcome in a reasonable time frame.

Protecting the integrity of the Basilica

When the city sells this property, we will be able to sculpt a development agreement with the buyer. Any development agreement should include requirements for seismic monitoring and consultation with a geotechnical engineer. If integrity of Basilica is threatened, then construction must stop until a solution is reached.

There must be a significant buffer space between any new building and the architectural treasure of the Basilica in order to assure its structural integrity. That buffer space can take the form of a world-class plaza/piazza if all of the parties involved will cooperate to make it happen. The Basilica will have to be the lead entity in doing so, because they already own the necessary land. We can reroute the roads, make a safer intersection, and create a lovely plaza. It will require cooperation, and I'm hopeful we can get there.

Further, any proposed building would be the first under new design guidelines we approved in 2010 after a lengthy public Downtown Master Plan process. The new guidelines were described by the Asheville Citizen Times as embodying a compromise between development interests and critics of new downtown construction.

Aesthetic tastes vary wildly, but no matter your opinion of Aloft or Indigo, built under the old rules, every building built from now on will fall under the new design guidelines. Also, the proposed building would be shorter than the historic apartment buildings on either side of it and would use brick facades to correspond with the surrounding structures.

Lastly, I am open to all suggestions about how we can further improve any development agreement in order to arrive at the best possible outcome.

In conclusion

The McKibben Group is prepared to invest more than \$25 million into our downtown. As people cry out for economic relief, it would be folly to reject this investment. The property tax revenues will help all of our citizens in perpetuity.

The \$2.3 million sale price of the land can go directly to creating affordable housing in our community. I will not vote for the project unless Council agrees to dedicate money to this purpose.

The decision will neither create nor prohibit a park/plaza. We need a welcoming space to join Haywood to Grove Arcade and to complement the Basilica and Civic Center. There can be a plaza, and step one will be the Basilica saying they want it and being willing to either build it or partner with others who want to do so.

We need to do away with the urban blight that exists there now.

Our new design guidelines coupled with a development agreement will ensure the highest quality building and protection of the structural integrity of the Basilica.

I hope this information is helpful,

Gordon Smith

On Sat, Sep 8, 2012 at 9:21 AM, Doug Abernethy <asheville@me.com> wrote:

Please consider the public park solution for the land across from the Basilica We need a balanced approach to our city's growth. Leave our children a better place.

Doug Abernethy

Sent from iPad

Ben Fulmer

From: Leonard Carrier <lcarrier@charter.net> on behalf of Leonard Carrier
Sent: Thursday, September 06, 2012 3:23 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: McKibbon's folly

Dear Members of the Asheville City Council,

It should be a no-brainer that if only 13% of Asheville's taxpayers prefer a hotel on City land adjoining the Basilica of St. Lawrence, then City Council is not representing its constituents if they vote for the latest McKibbon-Kessler boondoggle to hit the drawing board. I simply cannot understand why City Council members, duly elected by Asheville City residents, do not simply follow the Will of the People.

I have written to all of you before, at one time or another, regarding the fallacy of kneeling down to Mammon when it comes to protecting one of Asheville's treasures. The argument that the City "can't afford" a park in front of the Basilica is fallacious. Grass and trees are cheap compared to the cost of building a hotel on that spot. Council Members should look to what's good for our community as a whole, not just what's good for some wealthy investors.

So please, Esther Mannheim, Gordon Smith, Chris Pelly, and Marc Hunt. Think of the legacy you will be leaving if you vote for another hotel requiring huge expenditures that will impact City taxpayers--just like the millions of dollars that the City had to sink into the foundation of "Aloft" -- the high-flying venture that really benefited only the vulture capitalists. Please, Jan Davis, don't let personal differences with other Council Members blind you to the reality of turning Downtown Asheville into a concrete jungle instead of wide, green spaces. And finally, please Mayor Bellamy, do what your constituents expect of you in leading City Council to some *rapprochement* between PARC and the Catholic Diocese so that our children and our children's children can enjoy a leisurely walk in the park. It goes without saying that visitors to our Fair City will enjoy that, as well.

Sincerely,

Leonard S. Carrier
26 Stonebridge Drive
Asheville, NC 28805

Ben Fulmer

From: Leonard Carrier <lcarrier@charter.net> on behalf of Leonard Carrier
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2012 2:54 PM
To: Gordon Smith
Cc: Jan Davis;Chris Pelly;cecil@braveulysses.com;Terry Bellamy;Esther Manheimer;marchunt@avlcouncil.com
Subject: Re: Basilica

Nonsense, Gordon. First of all, there are not "many who feel differently." That's ungrammatical. You should have said that they feel *different* about the matter. But as a former academician, I offer you my considered opinion that the PARC poll was extremely reliable. Apparently, you are being duped, my friend. Judging from your reply, I think I might even appreciate Asheville more than you do.

Sincerely,

Leonard S. Carrier, PhD
Emeritus Professor of Philosophy
University of Miami, FL
26 Stonebridge Drive
Asheville, NC 28805

----- Original Message -----

From: [Gordon Smith](#)
To: [Leonard Carrier](#)
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2012 8:06 AM
Subject: Re: Basilica

Thanks again, Mr. Carrier. While I understand that many people feel the way you do, please understand that there are also many who feel differently. The PARC poll was not, in my opinion and in the opinion of academicians, a reliable one. I will continue to work towards the best solution, and I appreciate your care for the city.

Gordon

On Tue, Aug 28, 2012 at 2:57 PM, Leonard Carrier <lcarrier@charter.net> wrote:
Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for your reply. I feel that I must remind you that Asheville is on the cusp of having a really great Downtown area--or else falling prey to developers who simply want to make their money and run. I'm not running, Mr. Smith. I am a City taxpayer, and I believe that when 78% of Ashevilleans do NOT want another hotel near their most treasured landmark, then their wishes should be honored.

Why don't you show a little creativity, in the way that the City of Greenville, SC did? Greenville made the most of its natural setting and created a wonderful area for its citizens to enjoy, and also to attract tourism.

We already have Hotel Indigo close to the Basilica, and we have Aloft at the other end of town; plus we have the Royal Bohemian in Biltmore Village. Across the Smoky Park Bridge we also have the wonderful Crowne Plaza Resort and Spa. So we already have the wherewithal to accommodate

tourists. What we need are attractions to draw them here. if you can't see that, then you are not serving the interests of most of my fellow Ashevilleans.

Here are some concrete recommendations designed to meet your worries about the City's not having enough resources to do what PARC has recommended: (1) Fire the City Manager. He is being reactive, rather than pro-active; (2) Approach large corporations the way Greenville did, to partner with the City; (3) Listen to your constituency and not to your wallet. Do those things and you'll get to "the promised land." Fail to do them and you will leave a legacy of failure for all of us.

Sincerely,

Leonard S. Carrier
26 Stonebridge Drive
Asheville, NC 28805

----- Original Message -----

From: [Gordon Smith](#)

To: [Leonard Carrier](#)

Sent: Tuesday, August 28, 2012 8:14 AM

Subject: Re: Basilica

Mr. Carrier,

Thank you for writing in. There are a lot of different opinions about how that parcel ought to be developed, and everyone wants something that Asheville can be proud of for generations to come. It's a notable location, and anything that happens there ought to complement surrounding uses, preserve the integrity of the Basilica, and comport with the Downtown Master Plan's Design Guidelines. The recently passed design guidelines will ensure sufficient setbacks and complementary building materials. Further, I expect City Council will urge any builder to go above and beyond those guidelines since this is a marquis location for the citizens of Asheville.

Any design that comes forward will need to have a sufficient open space to allow for a buffer between the proposed building and the Basilica. The open space will also invite foot traffic from Haywood Street and from the Grove Arcade to turn the corner and admire that architectural gem. In order for this to happen, it will require the voluntary cooperation of the Basilica for the land. It will also require a broad financial partnership, because the City of Asheville simply can not afford to build and maintain another downtown park on its own. The City just took on maintenance of Pack Square Park, and there are several other park areas in and around downtown that we are currently struggling to maintain due to budgetary pressures. We are working to create a series of French Broad River Parks as well that incorporate multimodal transportation options. While I very much enjoy our parks, I must also be responsible with taxpayer dollars and recognize that there are a lot of goals we've been asked by the voters to achieve.

I am looking forward to learning more about the proposals and working with Council members to ensure responsible building on the site. The proposals I've seen so far are all shorter than the nearby historic apartment buildings.

I hope this is helpful. Thank you again for being an engaged member of our community.

Gordon Smith

On Mon, Aug 27, 2012 at 8:23 PM, Leonard Carrier <lcarrier@charter.net> wrote:

Dear Members of City Council,

Do you really represent the taxpaying citizens of Asheville? It's hard to say. One thing I do know, which is that only 13% of your electorate favor building a hotel on the City-owned property adjoining St. Lawrence Basilica. That means that 87% favor something else. That 87% is divided between the PARC proposal of a green space, and the Catholic Church offer, which would also protect Guastavino's master work and our most famous landmark.

I find the solution to be a simple one. Why doesn't City Council ditch the offer of McKibbin and Kessler? Instead, negotiate a compromise between the Church and PARC. I can't imagine why anyone hasn't thought of this.

But, please, please, don't vacillate and conduct another study. Either do your business or get off the Council and make way for those who will look after those who elected you. Otherwise, you will be remembered for simply bleating like baby sheep--poor little lambs who have gone astray.

Sincerely,

Leonard S. Carrier
26 Stonebridge Dr.
Asheville 28805

Ben Fulmer

From: Susan Sihler <ssihler@yahoo.com> on behalf of Susan Sihler
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2012 11:48 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Cc: Robert Phillips
Subject: Haywood/Page site

Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to plead with you not to let the McKibbon group build another hotel in Asheville and especially not on the Haywood/Page site.

In my opinion they have already "defaced" our beautiful downtown architecture with the ugly and out-of-place Aloft Hotel.

We have a city filled with very interesting and historic buildings, one of which is the treasured Basilica of St. Lawrence. It behooves us to think of developing space on the Haywood/Page site that not only enhances the Basilica, but also provides some green space in downtown Asheville.

Both tourists and residents of Asheville will benefit. There is more to consider here than the income and tax revenue and "pleasing" the developers who are getting more than due consideration from City Council and the City Planning. How about some planning that will help to preserve and enhance our unique city?

Thank you!

Susan Sihler
17 Wisteria Drive
Asheville, N.C. 28804

Ben Fulmer

From: Leonard Carrier <lcarrier@charter.net> on behalf of Leonard Carrier
Sent: Monday, August 27, 2012 8:23 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Basilica

Dear Members of City Council,

Do you really represent the taxpaying citizens of Asheville? It's hard to say. One thing I do know, which is that only 13% of your electorate favor building a hotel on the City-owned property adjoining St. Lawrence Basilica. That means that 87% favor something else. That 87% is divided between the PARC proposal of a green space, and the Catholic Church offer, which would also protect Guastavino's master work and our most famous landmark.

I find the solution to be a simple one. Why doesn't City Council ditch the offer of McKibbin and Kessler? Instead, negotiate a compromise between the Church and PARC. I can't imagine why anyone hasn't thought of this.

But, please, please, don't vacillate and conduct another study. Either do your business or get off the Council and make way for those who will look after those who elected you. Otherwise, you will be remembered for simply bleating like baby sheep--poor little lambs who have gone astray.

Sincerely,

Leonard S. Carrier
26 Stonebridge Dr.
Asheville 28805

Ben Fulmer

From: beth searles <b_searles@yahoo.com> on behalf of beth searles
Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2012 1:19 PM
To: Marc Hunt
Cc: ashevillencouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Re: St Lawrence Plaza

Mr. Hunt,

Thank you very much for your response and the helpful information provided below. It is encouraging to read that you see the value of the Basilica's rendering/plans thus far, and its pedestrian-friendly, aesthetic and long-term strengths for the community.

I've seen the McKibbon Group's hotel renderings recently, and I am relieved that they have come up with something more acceptable than was probably originally conceived. It would be short-sighted, though, to assume it is automatically, now, the best choice over the Plan you have admitted has merit.

NOtice that the 6 levels of the rendered St. Lawrence Plaza have a tiered effect, and the effect is far more open and site-line-friendly, than the solid levels that the Hotel would include, even with a fountain/plaza segment. The St. L. Plaza is commercially viable and is multi-use and is a more dynamic use of the space from the viewpoint of the community, and tourists. It is aesthetically superior to McKibbon Group's design, it can be argued, and is more far-sighted in its benefits to Asheville overall. Hotel developers come and go, and other hotel sites can and will be available, but this site has a unique situation relative to a historical treasure, as well as being part of an active downtown corridor. Another hotel is just not the wisest decision in the big scheme, I would have to agree with those making that argument.

There still does remain the issues of fairness about opening up the RFP process after such a dated proposal by the McKibbon Group. I can't and don't speak for the Basilica, of course, but I suspect that the desire to have a shot at controlling development stems from the same issue you appear to have - not completely trusting that the other will do the job exactly as wanted or needed. Your concerns about the Basilica owning the site and developing it seem to be a red herring, though, since anyone developing that site has to answer to the City's requirements, correct? Negotiations can still be hammered out I would assume. The question comes down to the development that will end up on that site....which is the best long-term choice for the Basilica and the community/city?

It seems wrong to suggest that the BASilica with its selected (and proven) developer/architect fails to qualify as a valid competitor for the site at least as much as the McKibbon Group.

The Basilica is squarely and definitively a part of Asheville, and has been for over a hundred years. It would act in the interest of itself, of course, AND in the interest of the community and city - all of which are intertwined in a way that the McKibbon Group is not. The Basilica plan has already compromised on key issues that the city has indicated and would obviously remain amenable to such issues. It should not, of course, be given short shrift in any serious consideration of development that so directly affects its own well-being. I hope and fully suspect the Council is sensitive to that.

The Basilica has of course made its intentions known that it has no long-term interest in being in the development business, beyond what's necessary for the issue at hand, but has found a developer it trusts, a proven developer not unknown to Asheville; and it has architects and consultants who are intimately acquainted with the unique aspects of the Basilica's construction and architecture. That is entirely a plus, and in the case of such an old structure, with a worrisome defect, it seems to be a necessity. NO matter how forward-thinking McKibbon Group may be, (and as a customer of the Chapel Hill Aloft Hotel, I happen to like the hotel, in general) they are not invested in this area or in the Basilica in quite the same way. In fact, up to the time of the

revealing of their plan , I understand they had made no real attempt to talk with anyone involved with the Basilica re development. That may be revealing.

At the end of the day, though, I sense and am encouraged that there's far more sensitivity and trending toward common ground between all parties than was originally apparent. I would hope that ongoing discussions are fruitful, but I believe the Basilica should have the respect it deserves and be given a fair opportunity to bid for ownership and development of the site , according to city wishes, and to help develop that property with the best possible intentions for the Basilica and the whole community.

That is ultimately the biggest concern for the Basilica and its supporters.

Again, I thank you very much for your response, Mr. Hunt, and your intentions to remain open to the best solutions, and I am happy to see that you are open to the merits of the Basilica's St. Lawrence Plaza plan. I hope that whatever happens, the current sensitivity to "doing right" by the historical Basilica and the community continues.

Sincerely Beth Searles

From: Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com>

To: 'beth searles' <b_searles@yahoo.com>

Sent: Sunday, August 5, 2012 11:37 AM

Subject: RE: St Lawrence Plaza

Ms Searles

Thanks for writing me regarding the future of the city-owned parcel across from the US Cellular Center and the Basilica of Saint Lawrence. I appreciate your concern. Let me share my current thinking on the project.

I am committed to an outcome for the site which:

- From a design and quality standpoint enhances and adds to the vibrancy of that portion of downtown and especially complements that Basilica, the US Cellular Center, and other surrounding buildings.
- Ensures that any structures are set back from the Basilica so as to maintain site-lines to the Basilica.
- Includes a public plaza / open space
- Utilizes construction techniques that ensure no structural damage to the historic Basilica.
- Activates improved use and function of the US Cellular Center.

The short clip here is provided by official representatives of the Basilica and Diocese of Charlotte as their vision for the site, and it is consistent with a site plan and structures that would meet my hopes for the site. It features a six-story structure and open plaza area separating the building from the Basilica: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0A5NGEW3Gc>

A few more thoughts:

Public Park/Green Space Versus Buildings? – As former chairman of the Asheville Greenway Commission and land conservation professional, I am a strong advocate for parks and green space in this community. Some are avidly promoting the idea of a stand-alone green park here as being a simple choice, but I do not see this site working out as a stand-alone park. I do think approximately half of the site being dedicated to public open space featuring some horticultural elements would be great. As for the key issue of funding, note that the effort

to build nearby Pack Square Park, while very successful in many ways, so far is more than \$ 1.5 million short of its initial fundraising goal. The City is also falling well short of the \$600k annually required to operate and maintain that park according to the initial vision for it as a “signature park”. Given Asheville’s overly limited fiscal resources, the struggle to fund what we currently have, a price-tag for a stand-alone park project on this site that would be several million, and the competing demands for parks and, greenways from other parts of town, I cannot support prioritization of another full-scale park downtown. I do feel that significant public space as a plaza in conjunction with a smart real estate development project can work and be aesthetically great, so I am advocating for that.

Hotel versus Another Type of Development? – The City is currently in negotiation with McKibbon Hotel Group for development of the site to feature retail spaces at street level, hotel on upper floors, with structured parking included. That negotiation is based on McKibbon’s providing an initial winning proposal under a competitive RFP process four years ago. There is no downside to seeing this process through, and I support the City’s completing its discussions with McKibbon before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbon if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbon. I am open to the idea of a well-designed high-quality hotel (not an imposing ugly one) because that might best activate use of the US Cellular Center while also protecting the interests of the Basilica and the rest of the neighborhood. While some segments of the hotel/motel market in the region are struggling, I have recently been hearing that there does seem to be healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel choices. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the notion that we have too many hotels downtown already. As for design, note that the vision for the site put forward by the Basilica/Diocese could work quite well as a hotel (see above video link). Many in the community seem to fear a “high-rise” development. I can only support a project that would be limited and fit height-wise between the neighboring Vanderbilt Apartments and Battery Park Apartments.

City-Led or Basilica-Led Development? - Parishioners of the Basilica have done a great job helping City leaders understand the importance of great design and implementation for the site, and that is indeed resulting in the commitment to a quality outcome by the City. The Asheville Design Center was recently facilitating collaborative design efforts among official Diocese/Basilica representatives, McKibbon, and City officials. I was disappointed when, on July 5th, the Diocese/Basilica representatives unilaterally withdrew from those productive discussions, declaring that the only acceptable outcome would for the Diocese to own the site and plan/control its future development. The City owns the property and should negotiate directly with a developer to ensure a great design and implementation to benefit the entire community. I was elected to make sure that the best interest of the entire community will be served in situations like this. The Diocese of Charlotte and parishioners of the Basilica have proposed that the City sell the land to the Diocese and allow the Diocese to negotiate with a developer for design and implementation. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority to any group for a site so important to the whole community. Note that representatives of the Basilica say they fully intend to sell the property to a developer just as the City might, a point that does not seem to be well understood in the community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza, not a hugely different outcome than what the City is currently negotiating for.

Economic and Fiscal Considerations – Downtown character and function are enormously important to our regional economic development. Getting a well-designed and highly functional development outcome for the site is critical. The City must be fairly compensated in selling the site, and given the City’s serious fiscal challenges, we really need to see the property productively on the tax role.

Next Steps - Early in 2012, Council directed City staff to continue in the earlier-committed RFP process with McKibbon to see whether or not an acceptable site plan, design, and development agreement might be arranged. That process is ongoing and should be completed within a few weeks – perhaps by late September. Council will simply review progress at its August 14th meeting.

The Scenario I Most Worry About – Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that political crossfire and stalemate along with limited willingness of key stakeholders to negotiate for shared benefits in the outcome will halt progress. If that happens, the site would likely devolve to an uninspiring surface parking lot for years to come. That would be tragic.

Marc Hunt
Asheville City Council Member

From: beth searles [mailto:b_searles@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 12, 2012 2:58 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Cc: basilica@bellsouth.net
Subject: St Lawrence Plaza

July 12, 2012

To members of Council,

My husband and I wish to eagerly voice our support for the Basilica's impressive development plans for the Haywood St. property across from Basilica. It strives, in good faith, to work with the City and compromise on several key issues, and most importantly, protects the interests of the Basilica, and, we believe, the interests of many Asheville citizens who are weary of decisions that inflate commercial interests over vision and aesthetics for the city of Asheville.

To ignore a perceived groundswell on this issue is unwise and short-sighted. The rancor is destined to grow significantly I suspect, but that is one issue of many.

This plan effectively compromises by offering both significant revenue and a far more aesthetic and tourist-friendly plan. On reviewing the proposal (at www.stlawrenceplaza.com) my husband and I find these plans to be highly dynamic and forward-thinking for the area in question, and the addition of Kessler as a reputable developer offers a sophisticated direction. I should add that my husband is not without business acumen in this area, as he has experience as a real estate agent and commercial real estate investor and developer on a small scale.

The old business adage that one must take care of the goose that lays the golden egg, if you wish to continue receiving golden eggs, is appropriate here. The golden egg for Asheville, you certainly know, is primarily tourism - a tourism based on a city that has earned high marks for its unique appeal architecturally, geographically and historically, among other factors. Inappropriate hotel development chosen purely for the revenue at the expense of aesthetics, vision and respect for historical value is objectionable - particularly for a city like Asheville.

To fail to consider the Basilica's plan versus an out-of-town developer who specializes in contemporary high-rise hotels with minimalist (block-y) exteriors, (when that hotel can surely be built in a more appropriate location, not to mention the questionable need for another hotel in this area) is purely lacking wisdom and vision. To remain inflexible and rigid in the face of this proposal and to cling to an old proposal by McKinnon group is a choice that veers into questionable ethics, as well. One can argue it is boiling down to greed versus vision.

I believe the majority of this Council is totally capable of recognizing these points, and I hope and pray the Council seriously considers this plan , and respects the voice of the venerable Basilica, and its community supporters. It is , quite simply, the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration of our points, and for your service to the city and your constituents,
Elizabeth and Mark Searles

b_searles@yahoo.com

Ben Fulmer

From: Andra Cagle <h2andra@yahoo.com> on behalf of Andra Cagle
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2012 2:30 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: St. Lawrence Green

St. Lawrence Green would put a park where people are: going and coming from the Civic Center, the Church, the Arcade, Pack Memorial Library, the Battery Park, and the Vanderbilt.

Any saved greenspace is valuable-would New York be the same without Central Park? Large buildings block the great views that people come to visit and/ or move to Asheville. Please don't make us into every other city!

Thank You,

Andra Cagle
Concerned citizen of Asheville

Ben Fulmer

From: SchreiberE@aol.com
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2012 2:12 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Please make the area a park!

We badly need more open space in down town for people to enjoy. Downtown traffic and congestion is bad now. Please don't allow development of the area across from the Basillica and Civic Center.

St. Lawrence Green would put a park where people are: going and coming from the Civic Center, the Church, the Grove Arcade, Pack Memorial Library, the Battery Park, and the Vanderbilt.

Thank you!

Betty Anne and Gary Schenk
Weaverville, NC

Ben Fulmer

From: Mary Evers <mdevers03@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mary Evers
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2012 1:19 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Proposed construction in the St. Lawrence Church area

Honorable Mayor and Council Persons: As 32 year residents of Asheville we ask that you support either a park or the sale of the land to the Church as per their plan for a plaza and residential construction. The least appealing plan is the McGibbon Hotel Plan, and we totally oppose it. Downtown needs more green areas and the intersection in front of the Church is in dire need of fixing to reduce the number of streets intersecting there. More congestion and traffic in this area is NOT needed. Thank you for your consideration. David & Mary Evers, 24 Finalee Ave., Asheville NC 28803-2544

Ben Fulmer

From: Jean Ann Wheelock <jeanann.wheelock@gmail.com> on behalf of Jean Ann Wheelock
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2012 10:16 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: property across from Basilica

Respectfully submitted to all Council members:

After seeing all the proposals and hearing from all sides, we still prefer that the city-owned property across from the Basilica of St Lawrence and our civic center and library be put to its best and highest use as a green, family-friendly, public space.

Very sincerely,

Russ and Jean Ann Wheelock
22 Hibriten Drive
Asheville, NC 28801

Ben Fulmer

From: Cecil Bothwell <cecil@braveulysses.com> on behalf of Cecil Bothwell
Sent: Sunday, August 12, 2012 7:17 AM
To: councilgroup Group;Gary Jackson;Dawa Hitch
Subject: Asheville voters DO NOT want a hotel on Haywood property

For immediate release 8/11/12

What: Public opinion poll of Asheville voters concerning Haywood Street property

Who: Cecil Bothwell, PARCPAC and Voice Broadcasting Corp. (an automated polling company)

Contact: 828-713-8840

Here is the text used in the public opinion poll of Asheville voters:

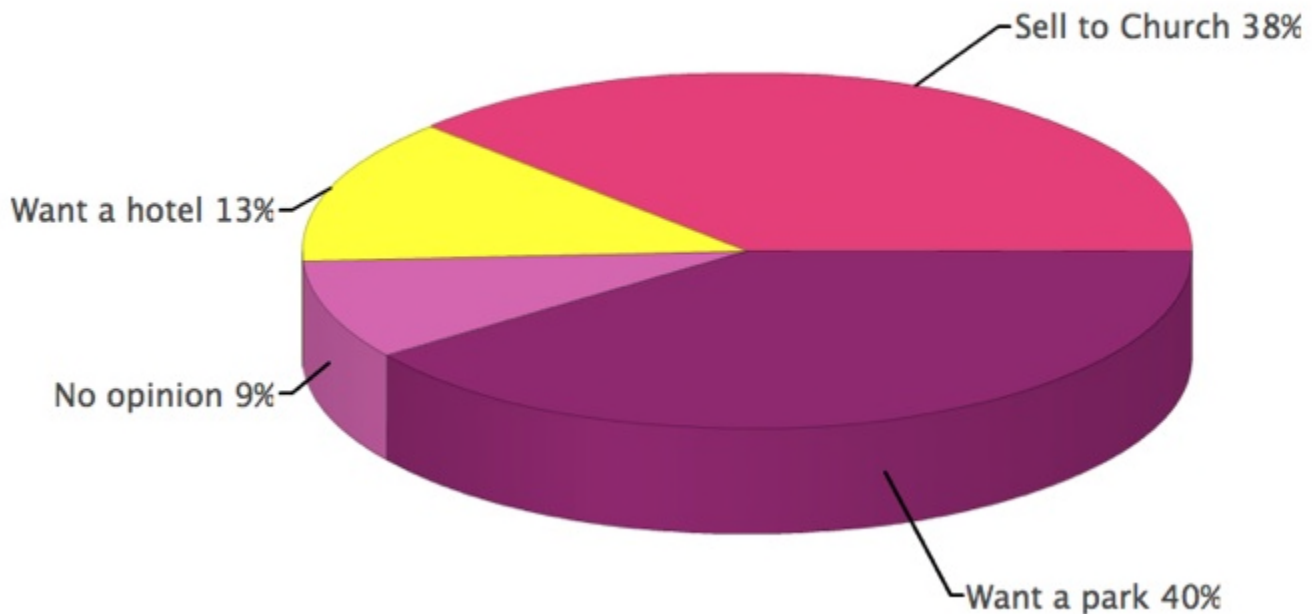
"The first question is about the city-owned land across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Some people favor a hotel, others selling the land to the church for their development, and others favor a public park.

If you favor the McKibbin Hotel, please press 1

If you favor selling the land to the Diocese of Charlotte, press 2

If you favor a public park, press 3

If you have no opinion, press 4"



A new poll released today shows that most Asheville voters do not want to see a hotel on the city-owned property across from the Civic Center.

PARC PAC obtained a phone list of all Asheville voters who cast ballots in at least two of the last three City elections. That list included 8,713 consistently engaged voters: Unaffiliated, Republican, Democrat. We employed an automated phone polling company to conduct the survey. 40 percent favored a public park, 35 percent want to sell the land to the Catholic church and 25 percent favor a hotel on the site (the rest indicated "no opinion.")



The poll was conducted after the *Citizen-Times'* big front-page story last Tuesday and McKibbin's public presentation of its plan. So even after all of our persuasion the developers must muster, the public still opposes a hotel in that location.

A seven story hotel looming over the Basilica came in dead last among those who answered the question.



The church has said that it would use the property for parking for now and would sell at a later date for development. This is their rendering of a four-story building and a paved patio.

Some people are under the mistaken impression that the church wants the property for greenspace but that is not the case.

I believe it is time to withdraw the defunct deal the City made with McKibbin back in 2008 (they defaulted on their contract to complete the project within 2-3 years). We need to rethink use of this space in line with citizen preferences.

-Cecil Bothwell
Asheville City Council

St. Lawrence Green would be a park where people are: going to and coming from the Civic Center, the Church, the Green Arcade, Pack Memorial Library, the Battery Park, and the Vanderbilt.



Ben Fulmer

From: Esther Manheimer <emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com> on behalf of Esther Manheimer
Sent: Thursday, August 09, 2012 4:23 PM
To: 'Phil Kleisler'
Cc: Jan Davis; Chris Pelly; Gary Jackson
Subject: RE: Meetings with the Basilica

Ok
thanks

From: Phil Kleisler [<mailto:PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, August 09, 2012 4:22 PM
To: Esther Manheimer
Cc: Jan Davis; Chris Pelly; Gary Jackson
Subject: RE: Meetings with the Basilica

Yes, 209 is reserved. The Boards and Commissions interviews are taking place in that room at 4:15pm, which shouldn't interfere with this meeting.

Philip Kleisler

Business Services Manager
City Manager's Office
City Of Asheville
828-232-4541
PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov

Think Green! Please do not print this e-mail unless necessary

From: Esther Manheimer [<mailto:emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com>]
Sent: Thursday, August 09, 2012 4:12 PM
To: Phil Kleisler
Cc: Jan Davis; Chris Pelly; Gary Jackson
Subject: FW: Meetings with the Basilica

Phil – can you reserve room 209 for the below meeting? For Tuesday the 14th?

From: Rita Livezey [<mailto:rdlive@charter.net>]
Sent: Thursday, August 09, 2012 3:53 PM
To: Esther Manheimer; 'Gordon Smith'; 'Marc Hunt'; 'Cecil Bothwell'; 'Jan Davis'; 'Chris Pelly'
Cc: Very Rev. Wilbur N. Thomas, V.F.
Subject: Meetings with the Basilica

Madam Vice Mayor and Members of the City Council,

We are delighted you are able to attend private meetings with us. The schedule is as follows:

Monday 3 pm at the Basilica
Gordon Smith
Marc Hunt
Cecil Bothwell

The meeting will be in Laurentine Hall; enter on Flint St. opposite Cellular One.

Tuesday 3 pm at the City Building

Esther Manheimer

Jan Davis

Chris Pelly

Can you arrange a meeting room for us?

Father Thomas is on vacation this week but has picked up email. He expresses concern that we have not received a response from you to his letter of July 27. If possible, it would be helpful to have that before we meet.

We look forward to meeting with you and will send a list of attendees from our side as soon as they are confirmed.

Best regards,

Rita Livezey

Social Justice Commissioner | Roman Catholic Parish of the Basilica of St. Lawrence | Asheville, NC | 828.299.0668

View Proposed St. Lawrence Plaza

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOA5NGEW3Gc>



11 North Market Street, Asheville, NC 28801 | 828-258-2991 | FAX 828-255-0255
422 South Main Street, Hendersonville, NC 28792 | 828-697-6196 | FAX 828-693-3999

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Ben Fulmer

From: Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt
Sent: Sunday, August 05, 2012 10:58 AM
To: 'Christopher Pratt'; 'Esther Manheimer'
Cc: 'Cecil Bothwell'; 'Chris Pelly'; 'Gordon Smith'; 'Jan Davis'; 'Mayor Bellamy'; 'Maggie Burleson'; paula@mckibbonhotels.com
Subject: RE: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

Dr. Pratt

We have exchanged emails before, and I think you know my general take on the situation, but I wanted to share my updated view which I provide to folks who write.

Thank you for being in touch.

Marc Hunt

+++++

Thanks for writing me regarding the future of the city-owned parcel across from the US Cellular Center and the Basilica of Saint Lawrence. I appreciate your concern. Let me share my current thinking on the project.

I am committed to an outcome for the site which:

- From a design and quality standpoint enhances and adds to the vibrancy of that portion of downtown and especially complements that Basilica, the US Cellular Center, and other surrounding buildings.
- Ensures that any structures are set back from the Basilica so as to maintain site-lines to the Basilica.
- Includes a public plaza / open space
- Utilizes construction techniques that ensure no structural damage to the historic Basilica.
- Activates improved use and function of the US Cellular Center.

The short clip here is provided by official representatives of the Basilica and Diocese of Charlotte as their vision for the site, and it is consistent with a site plan and structures that would meet my hopes for the site. It features a six-story structure and open plaza area separating the building from the

Basilica: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0A5NGEW3Gc>

A few more thoughts:

Public Park/Green Space Versus Buildings? – As former chairman of the Asheville Greenway Commission and land conservation professional, I am a strong advocate for parks and green space in this community. Some are avidly promoting the idea of a stand-alone green park here as being a simple choice, but I do not see this site working out as a stand-alone park. I do think approximately half of the site being dedicated to public open space featuring some horticultural elements would be great. As for the key issue of funding, note that the effort to build nearby Pack Square Park, while very successful in many ways, so far is more than \$ 1.5 million short of its initial fundraising goal. The City is also falling well short of the \$600k annually required to operate and maintain that park according to the initial vision for it as a “signature park”. Given Asheville’s overly limited fiscal resources, the struggle to fund what we currently have, a price-tag for a stand-alone park project on this site that would be several million, and the competing demands for parks and, greenways from other parts of town, I cannot support prioritization of another full-scale park downtown. I do feel that significant public space as a plaza in conjunction with a smart real estate development project can work and be aesthetically great, so I am advocating for that.

Hotel versus Another Type of Development? – The City is currently in negotiation with McKibbon Hotel Group for development of the site to feature retail spaces at street level, hotel on upper floors, with structured parking included. That negotiation is based on McKibbon’s providing an initial winning proposal under a competitive RFP process four years ago. There is no downside to seeing this process through, and I support the City’s completing its discussions with McKibbon before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbon if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbon. I am open to the idea of a well-designed high-quality hotel (not an imposing ugly one) because that might best activate use of the US Cellular Center while also protecting the interests of the Basilica and the rest of the neighborhood. While some segments of the hotel/motel market in the region are struggling, I have recently been hearing that there does seem to be healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel choices. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the notion that we have too many hotels downtown already. As for design, note that the vision for the site put forward by the Basilica/Diocese could work quite well as a hotel (see above video link). Many in the community seem to fear a “high-rise” development. I can only support a project that would be limited and fit height-wise between the neighboring Vanderbilt Apartments and Battery Park Apartments.

City-Led or Basilica-Led Development? - Parishioners of the Basilica have done a great job helping City leaders understand the importance of great design and implementation for the site, and that is indeed resulting in the commitment to a quality outcome by the City. The Asheville Design Center was recently facilitating collaborative design efforts among official Diocese/Basilica representatives, McKibbon, and City officials. I was disappointed when, on July 5th, the Diocese/Basilica representatives unilaterally withdrew from those productive discussions, declaring that the only acceptable outcome would for the Diocese to own the site and plan/control its future development. The City owns the property and should negotiate directly with a developer to ensure a great design and implementation to benefit the entire community. I was elected to make sure that the best interest of the entire community will be served in situations like this. The Diocese of Charlotte and parishioners of the Basilica have proposed that the City sell the land to the Diocese and allow the Diocese to negotiate with a developer for design and implementation. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority to any group for a site so important to the whole community. Note that representatives of the Basilica say they fully intend to sell the property to a developer just as the City might, a point that does not seem to be well understood in the community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza, not a hugely different outcome than what the City is currently negotiating for.

Economic and Fiscal Considerations – Downtown character and function are enormously important to our regional economic development. Getting a well-designed and highly functional development outcome for the site is critical. The City must be fairly compensated in selling the site, and given the City’s serious fiscal challenges, we really need to see the property productively on the tax role.

Next Steps - Early in 2012, Council directed City staff to continue in the earlier-committed RFP process with McKibbon to see whether or not an acceptable site plan, design, and development agreement might be arranged. That process is ongoing and should be completed within a few weeks – perhaps by late September. Council will simply review progress at its August 14th meeting.

The Scenario I Most Worry About – Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that political crossfire and stalemate along with limited willingness of key stakeholders to negotiate for shared benefits in the outcome will halt progress. If that happens, the site would likely devolve to an uninspiring surface parking lot for years to come. That would be tragic.

Marc Hunt
Asheville City Council Member

+++++

From: Christopher Pratt [mailto:christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2012 11:12 AM

To: Esther Manheimer

Cc: Dr. Christopher Pratt; Cecil Bothwell; Chris Pelly; Gordon Smith; Jan Davis; Marc Hunt; Mayor Bellamy; Maggie Burleson; paula@mckibbonhotels.com

Subject: Re: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

Dear Councillor Manheimer, Asheville City Council, Mayor Bellamy,

Thank you for your reply, however, isn't it time our City Council stops playing games with this process. Why is Council ignoring the facts? One might wonder if this isn't SOP for our City government. We all know that:

- the Basilica also submitted a bit in the first RFQ and it was acknowledged in writing by the City, and
- that the Basilica's proposal should be given full consideration first as it is rightfully due through the historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

One might ask Is someone withholding information from the Council, and if so why, or is it that the Council is choosing to ignore the record.

Your email and the McKibbon invitation forwarded by the City regarding an August 7 design presentation, and also to the public announcement of the same in the Asheville Citizen-Times on July 30 convey misleading and apparently false information which one could only imagine you and your colleagues and McKibbon knew. Did you not?

The reference in the publicity regarding McKibbon meeting with the Basilica is misleading and should be publicly retracted. There is no approved relationship or collaboration between the

Basilica and either the McKibbon Group or the Asheville Design Center. No such engagement was ever approved and the Basilica is not aware of, let alone were they consulted about any designs that they may be presenting or you may be considering.

The St. Lawrence Plaza web site presents the only approved messaging from the Basilica. The Basilica's stand has always been to support a developer only if and when the Basilica has been granted a historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

There is no authorized support from the Basilica for the 2007 McKibbon RFQ, moreover, there is vigorous objection from the Basilica to any hotel being built on this Haywood site. Please refer to the letter from the Basilica counsel on May 24, 2012 written to the city, available via a link on the web site. That is the only direction approved by the Basilica.

We understand that the city staff's desire is to keep this five year RFQ alive, but this is not

a position we support.

However, it is also then incumbent on the City to keep the Basilica proposal alive and give it all consideration due to it first as it is rightfully due through the historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

At this time, the Basilica has not authorized any Basilica representatives who will be attending the August 7th presentation. This is the first we are hearing about that meeting and any supposed collaboration with the Basilica.

I believe the Basilica Pastor/Rector will be responding more formally with a letter to John McKibbin. The only engagement to date with a developer by the Basilica is with the Kessler Development Group for a plaza with residential retail and commercial, and this will go forward only when the city approves private negotiations with the Basilica.

We believe ONLY the Basilica will be able to draw world class architectural design expertise to this project and ensure that the Basilica is protected during construction. This is a liability we believe no developer should undertake without full approval and support of the Basilica.

Please let's stop wasting taxpayer money and time and acknowledge what is the crux of this matter that:

- the Basilica also submitted a bid in the first RFQ and it was acknowledged in writing by the City, and
- that the Basilica's proposal should be given full consideration first as it is rightfully due through the historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

If you have not already, please view the proposed St. Lawrence Plaza online at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0A5NGEW3Gc>

and the Petition supporting the St. Lawrence Plaza at:

[**http://www.change.org/petitions/city-council-of-asheville-north-carolina-negotiate-to-sell-property-opposite-basilica-to-diocese-of-charlotte**](http://www.change.org/petitions/city-council-of-asheville-north-carolina-negotiate-to-sell-property-opposite-basilica-to-diocese-of-charlotte)

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Pratt and Mrs. Jimmie Cochran Pratt, MPA

Chairmen, New Generations of Global Entrepreneurs

120 Norwood Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804-3618 USA
+828-253-8158
christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com

On Wed, Aug 1, 2012 at 9:35 AM, Esther Manheimer <emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com> wrote:

Mr. Pratt: I believe McKibbon is, on its own initiative, holding this public meeting. Anyone can reserve the space and make their own presentation. I would certainly welcome Kessler to do the same.

Thank you for the email.

-Esther Manheimer

From: Christopher Pratt [mailto:christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2012 9:03 PM
To: Maria Mason; Bud Hansbury; PARC; AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Cc: Carmen Ramos-Kennedy; Anne Fitzgerald Smith; Briggs Sherwood; Jane Whitman; Sue & Jim Donato; Bob Long - Musician; Will Teller -Musician; Thomas Nelson -Musician; Blaine Greenfield; Charlie Thomas; Allison Biddix; John Bascom -Musician; Alex Burch -Musician; Bill & Marleen Hutt; Frank Kirkland
Subject: Re: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

Did the McKibbon group develop this plan “Through meetings with the Basilica” as this email states?

And when will the Kessler Group be given the same opportunity?

Chris

On Tue, Jul 31, 2012 at 5:46 PM, Maria Mason <mariamaso@gmail.com> wrote:

EXCELLENT, Dr. Pratt.

Hey, everyone: PASS THIS ON!!!

Respectfully yours,

Maria Mason

Begin forwarded message:

From: Christopher Pratt <christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com>

Date: July 31, 2012 4:35:59 PM EDT

To: "Dr. Christopher Pratt" <christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com>

Subject: Fwd: FW: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Maggie Burleson <MBurleson@ashevillenc.gov>

Date: Tue, Jul 31, 2012 at 3:04 PM

Subject: FW: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

To: Cecil Bothwell <cecil@braveulysses.com>, Chris Pelly <chrispelly@avlcouncil.com>, Esther Manheimer <emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com>, Gordon Smith <gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com>, Jan Davis <jandavis@avlcouncil.com>, Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com>, Mayor Bellamy <mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com>

City Council is invited to the following:

McKIBBON HOTEL GROUP TO PRESENT FIRST DESIGN DRAWINGS FOR HAYWOOD STREET PROPERTY

Public invited to preview plans for mixed-use hotel, plaza/piazza, restaurant and retail development

(ASHEVILLE, NC –07/31/12) **McKibbon Hotel Group, Inc.** will present the first design drawings for their proposed development of the city-owned Haywood Street site, across the street from the Basilica of St. Lawrence and the U.S. Cellular Center on **Tuesday, August 7 at 5:30 p.m.** at the **U.S. Cellular Center Banquet Room, 2nd floor, 87 Haywood Street, Asheville.** The meeting is open to the public, and **doors will open at 5:00 p.m.** for seating and preview of site renderings.

“Through meetings with the Basilica, the Asheville Design Center and City representatives, we are prepared to develop a property that will enhance the neighborhood and complement the Basilica, which is such an important historic landmark for our city,” explained **John McKibbon**, Chairman of McKibbon Hotel Group. McKibbon will lead the 30-minute presentation, and will ask for public comment at the meeting’s conclusion.

In addition to the presentation of new site renderings, the meeting will include:

✍ McKibbon Company History, Previous Urban Projects and Company Involvement in Asheville Community – John McKibbon, Chairman

✍ Overview of the Haywood Project – Architects Buck Lindsay and Chad Roberson, Lindsay Pope Brayfield Clifford and Associates

✍ Precautions That Will Be Taken to Protect Surrounding Buildings During Construction – Jill Heimburg, PE, AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, Asheville, NC

About McKibbon Hotel Group, Inc./McKibbon Hotel Management, Inc.

McKibbon Hotel Group, Inc., based in Gainesville, Georgia, is a privately owned enterprise that has grown into an award-winning premier real estate developer and owner of nationally franchised hotel brands for Marriott, Hilton, Starwood and Hyatt hotels. McKibbon is proud to be a recognized leader for over 87 years in the hospitality industry, and McKibbon Hotel Management, Inc., based in Tampa, Florida, currently operates over 65 mid and upscale brands in 8 states throughout the Southeast. The company has a rich history and culture that promotes a family oriented environment, while holding true to its core values of honesty, integrity and loyalty. For more information, visit www.mckibbon.com.



Paula MacDonald | Director of Communications

McKibbon Hotel Management, Inc.

5315 Avion Park Drive, Suite 120 | Tampa, Florida 33607

p: [813.472.7390](tel:813.472.7390) | f: [813.241.2389](tel:813.241.2389) | c: [813.545.1009](tel:813.545.1009) | www.mckibbon.com | www.facebook.com/mckibbonhotels



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Ben Fulmer

From: Rita Livezey <rdlive@charter.net> on behalf of Rita Livezey
Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2012 2:44 PM
To: 'Cecil Bothwell'; 'Chris Pelly'; 'Esther Manheimer'; 'Gordon Smith'; 'Jan Davis'; 'Marc Hunt'; Mayor Terry Belamy
Subject: Haywood Street Property Petition
Attachments: BASILICA OF ST LAWRENCE PETITION 07312012.pdf

Madam Mayor, Madam Vice Mayor, and Members of the Council,

Attached please find the output file of an online petition signed by over **860** people to date—voters and tourists alike—urging you to negotiate to sell the city-owned Haywood Street property opposite the Basilica of St. Lawrence to the Diocese of Charlotte so that the Basilica may become the steward of the site to protect and preserve the surroundings and the Basilica.

You may view the full text of the petition online and read people's comments at <http://www.change.org/petitions/city-council-of-asheville-north-carolina-negotiate-to-sell-property-opposite-basilica-to-diocese-of-charlotte>

We hope you will take this strong and ever-growing popular support for the Basilica's position into account as you weigh the options for the fate of this property.

Best regards,

Rita Livezey
Social Justice Commissioner | Roman Catholic Parish of the Basilica of St. Lawrence | Asheville, NC

Ben Fulmer

From: Maggie Lauterer <mplauterer@aol.com> on behalf of Maggie Lauterer
Sent: Monday, July 30, 2012 6:33 PM
To: Chris Pelly
Subject: Thanks

Chris, grateful for your thoughtful response.

Yes, cost is a factor, of course. Something simple - grass and a number of park benches and a few small trees - I agree with you it doesn't need \$15 million to be perfect.

Good to know there are some of you who are aware of the possibilities in a corner of downtown that needs protection from over-development. And the church needs breathing room since it's one of the most beautiful buildings Asheville claims.

Hope you and your family are well - we still miss our Haw Creek neighbors, after all these years.

Best to you,

Maggie

On 7/30/2012 1:12 PM, Chris Pelly wrote:

Dear Maggie,

Thank you for weighing in on this much-debated issue. I am in agreement this particular location is worthy of special consideration as we consider what development is appropriate opposite the Basilica and opposite our primary civic gathering point, the US Cellular Center.

Many have called for a park or other green space at this location. As appealing as this sounds, the fiscal reality of developing a park site (Roger McGuire Park at Pack Square cost upwards of \$15 million) **and** forever removing this property from the tax base, makes this option unaffordable at this time.

That said, I will likely only be supporting a development proposal which leaves the majority of this .8 acre site as an open public plaza as is often seen in European cities. The development proposal I would likely support will have buildings massed at the back of the property allowing the plaza concept in the area nearest the Basilica and civic center.

I believe City Council will demand a high standard of excellence allowing our city to achieve both additional tax base and a public plaza for which we will all be proud.

Good to hear from you Maggie and best wishes.

Chris Pelly,
Asheville City Council

On Mon, Jul 30, 2012 at 12:00 PM, Maggie Lauterer <mplauterer@aol.com> wrote:

Good servants of the city of Asheville,

Since the early 1980's when I moved to Asheville, I thought that the best use of that ugly parking space across the street from St. Lawrence and the civic center would be a park - so many people come to the civic center, and to have a space of green would speak volumes about

our city's sense of presence in the mountains and their nature.

Now I hear that the cathedral is suffering fragility in its dome - and that pretty much speaks volumes about the need for a park.

Thank you for considering that need for future plans.

Sincerely,

Maggie Lauterer

Ben Fulmer

From: Tom Downing <TDowning@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Tom Downing
Sent: Monday, July 30, 2012 5:15 PM
To: councilgroup
Subject: Letter to Mayor and Council from Basilica Requesting Consideration at Aug 14 Agenda -- Requests Dismissal of McKibbon RFP and Designation of Basilica and Diocese as a Partner with City to Develop Haywood Street Property
Attachments: Very Rev. Wilbur Thomas -- Basilica of St. Lawrence -- Requesting Dismissal of McKibbon RFP and Designation of Basilica and Diocese as a Partner -- 7-27-12.pdf

Mayor Bellamy and Council members,

Please see the attached letter, which was received in the Mayor's Office this afternoon.

Thanks,

Tom Downing
Administrative Assistant
City Manager's Office
828-259-5604

70 Court Plaza
PO Box 7148
Asheville, North Carolina 28802
TDowning@ashevillenc.gov



Think Green! Please do not print this e-mail unless necessary

The Asheville Way: Continuous Improvement, Integrity, Diversity, Safety and Welfare, and Excellent Service

Ben Fulmer

From: Maggie Lauterer <mplauterer@aol.com> on behalf of Maggie Lauterer
Sent: Monday, July 30, 2012 12:00 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: concern about the civic center area

Good servants of the city of Asheville,

Since the early 1980's when I moved to Asheville, I thought that the best use of that ugly parking space across the street from St. Lawrence and the civic center would be a park - so many people come to the civic center, and to have a space of green would speak volumes about our city's sense of presence in the mountains and their nature.

Now I hear that the cathedral is suffering fragility in its dome - and that pretty much speaks volumes about the need for a park.

Thank you for considering that need for future plans.

Sincerely,

Maggie Lauterer

Ben Fulmer

From: Helen Toms <helenet@charter.net> on behalf of Helen Toms
Sent: Sunday, July 15, 2012 8:45 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Native In Favor of Basilica Purchase and Green-Space

Dear Asheville City Council,

As a native of Asheville and current resident I'd like to weigh in on the Haywood St. property across from St. Lawrence. I believe that the Basilica should be given the contract for purchase for several reasons; First, I am concerned for the safety of the Basilica, a local and national treasure. Also, having a smaller building and some green space would be best for the city's economy. Other cities we compete with such as Greenville SC, Wilmington and Knoxville have designated historical districts and beautiful parks and green spaces. In order to compete we must strive to do the same. A small park-like setting would serve all the citizens all seasons instead of a few tourists coming only part of the year. In this case the long range interests of the city are better served with open space and a multi-use smaller building rather than another high rise hotel. Let's remember past near-misses when we saved the South Lexington Avenue area and City County Plaza from developers and a high-rise hotel. Please listen to the citizens you serve.

Sincerely,

Helen Toms
11 Parkview Dr.
Asheville, NC 28805

Ben Fulmer

From: Peter Brezny <pb@purplecat.net> on behalf of Peter Brezny
Sent: Thursday, July 05, 2012 2:43 PM
To: 'City Council'
Subject: Development near the cathedral

Dear City council,

I've written to you about this before, but I believe the importance of making the city owned property across from St. Lawrence Cathedral to be of great enough importance to ask for your time again.

I have heard back from some of you and I've been told that the city doesn't have the resources to maintain another park.

Although this may be true, I find it a poor excuse. Somehow we had enough revenue to spend Five million dollars for the basement rights to the property on Biltmore Avenue, which had a tax value of less than \$1million.

Now the city is left with that debt for another 25 years. Perhaps you can get Pat Whalen to mow the grass across from the Basilica for you. In all seriousness though, I'd ask that poor financial decision making not be used as an excuse for appropriate development of public space and historic preservation.

People don't come to Asheville to see new hotels with designs that belong in Miami. We have a historic city center, which has survived almost in spite of devastating planning decisions and near misses (remember the plan to turn all of Lexington Avenue into a mall?)...Imagine how different (dead) North Lexington would be today had that plan gone through.

I ask that in your consideration of options for the city owned land across from the Basilica, you look forward and 'think preservation' first. Our small city is losing its charm with every national chain store and eyesore hotel that's pops up in the city limits. Green space across from the Asheville Civic Center has been a long absent need in that area of town--a place where the public can congregate and comfortably relax under trees after a concert or event.

It's a beautiful, underserved location in town that you have the power to really do something wonderful with.

If nothing else, think how you would like to be remembered for your service on council? Do you want to be another Mayor Charles Wallmart, or even a Scott (staples) Shuford... The McKibbin 5?

Think Preservation.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Peter Brezny

Ben Fulmer

From: Gordon Smith <gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Gordon Smith
Sent: Friday, June 29, 2012 8:13 AM
To: Cathy Early
Cc: City Council;PARC
Subject: Re: St Lawrence Green

Ms. Early,

I appreciate you writing in. There has been a lot of misinformation going around, and I'm glad for the opportunity to clarify the situation and my stance on it. It's been great to have so much interest and enthusiasm for seeing a good use and good design.

The short wrap-up in this: Nothing has been decided. McKibbon and the Basilica are in talks with the Asheville Design Center. There are several options available.

McKibbon hotel group was awarded rights to this property following a Request For Proposals (RFP) process, in which they were the sole applicant. The process was open to all bidders. I favored allowing that RFP to expire, but Council voted to extend it in 2010. The agreement is not complete in that there has not been a development agreement written and signed. This means that, even if Council decided to allow McKibbon to go ahead, there would be specific requirements for any building on the site.

The Basilica has made several offers, but there are, as of now, very few specifics attached to their offers. The Basilica and McKibbon representatives are working with the Asheville Design Center to determine what design might best preserve the integrity of the treasured Basilica and open up some public space on the site. I am looking forward to learning more about the outcome of these discussions.

As to a park, the city is not in a position to make that kind of ongoing investment. Having just taken on maintenance responsibilities for Pack Square Park, the city is stretched to the limit. While we're optimistic about seeing the end of this recession, we must be responsible with our expenditures. Parks are wonderful, but they have a cost and don't generate revenue.

A fourth option is to reissue the Request for Proposals in an effort to have a use for the site that respects the integrity of the Basilica, provides for some public space, and complements all of the surrounding properties. This is direction I'm leaning right now. This process would again be open to any entity that wanted to make a proposal. Council would determine the specific requirements for proposals.

I hope this is helpful information, and thank you again for the opportunity,

Gordon Smith

On Thu, Jun 28, 2012 at 3:53 PM, Cathy Early <cearly@plumdogfinancial.com> wrote:

I wholeheartedly support the Green area in front of St. Lawrence. That end of town is in desperate need of a face lift, plus it would be shame not to highlight and showcase a beautiful monument and building such as St Lawrence.

I hope City council can have a long term vision. The City of Asheville will continue to grow, and we should be cognizant of keeping some special areas of the City special, as the Green area in front of the church certainly would do.

Thank you.

Cathy Early

ID #58767

Mortgage Manager

PlumDog Financial

NMLS # 58590

p 828 274-1515

f 828 274-1514

c 828 242-7194

www.plumdogfinancial.com

PlumDog happily donates \$50 for every loan closed to Mission Children's Hospital.

Ben Fulmer

From: Mike Walker <walkmex@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mike Walker
Sent: Friday, June 29, 2012 5:58 AM
To: City Council;PARC
Subject: St Lawrence Basilica "Park"

I strongly support establishing the land across from the Basilica as a green space. I am resident of 21 Battery Park and pay a lot of taxes to the city. Asheville could be a much better city than it is but it takes strong leadership & a vision to make it so. Please stand back and decide what you want Asheville to be and stop letting it evolve based on special interests.

Michael Walker
21 Battery Park Ave Suite 404

Ben Fulmer

From: Vicki Nichols <vnichols1@earthlink.net> on behalf of Vicki Nichols
Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2012 6:59 PM
To: 'City Council'
Subject: Basilica Park

Asheville City Council -

I simply cannot understand how the City of Asheville can even entertain the idea of a high rise or even low-rise hotel on the site in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence!!

Do you not understand what a treasure that building is? It is an architectural gem that attracts the interest of religious persons and non-religious persons. I take all visitors to Asheville to the Basilica as part of an architectural tour of Asheville, and always feel I have to apologize for its unsightly setting. It is just a beautiful building inside and out, and currently sits in a nightmare of a bad intersection and an ugly parking lot and abandoned building.

A park on that property across from the Basilica would not only improve the tourist experience of visiting the building, but it would add much needed green space in the downtown area. While the Pack Place and City Hall park area is nice, it is not really close to the heart of Downtown, where there is a desperate need for more green space. A park in front of the Basilica would be the perfect solution.

I am not a city limits resident, but I work Downtown, I dine, shop and enjoy entertainment Downtown very often. So the quality of the Downtown experience means a lot to me. I can guarantee that any elected official who votes for putting up an unsightly and definitely un-needed hotel or other commercial enterprise on the site in front on the Basilica will never receive and support (financial or otherwise) from me for any future election for any office.

Thank you for your considered attention to this matter.

Vicki Nichols
17 Auburndale Drive
Asheville, NC 28806
828-665-8908
Vnichols1@earthlink.net

Ben Fulmer

From: Cathy Early <cearly@plumdogfinancial.com> on behalf of Cathy Early
Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2012 3:53 PM
To: 'City Council'; 'PARC'
Subject: St Lawrence Green

I wholeheartedly support the Green area in front of St. Lawrence. That end of town is in desperate need of a face lift, plus it would be shame not to highlight and showcase a beautiful monument and building such as St Lawrence.

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Ben Fulmer

From: Shinesign@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2012 1:50 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: MccKibbon

I do not support the proposal to have a Georgia hotel chain in front of the St Lawrence Basilica.

This would make a wonderful Green Space that supports residents as well as those visitng the city.

Shiner Antiorio

Peace isn't an experience free of challenges, free of rough and smooth, it's an experience that's expansive enough to include all that arises without feeling threatened.

~Pema Chodron~

Ben Fulmer

From: Susan Kokora <susankokora@charter.net> on behalf of Susan Kokora
Sent: Wednesday, June 27, 2012 2:17 PM
To: City Council;PARC
Subject: a park

Dear City Council,

I love the idea of a park across from the St. Lawrence Basilica.

Our beautiful city would do well do have more green areas both for tourists and residents.

A park would be an area of aesthetic beauty for our city. As our climate continues to warm, it would be a desired retreat for visitors.

I am traveling abroad this summer and I have found many of the parks in Europe to be stunning "draws" for people...areas of culture (ie. visiting musicians, bands, symphonies), places of relaxation to sit and relax, spots where nature can find a nook, ie. birds, squirrels, gardens, trees, etc. I would love to see Asheville provide more parks/green spaces downtown.

It would sadden me to see another parking deck and high rise across from the Basilica.

I appreciate the work you do for our city.

Susan Kokora & John Combs
19 Melrose Ave.
Asheville, NC 28804

Ben Fulmer

From: Robert Eaton Kelley <reatonkelley@charter.net> on behalf of Robert Eaton Kelley
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2012 7:12 AM
To: City Council;PARC
Subject: Create St. Lawrence Green!

Listen to the Citizenry: Create St. Lawrence Green!

Robert Kelley
28803

Ben Fulmer

From: Jon <anderson2118@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Jon
Sent: Monday, June 25, 2012 10:11 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;info@ashevilleparc.org
Subject: Too late for the green St. Lawrence Basilica?

Dear City Council -

The landmark of EVERY small town in Europe is a duomo and a plaza. Wouldn't that be the coolest thing for our great city? I'm not certain a strict green space is what we need, as we all know it will be more certain to attract homeless versus commerce.

Please work with the hotel group or the Basilica to create the best environment for this beautiful landmark in our city. To hide it or hurt it would be a crime.

Jon Anderson
Asheville, NC

Sent from my iPad

Ben Fulmer

From: Rachel Sternberg <rsternberg1@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Rachel Sternberg
Sent: Monday, June 25, 2012 5:14 PM
To: City Council;PARC
Subject: Land in front of St. Lawrence'

Dear Council Members~

I'm writing to **STRONGLY** urge you to reserve the land in front of the St. Lawrence Basilica for a **GREEN SPACE** - such as a park that would enhance downtown immeasurably, provide an inviting face to visitors, and serve **ALL** the people in the Asheville community.

We have enough hotels. We definitely do not need another, high priced hotel in the downtown area. But we have only Pritchard Park downtown and another green space to provide a place for rest would be the best use of that land. And, with the Basilica such a lovely and important feature of the Asheville landscape, it would be a crime to "hide it" behind a large building. The Basilica is a natural accompaniment to a beautiful green space.

Please do not let outside interests and corporate greed influence your decision. That land should be for **ALL** the **PEOPLE**.

Thank you for your consideration.
Rachel Sternberg

Ben Fulmer

From: Ruby D. Moore <rubydhaliwal@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ruby D. Moore
Sent: Monday, June 25, 2012 2:26 PM
To: City Council;PARC
Subject: st. lawrence

Hello City Council,

I am writing to advocate that the area in front of the St. Lawrence Basilica not be sold for a hotel. I'm not sure that Asheville downtown needs another hotel and I definitely don't think so in that area.

Having just visited Greenville, SC last night, we were very impressed with the open areas in the downtown there. Inviting, clean, GREEN-I think that your foresight is necessary in making sure our city is a great place to live, work, and play for its citizens-this will automatically make it more appealing for tourists and their dollars.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,
Ruby Moore
North Asheville resident

Ben Fulmer

From: Cunningham, Patricia <pcunningham@brchs.com> on behalf of Cunningham, Patricia
Sent: Thursday, June 21, 2012 12:38 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: email subject

Please designate the area surrounding St. Lawrence Basilica as a green area and protected from development

Ben Fulmer

From: Pat McKee <PMcKee@CarolinaEHS.com> on behalf of Pat McKee
Sent: Thursday, June 21, 2012 12:05 PM
To: 'City Council'; 'PARC'
Subject: Basilica property

I urge you to vote against selling the property across from the St. Lawrence Basilica to McKibbin Properties. This land belongs to the citizens of Asheville and should be put to use for the benefit of all, not for the wealthiest among us. Another green space in this city would offer enjoyment to residents and to visitors.

Pat McKee
25 Brookwood Road
Asheville NC 28804

Ben Fulmer

From: Pfbeyer@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, June 21, 2012 10:45 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;ashevilleparc@gmail.com
Subject: St. Lawrence Park

Asheville needs more green space and not more hotels!!!!!! Do not destroy what has made Asheville a beautiful town.

Resident for 14 years.
Patsy Beyer

Ben Fulmer

From: Lin Brown <linbrown5@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lin Brown
Sent: Wednesday, June 20, 2012 12:10 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;ashevilleparc@gmail.com
Subject: A park not a hotel across from St. Lawrence church

Dear Council Members,

My husband and I spend a lot of our time and communications promoting Asheville here and when we are away. Friends even joke we should be with the Chamber of Commerce.

I have a firm conviction that we need to do everything we can to make the tourist experience outstanding and thereby support all the entrepreneurs (restaurants, galleries, shops, etc.) in the downtown. What would preserve and enhance the area around the Civic Center is not another hotel, but rather a park. A green space that shows off the gem of architecture, St. Lawrence Cathedral, is what is needed not another hotel. In that area there are already the Renaissance, the Sheraton, and the Indigo. Additionally, until we see the effect of the now-being-built hotel on Biltmore Avenue, I don't think the City should rush into permitting another hotel.

As the editorial in the AC-T said today, Asheville is the driving sales tax generator of the county. And the downtown is the place that tourists want to be. Let's do all we can to maintain and enhance that downtown, not destroy it piece by piece. The space across from St. Lawrence is the one remaining space in the downtown where a park could be built. Let's go for it!!

From a very committed booster of Asheville, Lin Brown

Lin Brown
439 Vanderbilt Road
Asheville, N.C. 28803
828-274-0828
linbrown5@yahoo.com
Alternative email= brown@wfu.edu

Ben Fulmer

From: Leonard Carrier <lcarrier@charter.net> on behalf of Leonard Carrier
Sent: Monday, June 11, 2012 3:30 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: PARC proposal

Dear Council Members,

As an Asheville City taxpayer, I support the plan of PARC to turn the land adjacent to the St. Lawrence Basilica into a green space. I am opposed to having another hotel built anywhere on this property.

Sincerely,

Leonard S. Carrier
26 Stonebridge Drive
Asheville, NC 28805-1464

Ben Fulmer

From: George Fleming <georgefleming6@yahoo.com> on behalf of George Fleming
Sent: Sunday, June 10, 2012 4:23 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;'PARC'
Subject: St, Lawrence Green

I have been amazed that the City has been planning on going ahead with selling the land in front of St. Lawrence and the Civic Center. This is a very, very important decision that requires citizen input as it is selling off one of the last pieces of undeveloped downtown land. Especially when St Lawrence offered a better offer and their proposal provides a much needed green space...and we don't need more hotel rooms.

Bigger and more is the default mantra of an unconscious community and economic system!

Thank you.

George Fleming

Ben Fulmer

From: jasmin gentling <jgentling@charter.net> on behalf of jasmin gentling
Sent: Thursday, June 07, 2012 10:36 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC
Subject: St. Lawrence basilica

As a city taxpayer i implore you to not allow a hotel in front of the church.. it is a national treasure and we need to ensure its place in the downtown aesthetics.. if we destroy what we have we will be destroying it for future generations..

please please vote for a green space..

Jasmin Gentling

Ben Fulmer

From: Erin Barnes <ebarnes@ioby.org> on behalf of Erin Barnes
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 5:14 PM
To: Marc Hunt
Cc: chrispelly@avlcouncil.com;Gordon Smith;Cecil Bothwell
Subject: Re: Erin Barnes of IOBY

Hi Cecil, Chris & Gordon,

Great to meet all of you. Congratulations on your obviously incredibly effective efforts to make Asheville a knit and sustainable city. I had a wonderful time walking around the neighborhoods on Monday. Asheville is bursting with character and authenticity, as well as a great walkable, bikeable, green infrastructure.

I'm one of three co-founders of ioby.org, a web-based initiative to strengthen neighborhood leaders doing environmental projects in public spaces. We assist groups and individuals in raising money, connecting with volunteers and sharing their ideas to a larger network of thought leaders, also working at the neighborhood or block level.

If it's not obvious, ioby stands for "in our backyards" or the opposite of NIMBY and we hope to encourage a connection between urban civic action (especially that led by Gen X and Gen Y) and the larger environmental that tends to focus on national and international policies. We know that lots of change -- big and small -- are needed to ensure a sustainable future for people, and the planet.

If you know of any citizen-led initiatives to green Asheville at the block or neighborhood (or even watershed) level, and you think they would like to "crowdfund" their ideas, please do introduce them to ioby. I think our platform is effective at both increasing civic engagement in a very tangible way as well as at directing an untapped source of citizen micro-philanthropy at green infrastructure projects.

Happy to answer any questions you might have now, or, if you'd like to, at the tour of ioby I'll be hosting on Friday online at noon: <http://ioby.org/tour>

All my very best,
Erin

On Wed, Jun 6, 2012 at 2:50 PM, Marc Hunt <hunt.marc@gmail.com> wrote:

Erin –

Please meet Cecil Bothwell, Chris Pelly, and Gordon Smith, all colleagues on City Council. Of all of us, these guys are the most focused on environmental issues at the neighborhood level here in Asheville, and I thought they would be interested in what you and ioby do for communities.

Chris, Cecil, and Gordon –

Please give ioby a look, and please consider putting folks at the neighborhood and community levels in touch with Erin.
. I'll do the same.

Thanks All,

marc

From: Erin Barnes [mailto:ebarnes@ioby.org]
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 4:39 PM
To: Marc Hunt
Cc: Antonia
Subject: Re: Meeting tomorrow???

Hi Marc,

A fascinating debate indeed! And your tour and dialogue was quite the opposite -- super invigorating! Thanks for taking the time to walk me around your great city.

A few points of follow-up from my end.

If you feel comfortable in your position making this sort of introduction on ioby's behalf, I welcome you to share our fundraising platform with community and neighborhood associations, environmental nonprofits, schools, churches and recreation organizations around Asheville.

We have just one project in the great state of North Carolina so far, this school garden in Raleigh, and would welcome many more. <https://ioby.org/project/powell-magnet-elementary-school-gardenoutdoor-classroom>

People with ideas for projects can go here <http://ioby.org/idea> to get started, or can join us for a webinar tour of ioby on Friday, June 8, 15 and 22 at noon eastern <http://ioby.org/tour>

If making an introduction compromises you at all, but think I should reach out to a certain community group, let me know. I am interested in eating more delicious food in Asheville in the near future and would like to be lured back there for work.

All my very best,

Erin

On Mon, Jun 4, 2012 at 5:59 PM, Marc Hunt <hunt.marc@gmail.com> wrote:

Erin

So nice to spend time with you today! Hope the tour and my dialogue was not too tiring.

I've pasted in below my current email blurb about development of that site across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence (Antonia, you should google this).

Also, if you do not follow this yet, give it a try. OSI and NRDC have some significant links:

<http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/>

Good luck!

Marc

++++++

Thanks for writing me regarding the future of the city-owned parcel across from the US Cellular Center and the Basilica of Saint Lawrence. I appreciate your concern for the future of the site and the community. Let me share my current thinking on the project.

I am committed to an outcome which:

- From a design and quality standpoint enhances and adds to the vibrancy of that portion of downtown and especially complements that Basilica, the US Cellular Center, and other surrounding buildings.
- Ensures that any structures are set back from the Basilica so as to maintain site-lines to the Basilica.
- Includes a public plaza in the open space resulting from the setback.
- Utilizes construction techniques that ensure no structural damage to the historic Basilica.
- Activates improved use and function of the US Cellular Center.

The short clip here is provided by official representatives of the Basilica and Diocese of Charlotte as their vision for the site, and it is not at all inconsistent with a site plan and structures that would meet my hopes for the site. It features a six-story structure and open plaza area separating the building from the Basilica: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0A5NGEW3Gc>

A few more thoughts:

Public Park/Green Space Versus Buildings? – As long-time chairman of the Asheville Greenway Commission and land conservation professional, I am a strong advocate for parks and green space. I do not see this site working out as a stand-alone green park however. Intensive use demands that would result in this part of town (think Pritchard Park) would make it infeasible for a fully green park. But I think approximately half of the site being dedicated to public open space featuring some horticultural elements would be great. Another issue is funding. The effort to build Pack Square Park, while very successful in many ways, so far is more than \$ 1.5 million short of its initial fundraising goal. The City is also falling well short of the \$600k annually required to operate and maintain that park according to the initial vision for it as a “signature park”. Given Asheville’s overly limited fiscal resources, the struggle to fund what we currently have, a price-tag for the project that would be several million, and the competing demands for parks, greenways, etc., from other parts of town, I cannot support prioritization of another full-scale park downtown, nice as it would be. I do feel that significant public space as a plaza in conjunction with a smart real estate development project can work and be aesthetically great, so I am advocating for that.

Hotel versus Another Type of Development? – The City is currently in negotiation with McKibbon Hotel Group for development of the site to feature retail spaces at street level, hotel on upper floors, and perhaps structured parking included. That negotiation is based on McKibbon’s providing an initial winning proposal under a competitive RFP process four years ago. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbon if the project supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, I will gladly support abandoning the negotiation with McKibbon. I am supportive of a hotel because that use would best activate use of the US Cellular Center. Note that the vision for the site put forward by the Basilica/Diocese could work quite well as a hotel (see above video link). A plan much like this is what I would aim to see achieved by McKibbon or another hotel developer. Many in the community seem to fear a “high-rise” development. I can only support a project that would be limited and fit height wise between the neighboring Vanderbilt Apartments and Battery Park Apartments.

City-Led or Basilica-Led Development? - Parishioners of the Basilica have done a great job helping City leaders understand the importance of great design and implementation for the site, and that is indeed resulting in the commitment to a quality outcome by the City. The City owns the property now and has the opportunity to continue negotiating directly with a developer, thus ensuring a great design and implementation to benefit the entire community. I was elected to ensure that the best interest of the entire community will be served in situations like this. We have a process underway that allows us to do that. The Diocese of Charlotte has proposed that the City first sell the land to the Diocese, and that the Diocese then be in charge of negotiating with a developer for design and implementation, subject to City approval. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority for a site so important to the whole community. Note that representatives of the Basilica say they fully intend to sell the property to a developer just as the City might, a point that does not seem to be well understood in the community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza, again not a hugely different outcome than what the City is currently negotiating for.

Economic and Fiscal Considerations – Downtown character and function are enormously important to our regional economic development. Getting a well-designed and highly functional development outcome for the site is much more critical than the purchase price the City would receive. The City must be fairly compensated, and given the City’s structural fiscal challenges, we really need to see the property productively on the tax role.

The Scenario I Most Worry About – Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that political crossfire and stalemate along with limited willingness of key stakeholders to negotiate for shared benefits in the outcome will halt progress, and that the site will devolve to surface parking for years to come. That would be tragic.

Marc Hunt

Asheville City Council Member

From: Erin Barnes [mailto:ebarnes@ioby.org]
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 11:56 AM
To: Marc Hunt
Subject: Re: Meeting tomorrow???

Forgot to tell you what i look like. Im wearing a black dress and have short brown hair. Im here and ill grab a table.

Erin Barnes
ioby.org

On Jun 4, 2012 9:43 AM, "Erin Barnes" <ebarnes@ioby.org> wrote:

Perfect! Thank you for being so generous with your time and your town! I'm so looking forward to it.

All my best,

Erin

On Mon, Jun 4, 2012 at 7:42 AM, Marc Hunt <hunt.marc@gmail.com> wrote:

>
> Erin
>
>
>
> Let's j...

--
Erin Barnes
Executive Director/Co-Founder
erin@ioby.org
ioby.org
[917-464-4515](tel:917-464-4515) o

[203-606-7710](tel:203-606-7710) m
[917-464-4515](tel:917-464-4515) f
[Like us!](#) [Follow us!](#) [Read our snappy newsletter!](#)

Have an idea for change in your neighborhood, but aren't sure how to get started? Join us for a [tour](#).

--

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Ben Fulmer

From: Jack Clement <jackclem@aol.com> on behalf of Jack Clement
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 5:14 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: St. Lawrence vs. McKibbon

Dear City Council Members,

While I think the St. Lawrence proposal of a green space and mixed use development is preferable to a street front, high rise hotel, I think either would be an improvement over the current vacant eyesore. More importantly, I do not think it is City Council's prerogative to decide what is built where beyond zoning requirements. The land should go to the highest bidder. In the meantime, put the parking spaces to good use by opening them to the public.

Jack Clement

Ben Fulmer

From: Marc Hunt <hunt.marc@gmail.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 4:50 PM
To: erin@ioby.org
Cc: chrispelly@avlcouncil.com;Gordon Smith;Cecil Bothwell
Subject: Erin Barnes of IOBY

Erin –

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The short clip here is provided by official representatives of the Basilica and Diocese of Charlotte as their vision for the site, and it is not at all inconsistent with a site plan and structures that would meet my hopes for the site. It features a six-story structure and open plaza area separating the building from the Basilica: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0A5NGEW3Gc>

A few more thoughts:

Public Park/Green Space Versus Buildings? – As long-time chairman of the Asheville Greenway Commission and land conservation professional, I am a strong advocate for parks and green space. I do not see this site working out as a stand-alone green park however. Intensive use demands that would result in this part of town (think Pritchard Park) would make it infeasible for a fully green park. But I think approximately half of the site being dedicated to public open space featuring some horticultural elements would be great. Another issue is funding. The effort to build Pack Square Park, while very successful in many ways, so far is more than \$ 1.5 million short of its initial fundraising goal. The City is also falling well short of the \$600k annually required to operate and maintain that park according to the initial vision for it as a “signature park”. Given Asheville’s overly limited fiscal resources, the struggle to fund what we currently have, a price-tag for the project that would be several million, and the competing demands for parks, greenways, etc., from other parts of town, I cannot support prioritization of another full-scale park downtown, nice as it would be. I do feel that significant public space as a plaza in conjunction with a smart real estate development project can work and be aesthetically great, so I am advocating for that.

Hotel versus Another Type of Development? – The City is currently in negotiation with McKibbin Hotel Group for development of the site to feature retail spaces at street level, hotel on upper floors, and perhaps structured parking included. That negotiation is based on McKibbin’s providing an initial winning proposal under a competitive RFP process four years ago. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, I will gladly support abandoning the negotiation with McKibbin. I am supportive of a hotel because that use would best activate use of the US Cellular Center. Note that the vision for the site put forward by the Basilica/Diocese could work quite well as a hotel (see above video link). A plan much like this is what I would aim to see achieved by McKibbin or another hotel developer. Many in the community seem to fear a “high-rise” development. I can only support a project that would be limited and fit height wise between the neighboring Vanderbilt Apartments and Battery Park Apartments.

City-Led or Basilica-Led Development? - Parishioners of the Basilica have done a great job helping City leaders understand the importance of great design and implementation for the site, and that is indeed resulting in the commitment to a quality outcome by the City. The City owns the property now and has the opportunity to

continue negotiating directly with a developer, thus ensuring a great design and implementation to benefit the entire community. I was elected to ensure that the best interest of the entire community will be served in situations like this. We have a process underway that allows us to do that. The Diocese of Charlotte has proposed that the City first sell the land to the Diocese, and that the Diocese then be in charge of negotiating with a developer for design and implementation, subject to City approval. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority for a site so important to the whole community. Note that representatives of the Basilica say they fully intend to sell the property to a developer just as the City might, a point that does not seem to be well understood in the community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza, again not a hugely different outcome than what the City is currently negotiating for.

Economic and Fiscal Considerations – Downtown character and function are enormously important to our regional economic development. Getting a well-designed and highly functional development outcome for the site is much more critical than the purchase price the City would receive. The City must be fairly compensated, and given the City's structural fiscal challenges, we really need to see the property productively on the tax role.

The Scenario I Most Worry About – Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that political crossfire and stalemate along with limited willingness of key stakeholders to negotiate for shared benefits in the outcome will halt progress, and that the site will devolve to surface parking for years to come. That would be tragic.

Marc Hunt

Asheville City Council Member

From: Erin Barnes [mailto:ebarnes@ioby.org]

Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 11:56 AM

To: Marc Hunt

Subject: Re: Meeting tomorrow???

Forgot to tell you what i look like. Im wearing a black dress and have short brown hair. Im here and ill grab a table.

Erin Barnes

ioby.org

On Jun 4, 2012 9:43 AM, "Erin Barnes" <ebarnes@ioby.org> wrote:

Perfect! Thank you for being so generous with your time and your town! I'm so looking forward to it.

All my best,

Erin

On Mon, Jun 4, 2012 at 7:42 AM, Marc Hunt <hunt.marc@gmail.com> wrote:

>
> Erin
>
>
>
> Let's j...

--

Erin Barnes

Executive Director/Co-Founder

erin@ioby.org

ioby.org

917-464-4515 o

203-606-7710 m

917-464-4515 f

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Have an idea for change in your neighborhood, but aren't sure how to get started? Join us for a [tour](#).

Ben Fulmer

From: Harry Woggon <hakw@charter.net> on behalf of Harry Woggon
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 4:45 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC
Subject: PLEASE A PARK NEXT TO THE BASICILA OF ST. LAWRENCE

Please have a park next to the Basicilla of St. Lawrence. They have offered money for the space We have enough already of hotels downtown.

Let the people add to the funds from the Catholic Diocese of Charlotte, even if it is but a small amount, it will show our solidarity with the the Spiritual aspects of life and the world.

We need Green Space and trees for all our citizens.

Thank you

Harry and Genelda Woggon

118 Macon Ave, Asheville

Ben Fulmer

From: Karen Poehlein <karlein@charter.net> on behalf of Karen Poehlein
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 2:36 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;info@ashevilleparc.org
Subject: Haywood Street property

Dear Council Members,

Asheville is an extremely fortunate city with regard to the architecture of its buildings. At this time there is a great debate going on about the sale of the land on Haywood Street that is across from the Vanderbilt Apartments and faces the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Close to the back of the property are the Grove Arcade and the Battery Park Apartment buildings. It is an extremely rich architectural area within our downtown. Both the Grove Arcade and the Battery Park Apartment building were built by Edwin Grove in an area of city that could already claim one of our greatest architectural treasures - The Basilica of St. Lawrence. The very fact that Rafael Guastavino was able to create the unsupported dome within the Basilica makes that structure one we should do all we can as citizens of this city to focus on the structure as a great architectural wonder. As an individual working in retail in Asheville, I recommend this area to our visitors when they ask what they should do and what can be seen in Asheville. And how much more beautiful that area would be with a green park for our visitors and residents to relax in when they are in that part of downtown. The park would also provide a space for people to gather for events at the civic center and Thomas Wolfe Auditorium.

We already have hotels in the area with the Haywood Park and the Indigo. When Ivey's Department Store was remodeled and became the Haywood Park Hotel the exterior of the building was not altered extensively which has permitted it to retain the ambiance of downtown. As I drive down Biltmore Avenue past the construction of the multi-use hotel being built by the McKibbin Hotel Group, it strikes me that the building does not support the architecture of downtown Asheville. To have another structure built by them in another part of town will not be an enhancement to our city. Another structure by them reminds me of the Grove Park Inn and the two wings it has added to the hotel. Many of the postcards of the hotel have airbrushed out the new wings so that it appears as the hotel did upon its completion in 1913. Is that what will happen to the area around the Basilica, the Vanderbilt and Battery Park Apartments and the Grove Arcade? That the potential postcards may need airbrushing to retain the appearance of the area as it was in 2012 by eliminating new construction is an realistic option.

As City Council Members you have the authority to determine the future use of that piece of property. Since the McKibbin Hotel Group has proposed a use for the property, you do have a responsibility to them to hear them out again. But that does not mean you are committed to accepting their proposal. Please consider the uniqueness of our city in the ambience it presents

to its city residents, county residents, and visitors. We are a special city in part because of that uniqueness. We have more hotel rooms that we can fill. We have no green space in the area of town being discussed. A green space would be enjoyed by all residents and visitors in that part of town. The Diocese of Charlotte has committed itself to adding shops to the area which will add to our tax base.

The roads in that area at this time are narrow and often congested. What will a potential hotel do to driving patterns in the area?

In my 57 years as a resident of Asheville, I've seen many changes in our city. Some have architecturally enhanced the beauty of this special city surrounded by mountains while other have not. The green space around the Court House has been beautifully done and is a great addition to our city. This area needs similar attention as a green space. It is my hope that the change I will see here will be the sale of the property to the Diocese of Charlotte in support of our efforts to enhance the beauty of our city while retaining and enhancing its treasures.

Sincerely,
Karen Poehlein
June 6, 2012

Ben Fulmer

From: Ellen Clarke <ellengclarke@gmail.com> on behalf of Ellen Clarke
Sent: Tuesday, June 05, 2012 12:39 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC
Subject: Support St Lawrence Green

Asheville City Council:

Please vigorously support community-wide efforts to create a green space in front of St Lawrence Basilica. We do not need more hotels in downtown Asheville.

Thanks,

Ellen Clarke and John Byrd

24 Howland Rd

28804

Sent from my iPhone

Ben Fulmer

From: Frank Coney <fcms1982@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Frank Coney
Sent: Tuesday, June 05, 2012 11:54 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;'PARC'
Subject: Proposed McKibben Purchase

I urge all those on City Council to approve the proposed purchase of the lot in front of St Lawrence as proposed by the Church. We do not need yet another giant building, particularly a hotel in that location. Can't anyone on Council look at the choice which would benefit most of the citizens of Asheville for perpetuity rather than a choice which will benefit an out of state corporation? A green space in that area would enhance the beauty of the area and serve as a draw for residents and tourists alike. The Church has made a generous offer to the City. I request you approve their offer. If you are intent on building yet another hotel, consider the area on south Coxe Avenue or Buxton Street.

Thank you for considering this request.

Frank D. Coney

Ben Fulmer

From: Catherine Faherty <catina@main.nc.us> on behalf of Catherine Faherty
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 8:55 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC
Subject: Basilica of St. Lawrence area

To Members of Asheville City Council,

PLEASE DO NOT sell our land to McKibbon, hotel chain. We NEED a beautiful green space there! For all, tourists and locals alike to share, enjoy. Please do not sell it!! Please make a green space!

Thank you
Catherine Faherty
Resident and downtown worker since 1984

Ben Fulmer

From: C. Walgate <cwalgate@bellsouth.net> on behalf of C. Walgate
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2012 12:02 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: FW: St. Lawrence Green Space

From: C. Walgate [mailto:cwalgate@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2012 11:58 AM
To: 'AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov'; 'PARC'
Subject: St. Lawrence Green Space

As a city taxpayer for over 40 years, I am appalled at council's decision for the property across from St. Lawrence. Do I need to remind you that you are making a decision about taxpayer owner property, and the majority of friends and neighbors want a green space not another monster that blocks the views like Biltmore Ave. A few more building additions like the Biltmore Ave construction and who wants to walk the streets of Asheville. What are you thinking? You will have your luxury hotels and no occupants. You are elected to work for your constituents not corporate executives. Please think long term and what is best for the majority of our citizens and not the privileged few.

Cathy Walgate

Ben Fulmer

From: Amy Renigar <amyrenigar@gmail.com> on behalf of Amy Renigar
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2012 7:15 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC
Subject: Please make St. Lawrence GREEN

Dear City Council,

I am asking that you please use the area in front of St. Lawrence Basilica to create a community green space. What makes Asheville attractive to tourists is that it isn't a BIG city. Both local residents and tourists LOVE Pritchard Park, and to have a space with an even more beautiful view would attract even more people.

I realize it all comes down to money, but I know there is a way to work with the public to raise funds needed to make the green space. If you can turn down the big bucks offered from a corporation in support of your citizens, then we can pull together and make the space green.

Regards,
Amy Renigar
Weaverville, NC

Ben Fulmer

From: Martin Barnes <mabarnes@charter.net> on behalf of Martin Barnes
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2012 10:01 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;' + PARC + '
Subject: Basillica Green

Dear Asheville City Council Members,

I would like to voice my opinion about the proposed development of the lot across from the St. Lawrence Basillica and the Asheville Civic Center. Having lived in Asheville now for 27 years I've seen lots of changes to downtown; the center of our city has gone from a virtual ghost town to a vibrant center for business, residents and tourists. While I see this change as beneficial to all, I don't see the proposed hotel on this site being a benefit to our town. The Basillica is a treasure of history and architecture that should be protected and spotlighted. I see a public plaza accomplishing just that. Please don't allow a hotel and parking deck to be developed on this lot.

Thanks, Martin Barnes PLS

Ben Fulmer

From: Ilene Procida <ileneprocida@yahoo.com> on behalf of Ilene Procida
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2012 5:45 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: St. Lawrence property

Please be considerate of those of us who live & work downtown & keep the property across from St. Lawrence green. A high rise hotel would surely detract from the beauty & aesthetic of this unique part of town.

Manay thanks,

Ilene Procida, LPC
Child Abuse Prevention Services, Inc.
50 S. French Broad Ave. Suite 152
Asheville, NC 28801
www.childabusepreventionservices.org
828-299-9797

Ben Fulmer

From: Demos Builders <demosbuilders@gmail.com> on behalf of Demos Builders
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2012 5:30 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;+PARC+
Subject: No hotel! St Lawrence Green!!!

Hotel Indigos's right down the street for crying out loud! Please move for a green space!

Jim Demos
Demos Builders, Inc.
828.777.2395
www.demosbuilders.com

Let us build your green home.

Sent from my iPhone

Ben Fulmer

From: Susan & Dean Presson <4pressons@gmail.com> on behalf of Susan & Dean Presson
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2012 10:00 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;+PARC+
Subject: greenspace in front of St. Lawrence

Please don't let the area in front of St. Lawrence be turned into a hotel. I understand that the taxes would be good income for Asheville, but I think the need for plenty of green space vs. development is more important to our mountain city.

susan presson

Ben Fulmer

From: moonspirit48@bellsouth.net
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2012 9:16 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC
Subject: Make St. Lawrence GREEN

The citizens of this city clearly DO NOT WANT a high rise put in front of the church. Turning this space into a park is an ideal solution for this land purchased with TAXPAYERS' MONEY...not yours!

Kindly, Kathleen

Ben Fulmer

From: AshevilleAnnie@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2012 3:19 PM
To: chrispelly@avlcouncil.com
Subject: Re: building

Dear Mr. Pelly,
Thank you for your reply to my letter and ideas for the site.
Leigh Condie

In a message dated 5/29/2012 10:24:56 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, chrispelly@avlcouncil.com writes:

Dear Ms. Condie,

Thank you for sharing your concerns about the proposed hotel on the site opposite the Basilica. A condition of my support for any development on this site will be that the development plan include a sizable public plaza as is often seen in European cities. I will be looking for a plaza that accentuates the significance of the Basilica as a cultural landmark of Asheville.

I hear you when you suggest another downtown hotel is not needed. I am certain those proposing a hotel have done a market analysis and determined, before making a multi-million investment, a hotel can be profitable at this location. Also, any development plan that I would consider supporting will require this property be of similar height as surrounding buildings and not at all what you describe took place in Charlotte.

Thank you,

Chris Pelly,
Asheville City Council

On Tue, May 29, 2012 at 5:59 PM, <AshevilleAnnie@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Asheville City Council Members,

A year or so ago there were two articles in the Asheville Citizen-Times that caught my attention and the irony of them. One article featured a photo of a large Roman Catholic church in Charlotte that is now surrounded by tall buildings. It wasn't a pretty sight. The other article was about McKibbon's plan to build across from Asheville's historical St. Lawrence Basilica.

I said to a friend, "Well, I guess Asheville will have the same look as Charlotte."

As was noted in the Citizen-Times last week: there are too many unfilled hotels in Asheville. Not only do we not need

another hotel, we don't need one at the proposed site to dwarf the St. Lawrence Basilica.

Yes, you want to bring in a money-maker. If the "Tripp's" property is available to buy, McKibbon could buy/build there.

******Think green...a green respite with trees, flowers, park benches...a green oasis where tourists can rest and gather energy to shop some more.***

******Think of the air that will be blocked by McKibbon's tall building. The beauty of an open green space out matches a city building any day, in my opinion.***

When I visit a city, one of the memories that stays with me is its green spaces, the shaded areas to "people watch," to rest during a day of walking, to hear the birds sing.

Asheville is known as a happenin' town. Let it also be known for its loveliness. Nothing says ***welcome, I'm glad you're here*** than a place to rest and reflect on the wonderful time they have in Asheville and decide to come back and tell their friends about.

Please, City Council Members, make Asheville beautiful for us who live here and for guests who visit.

You'll always be able to get money for Asheville, but will you ever have another choice space like the one across from the Basilica for a park?

If that space is gone for buildings, it's gone for good.
PLEASE PRESERVE THAT AREA FOR A PARK.

***Sincerely,
Leigh Ann Condie
9 Maplewood Rd.***

Asheville, NC 28804

Ben Fulmer

From: Bill Crownover <billcrownover@gmail.com> on behalf of billcrownover@bellsouth.net
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2012 11:00 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC
Subject: Property near St. Lawrence Cathedral

I am totally opposed to the sale of the property across from St. Lawrence Cathedral to McKibbin or any other developer since I believe that we need a nice, small green space in that part of town. Please slow down and think more about beauty and less about tax dollars.

I have lived in Asheville for 60+ years, born and raised in the local schools and currently live in east Asheville. We love our great city and downtown and we hope you will think quality over quantity when it comes to major decisions like this.

Thank you,

Bill and Barbara Crownover
8 Pine Spring Drive
Asheville, NC 28805

Ben Fulmer

From: AshevilleAnnie@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 5:59 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: building

Dear Asheville City Council Members,

A year or so ago there were two articles in the Asheville Citizen-Times that caught my attention and the irony of them. One article featured a photo of a large Roman Catholic church in Charlotte that is now surrounded by tall buildings. It wasn't a pretty sight. The other article was about McKibbon's plan to build across from Asheville's historical St. Lawrence Basilica.

I said to a friend, "Well, I guess Asheville will have the same look as Charlotte."

As was noted in the Citizen-Times last week: there are too many unfilled hotels in Asheville. Not only do we not need another hotel, we don't need one at the proposed site to dwarf the St. Lawrence Basilica.

Yes, you want to bring in a money-maker. If the "Tripp's" property is available to buy, McKibbon could buy/build there.

******Think green...a green respite with trees, flowers, park benches...a green oasis where tourists can rest and gather energy to shop some more.***

******Think of the air that will be blocked by McKibbon's tall building. The beauty of an open green space out matches a city building any day, in my opinion.***

When I visit a city, one of the memories that stays with me is its green spaces, the shaded areas to "people watch," to rest during a day of walking, to hear the birds sing.

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Please, City Council Members, make Asheville beautiful for us who live here and for guests who visit.

You'll always be able to get money for Asheville, but will you ever have another choice space like the one across from the Basilica for a park?

If that space is gone for buildings, it's gone for good.

PLEASE PRESERVE THAT AREA FOR A PARK.

*Sincerely,
Leigh Ann Condie
9 Maplewood Rd.
Asheville, NC 28804*

Ben Fulmer

From: Sybil Riddle <sybilriddle@beverly-hanks.com> on behalf of Sybil Riddle
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2012 9:13 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: proposed St Lawrence Plaza

Dear Council Members,
Please vote for the proposed St Lawrence Plaza. Thank you.

Kind regards,

Sybil Riddle **ABR, E-PRO, RCC, ECO, NAR GREEN**
Broker, REALTOR®



828.230.9116 Mobile
828.255.8994 Fax
sybilriddle@beverly-hanks.com
www.RealEstateAshevilleHomes.com

300 Executive Park
Asheville, NC 28801
www.beverly-hanks.com

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Ben Fulmer

From: David Johnson <djohnson12@mac.com> on behalf of David Johnson
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2012 2:14 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;spowers@ashevillenc.gov;gjackson@ashevillenc.gov;scole@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: St Lawrence Basilica area redevelopment

To the Asheville City Council and City Officials:

I understand that the Asheville City Council will take up on March 20 the issue of how to develop the city-owned site facing the historic St. Lawrence Basilica. Asheville has an unusual opportunity to foster an urban design consistent with the great urban architectural heritage this city features which attracts visitors from near and far. I recently authored an op-ed piece for the Asheville Citizen-Times which outlines the importance of getting this right and what features of development ought to be considered. This was published in the on-line edition of the AC-T so you may not have seen it. I attach it below for your consideration.

With a majority of our citizenry, I reject the notion that a tall hotel is appropriate for the site. However, I do not necessarily endorse simply turning the site over to the Archdiocese for development. Stringent city design controls and design review are called for. Some cities in such a case would utilize form-based zoning to achieve good massing and use results. Another approach would be to conduct a national competition for the site and the area around it. Such a competition would demonstrate that Asheville is the international center of the Guastavino Heritage. The reuse of this area is not a mere real estate operation, but a challenge in producing an attractive and economically viable urban design. For example, it may be desirable to redo the street pattern around the site, perhaps closing Page Street in front of the Basilica.

I urge the Council to accept the proposal of the Archdiocese, but with the proviso that development approval be predicated on a design review by appropriate city agencies to ensure the best possible outcome for all stakeholders and citizens.

Sincerely,

David A. Johnson, PhD., FAiCP

David Johnson is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, Professor Emeritus of Planning at the University of Tennessee, and a founding Board Member of the Asheville Design Center. He has resided in the Asheville area for twelve years. He was the planner on the team that designed Nashville's State Capitol Bicentennial Mall, which was named by the American Planning Association in 2011 as one of America's outstanding public spaces.

Rafael Guastavino and the Asheville Basilica opportunity

Written by
David Johnson

•
He was called the greatest American architect you never heard of. A Spanish immigrant, he brought from his native Catalonia a unique tile vaulting system that was subsequently used in more than 1,000 major buildings in the US. His name was Rafael Guastavino. His “Cohesive Construction” technique proved extremely popular in the early 20th century. He worked on 233 projects in Manhattan alone. These included Grand Central Station, Grant’s Tomb, the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, Carnegie Hall, and Temple Emanu-El. He also worked on the Great Hall at Ellis Island through which millions of immigrants came to America.

Guastavino is no longer a forgotten genius. Enthusiasm for his works has been growing world-wide over the last decade. He has been rediscovered in his native Catalonia, Spain, where a major exhibit on his works was recently presented. In New York, he has also been rediscovered. “Guastavino’s” is an extraordinarily popular restaurant in Manhattan built ten years ago into a beautiful space vaulted in Guastavino domes under the Queensboro Bridge. Guastavino scholars in the United States are now planning a major traveling exhibition titled “Guastavino Vaulting: Palaces for the People.” And an interactive exhibit on Guastavino’s work is set to open at the Boston Public Library in September 2012.

Guastavino is well-represented in Asheville, where he lived on-and-off from 1894-1908. He originally came here to work on elements of the Biltmore House including terraces, and the swimming pool. Guastavino built a home for himself in Black Mountain, called “Rhododendron”. While not much remains of the structure, it has some residual significance as an historic site and is a US National Historic Landmark. The Basilica is one of the most important of Guastavino’s 1,000 buildings. It was designed in collaboration with the well-known Asheville architect, Richard Sharp Smith. St. Lawrence is also where Rafael Guastavino is interred, making it a particularly important pilgrimage site for international “Guastavinistas”, as they are called. The parishioners of St. Lawrence are well-aware of the landmark treasure they worship in and are committed to ensuring its preservation and the sensitive development of the adjacent area.

Ashevillians are also rediscovering Guastavino as evidenced by the large turnout this month for a lecture given to a packed house at UNCA by John Ochsendorf, MIT engineering and history professor, and a leading researcher on the Guastavino legacy. Prof. Ochsendorf emphasized the international importance of the Guastavino presence in Asheville. Many in the audience were there because they were concerned about the prospects for future development of the site across from St. Lawrence.

So what guidelines should be put in place for the development of this critical part of downtown? Here is my list:

- Protect the “forecourt” and surroundings of the Basilica.
- Do not overbuild on the site. A building higher than six stories would damage the setting of the basilica and be out of scale with the surrounding urban fabric.
- The area design should be complementary to the surrounding setting and in harmony with the architectural features of the Basilica.
- The design should minimize surface parking.

- It should reflect natural pedestrian paths and movements through the area.
- It should carefully deal with and limit through traffic in the area.
- The design should include mixed uses: restaurants, offices, retail shops, and limited housing.
- More hotel rooms are not needed at this point. The Asheville area has an ample supply now and for the next decade.
- Views of landmarks and the mountains from the site, and to the site, should be respected.
- Shading in summer and sun capture in winter should be considered in the design.
- The open area should be an urban plaza, not a totally green park.
- Preserve a sense of enclosure. Successful urban places have a feeling of containment.
- Reflect the spirit, genius, and legacy of Rafael Guastavino.

Whoever gets the nod to develop the site should be kept to the highest design standards by the city. The city should not base its approval of a design simply on maximizing tax rateables from the site. There is a larger economic context to consider: tourism. Tourism is one of Asheville's strongest economic sectors. The opportunity to attract visitors from around the world to Rafael Guastavino's masterpiece can be realized only through careful planning of the site and sensitive design of its components. One can imagine a European style piazza in an open area in front of the Basilica ("Guastavino Place"?). A small museum to house exhibits on Guastavino? An arcade in the Italian style built into the surrounding structures adjacent to the piazza? A cappuccino on the square?

Get it right, Asheville, and it will be an adornment for years to come. Get it wrong and you will be remembered for missing a great opportunity and fouling the nest. Most of all, decisions about development should not be made on the basis of cronyism or political benefactions. The quality of the final result is what counts. Asheville is a smart, attractive place, and the rest of the country now knows it. And they are watching. Indeed, given the emerging global prestige of our Rafael Guastavino, the whole world is watching.

Postscript:

I urge you to view MIT Professor John Ochensdorf's recent UNCA lecture on the importance of Rafael Guastavino as an architect and builder in the early part of the 20th Century. This is available on-line at:

<http://tlt.unca.edu/video/productions/guastavino-vaulting-barcelona-black-mountain>

Ben Fulmer

From: racheltanksley@gmail.com on behalf of Rachel Russell
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2012 11:03 AM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com
Subject: Basilica of St. Lawrence

To Whom it May Concern:

It has come to my attention the the McKibben Group is interested in purchasing several city owned pieces of property around the Basilica of St. Lawrence in order to construct a high rise hotel. While a tourist destination such as Asheville does need lodging options, this location is less than ideal for yet another high rise hotel. There are already five hotels within one mile of the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Adding yet another hotel to the downtown landscape is completely un-necessary, especially a high rise building. The church itself has offered to purchase the property in order to avoid this construction, which is preferable to the alternative, but perhaps is not the best use of the space. The best use of the space would be to create a public green space for all to enjoy. Green spaces in urban areas have numerous positive impacts not only on the environment, but on the residents, and visitors, themselves. A green space planted with native trees, shrubs and plants will contribute to the health of our beautiful city in the following ways:

- Reduce heat build-up from the paved surfaces. In a study published by the University of Washington, tests in a mall parking lot in Huntsville, Ala. showed a 31 degree difference between shaded and unshaded areas.
- Reduce nitrate leaching from the soil into the water supply and reduce surface water runoff, keeping phosphorus and other pollutants out of our waterways
- Remove smoke, dust and other pollutants from the air. One tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually, equaling 11,000 miles of car emissions.

These are just a few of the environmental impacts an urban green space would have on the city of Asheville. Studies have also documented the impacts of urban green spaces on the health of the residents as well. A study published by the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research found the greater amounts of green space within one kilometer -- or 0.6 miles -- of people's homes was related to small reductions in the risks of health problems like heart disease, diabetes, chronic neck and back pain, asthma and migraine. The strongest connection was seen with depression and anxiety. Among people who lived in areas with 90 percent green space just over 2 percent had been diagnosed with depression, compared with just over 3 percent of those living in areas with 10 percent green space.

These are just a few of the reasons the city of Asheville should consider using this opportunity to create an urban green space for its residents. An urban green space will provide innumerable positive impacts for the people who live here, as well as the ones who visit, while another hotel will not.

Sincerely,

Rachel D. Russell

919/259-4275

Ben Fulmer

From: Chris Johansen <johansen@main.nc.us> on behalf of Chris Johansen
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 6:15 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com
Subject: Disposition of front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence

Friends, I am informed that there are three proposals for the land:

1. A high-rise hotel. Cities lose their local character quickly when the corporate giants come to town. We already will have the new sign for the U.S. Cellular Center; we already have a high-rise hotel build nearby, another under construction, and another in planning--enough is enough;
2. The Church's set-back building, with a plaza; or
3. A city park. As the economy improves and development resumes, more and more green space will be lost. Smart cities put in green space as they grow. Do not repeat the mistake the county has made with city-county plaza.

I strongly favor option three. I can live with option two. Please do not choose option one. Please remember that I vote my conscience assiduously in every election.

Best regards,

--

Chris Johansen {johansen at main dot nc dot us}
33 Haywood Street
828.280.2122

Ben Fulmer

From: Jennifer Woodward <jenwoodward@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Woodward
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:12 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com
Subject: stop Hi-Rise Hotel development from blocking St. Lawrence Basilica

As a citizen of Asheville and someone wholly invested in the unique landmarks that make our downtown special, I urge you to stop any plans for a hi-rise hotel across from the St. Lawrence Basilica. A city park/green space would be the most welcome solution as our city is seriously lacking in that area (especially on that side of downtown), but allowing the church to purchase would also be a welcome solution. The Basilica is one of our city's most treasured landmarks and should be protected!

Best regards,

Jennifer Woodward

Ben Fulmer

From: Mary Lou Sartoris <marylousartoris@charter.net> on behalf of Mary Lou Sartoris
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2012 2:02 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com
Subject: Preservation of Land near Basilica of St. Lawrence

Dear City Council of Asheville and the Citizen-Times--

Please, please, please preserve the beauty of Asheville's national treasure, The Basilica of St. Lawrence. A city park would be a gift to the residents of this community and all its tourists for years to come. It would exhibit pride of our legislators in our natural world and stand for Asheville's commitment to going green. Make the right decision!!!

Respectfully,
Mary Lou Sartoris

Ben Fulmer

From: Catherine Riley <catherineriley@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Catherine Riley
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 2:32 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com
Subject: Basilica of St. Lawrence

To: Asheville NC Council
Re: Our need for a Park in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence

It has recently come to my attention that a developer wants to buy the land in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence in downtown Asheville. In my opinion any commercial development would greatly detract from downtown Asheville's unique character, architecture, and beauty. Asheville is indeed special in that it does NOT have huge new buildings everywhere, blocking views and making it unable to walk around and enjoy the very special feeling that we all love. Asheville desperately needs green space downtown. Asheville NEEDS a park in front of the gorgeous Basilica of St. Lawrence. Everyone would benefit from it for generations to come. Please BLOCK commercial development!
Catherine Riley

Catherine Riley
catherineriley@bellsouth.net

Ben Fulmer

From: Judy Easley <jeasley08@gmail.com> on behalf of Judy Easley
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 1:52 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com
Subject: Property across from the Basilica

Downtown Asheville is a beautiful place and St. Lawrence Basilica is not only beautiful but a very historically significant building. In addition, there is no green space in the downtown area. Pritchard Park and the Plaza are nice, however, not as inviting as a nice green park. I would much rather see a park across from the Church than another hotel. Why don't we wait and see if the three new hotels in Asheville even make it before adding another. Isn't that part of our downfall in the economy now....building too much, too fast!! If we cannot have a park, let's let the church, who has been diligent in preservation, buy the property.

Judy Easley

Downtown resident

Ben Fulmer

From: Phil Kleisler <PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Phil Kleisler
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 10:04 AM
To: councilgroup
Cc: Gary Jackson
Subject: Letter: Haywood Street across from the Basilica
Attachments: Albert_Sneed.pdf

Mayor and City Council Members,

Gary asked that I forward the attached letter to you regarding the Haywood Street property across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Philip Kleisler

Business Services Manager
City Manager's Office
City Of Asheville
828-232-4541
PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov

Think Green! Please do not print this e-mail unless necessary

Ben Fulmer

From: Thehallerz <thehallerz@aol.com> on behalf of Thehallerz
Sent: Monday, February 06, 2012 10:20 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com
Subject: The Basilica of St. Lawrence

If three options exist for the property the city is considering selling to the McKibbon Group for development why not let St. Lawrence buy it?? I, like many others, would prefer to have a green area rather than a mass of concrete and asphalt. The Basilica is a historic structure and needs to be preserved and protected. Any major construction, like that being proposed, is risky. No one can guarantee that something negative wouldn't happen to the structure so why take the chance that it won't? Hopefully ALL aspects will be considered and properly evaluated before a decision is reached. And likewise, those making it won't allow the economics to be the sole and dominate criteria.

A. Haller
1 View Street
Asheville