

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** David Johnson <djohnson12@mac.com> on behalf of David Johnson  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 03, 2012 9:54 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt - Asheville City Council  
**Subject:** Re: Basilica area opportunity

Hi Marc:

Monday at 9:30 would be fine. What place would be convenient for you?

Dave

On Mar 3, 2012, at 10:22 AM, Marc Hunt - Asheville City Council wrote:

> David

> Sorry to be slow in responding; am vacationing thru Thursday out of town. Can we set a time to talk in the next couple days or so? Maybe 9:30 am Monday?

> I really appreciate your and adc's leadership efforts here.

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>> <Guastavino article AC=T version .rtfd.zip>

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**From:** David Johnson <djohnson12@mac.com> on behalf of David Johnson  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 04, 2012 12:46 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt - Asheville City Council  
**Subject:** Re: Basilica area opportunity

Hi Marc:

Yes. let's talk by phone tomorrow at 9:30. I can be reached at my home phone number which is 828 277-5792.

I wanted to show you a few things so maybe at a later date we can do a FTF when you are back in town.

I noticed that only the first page of my AC-T op-ed got through the web to you in my original message. The whole article is available at the following url.

<http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20120217/OPINION03/302170001/Rafael-Guastavino-Asheville-Basilica-opportunity?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|Opinion|p>

Also, I am including a photo page of Guastavino-related sites in and around Asheville.

[http://web.me.com/djohnson12/Site/My\\_Albums/Pages/Guastavino\\_related.html](http://web.me.com/djohnson12/Site/My_Albums/Pages/Guastavino_related.html)

I appreciate your willingness to discuss these possibilities for our city's development future.

Regards,

Dave

On Mar 4, 2012, at 9:17 AM, Marc Hunt - Asheville City Council wrote:

Dave

Whoops, we need to talk by phone monday at 930 since I am out of town. Could I dial you then?  
Phone #?

Marc

On Mar 3, 2012, at 9:06 PM, David Johnson <[djohnson12@mac.com](mailto:djohnson12@mac.com)> wrote:

Hi Marc:

Green Life, 70 Merrimon, is fine. See you on Monday at 9:30 am.

Dave

On Mar 3, 2012, at 10:20 PM, Marc Hunt - Asheville City Council wrote:

How about green life?

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## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Christopher Pratt <christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com> on behalf of Christopher Pratt  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 23, 2012 3:08 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC;Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce;North Asheville;Margaret Williams, Co-Managing Editor/News Editor;jboyle  
**Cc:** Bud Hansbury;Dr. Christopher Pratt  
**Subject:** The Basilica of St. Lawrence public forum Friday, 9-7-12 at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel 5-7 pm

The Basilica of St. Lawrence will hold a public forum on Friday, 9-7-12 at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel from 5-7 pm. Please try to attend and share this with friends and neighbors.

FYI, the McKibbon Group has misrepresented their project by showing a "park/piazza" ( where'd they get that?) on Basilica owned property.

Hopefully all questions can be addressed at this event thus educating as many as possible before the public forum on Tuesday 9-11-12 at city council.

I hope you'll be able to attend and bring concerned friends.We will be having questions and answers at the end.

Also as many as possible to attend the city council meeting on Tuesday 9-11-12 will be greatly appreciated as well. Please also try to attend that meeting as well.

Thank you!

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

**From:** Bud Hansbury <budhansbury@yahoo.com>  
**Date:** Thu, Aug 23, 2012 at 1:05 PM  
**Subject:**  
**To:** Chris Pratt <christopher.jimmie..pratt@gmail.com>

Dr. Pratt,

Thought I'd get you up to speed on the Haywood st. project. We are going to have a public forum on 9/7/12 at the Renaissance Ash. Hotel from 5-7 pm. to get the real story out to the public. The McKibbon Group misrepresented their project by showing a "park/piazza" ( where'd they get that?) on Basilica owned property. Hopefully all questions can be addressed at this event thus educating as many as possible before the public forum on 9/11/12 at city council .

I hope you'll be able to attend and bring concerned friends.We will be having questions and answers at the end. As many as possible to attend the city council meeting is greatly appreciated as well.

Carpe diem!,  
Bud



**Ben Fulmer**

---

**From:** Barbara <msbark@att.net> on behalf of Barbara  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2013 2:38 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** water

it would help if you could included links for everyone you would like us to contact ... as I am opposed to the take over ... Barbara Kern

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 09, 2013 11:39 AM  
**To:** 'Norm Ray'  
**Subject:** RE: Water Bill

Thank you!  
marc

---

**From:** hotmail\_7672b44ab94aa30c@live.com [mailto:hotmail\_7672b44ab94aa30c@live.com] **On Behalf Of** Norm Ray  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2013 12:42 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; 'PARC'  
**Subject:** Water Bill

Dear Council, We appreciate all of your efforts (including lobbying in Raleigh) to keep the water system within the City.

In Gratitude

Helen Yamada & Norm Ray  
400 Windswept Dr.  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Home 828-296-0017



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 09, 2013 11:28 AM  
**To:** 'JJ Kitt'  
**Subject:** RE: HB 488

Mr Kitt.

Please be assured that your City Council is working extremely hard to save our water system and agrees with you 100%. Please direct input to our legislators and the governor.

Marc Hunt

**From:** JJ Kitt [mailto:josephkitt@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2013 11:07 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
**Subject:** HB 488

I write today in opposition to House Bill 488, which forcibly merges Asheville's excellent water system with the MSD. The system is well run, and our water supply is safe and abundant. This legislation doesn't do anything but hurt Asheville. It doesn't even offer compensation for taking a public utility! That's the only way the "cost savings" claimed by the bill sponsors works – by refusing to compensate the city, which has made millions and millions of dollars of investments in the system.

Joseph Kitt

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 04, 2013 4:48 PM  
**To:** WLangdon@aol.com  
**Subject:** RE: (no subject)

Bill

Thanks for the input. The BID proponents yesterday shelved their proposal, so no consideration of it anytime soon.  
Marc

---

**From:** WLangdon@aol.com [mailto:WLangdon@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 04, 2013 4:46 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** (no subject)

City Council Members and PARC:

Like Bill MCKibbons says, this money is our money and not the cities. Instituting this additional tax based on our successful location needs to be canned. I feel that BID **will hinder** not help businesses in the downtown. Asheville has a very successful downtown that other cities are trying to replicate. The diversity of retail and businesses in the downtown does not come from additional taxes for what is claimed to be for additional support services and not from top-down manipulations. One reason that I am against BID is that my retail tenants are totally against it. As for Byron Geiner of the Asheville Downtown Association, when it comes to BID, I don't think that you get it. Joe Minicozzi who slings bags of cigarette butts at city council meetings doesn't get it either. Let's kill this ill-conceived tax before it kills our vibrant downtown.

Sincerely

Bill Langdon,  
Langdon Architecture PA  
William K. Langdon, AIA  
20 Battery Park Ave, Suite 820  
Asheville, NC 28801  
828.252.0296 office  
828.712.2190 cell  
William K. Langdon

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** WLangdon@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 04, 2013 4:46 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** (no subject)

City Council Members and PARC:

Like Bill McKibbons says, this money is our money and not the cities. Instituting this additional tax based on our successful location needs to be canned. I feel that BID **will hinder** not help businesses in the downtown. Asheville has a very successful downtown that other cities are trying to replicate. The diversity of retail and businesses in the downtown does not come from additional taxes for what is claimed to be for additional support services and not from top-down manipulations. One reason that I am against BID is that my retail tenants are totally against it. As for Byron Geiner of the Asheville Downtown Association, when it comes to BID, I don't think that you get it. Joe Minicozzi who slings bags of cigarette butts at city council meetings doesn't get it either. Let's kill this ill-conceived tax before it kills our vibrant downtown.

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William K. Langdon



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** libby <ciscokids@gmail.com> on behalf of libby  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2013 3:45 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** The Asheville Water System

We are totally against the take over of Asheville's water system and support the City in your/our fight against HB488!

Namaste,  
mark & libby cornett  
130 Cisco Rd.  
Asheville, NC 28805

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** hotmail\_7672b44ab94aa30c@live.com on behalf of Norm Ray  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2013 12:42 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;'PARC'  
**Subject:** Water Bill

Dear Council, We appreciate all of your efforts (including lobbying in Raleigh) to keep the water system within the City.

In Gratitude

Helen Yamada & Norm Ray  
400 Windswept Dr.  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Home 828-296-0017



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** JJ Kitt <josephkitt@gmail.com> on behalf of JJ Kitt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2013 11:07 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** HB 488

I write today in opposition to House Bill 488, which forcibly merges Asheville's excellent water system with the MSD. The system is well run, and our water supply is safe and abundant. This legislation doesn't do anything but hurt Asheville. It doesn't even offer compensation for taking a public utility! That's the only way the "cost savings" claimed by the bill sponsors works – by refusing to compensate the city, which has made millions and millions of dollars of investments in the system.

Joseph Kitt

**From:** Christopher Pratt <chrispdoc1@gmail.com> on behalf of Christopher Pratt  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 14, 2013 10:57 PM  
**To:** Chris Campbell; Jason Sandford; jboyle; Jon Ostendorff; Angie Newsome, Director and Editor; Margaret Williams, Co-Managing Editor/News Editor; Jody Evans; Terry; Holly Jones; commissioner@davidgantt.com; bill.stanley@buncombecounty.org; ray.bailey@buncombecounty.org; carol.peterson@buncombecounty.org; A-B Tech Board of Trustees; mandy.stone@buncombecounty.org; talexander@taylorandmurphy.com; mrfowler54@msn.com; wahartjr@bellsouth.net; piknsing@bellsouth.net; dlocke@ret.unca.edu; kaye.myers@ncdcr.gov; peterson7@bellsouth.net; gordon.diane@gmail.com; joebandaleta@bellsouth.net; ray.spells@wachovia.com; sga@abtech.edu; jessekorth@gmail.com; Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce; North Asheville; PARC; AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Please keep in mind that ABTech is a treasure for this community. Sadly, at ABTech the excellent faculty does not have tenure and many have been forced out because they disagree with Dunn who sent thousands of foundation dollars that were raised for

Please keep in mind that ABTech is a treasure for this community. Sadly, at ABTech the excellent faculty does not have tenure and many have been forced out because they disagree with Dunn who sent thousands of foundation dollars that were raised for student scholarships on marketing the Sales Tax. Of course, that money was never repaid to the scholarship fund. Who will address that and when?

On Thu, Mar 14, 2013 at 10:18 PM, Christopher Pratt <[chrispdoc1@gmail.com](mailto:chrispdoc1@gmail.com)> wrote:

**Why did Dunn have A-B Tech attorney Chris Campbell send me a "cease and desist letter"?**

On Thu, Mar 14, 2013 at 9:49 PM, Christopher Pratt <[chrispdoc1@gmail.com](mailto:chrispdoc1@gmail.com)> wrote:

**Why is the A C-T not addressing what Dunn told Jason Sandford?**

**NOT A-B Tech Employees, but TRUSTEES!**

**A-B Tech President Hank "Dunn is adamant that no college employee has been disciplined for expressing discontent with his decisions."**

**JUST A-B TECH TRUSTEES!**

**What kind of person thinks there is nothing wrong with telling the press adamantly "that no college employee has been disciplined for expressing discontent with his decisions" when he know it's not true? And so do all those A-B Tech employees who were threatened not to speak about being put on probation, suspended, and fired for doing their jobs. How many good, hard working people with excellent performance appraisals were targeted by him for disagreeing with him -- why is there no investigation?**

**And where are the College Board of Trustees of the College, the County Commissioners and the Asheville Citizen Times in letting him get away with it?**

**WHY HASN'T THE CITIZEN TIMES connected the dots, if Dunn will do it to Trustees, what makes them think he didn't do it to the press and to employees?**

Asheville Citizen-Times reported that Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College President Hank **"Dunn is adamant that no college employee has been disciplined for expressing discontent with his decisions."** -- Written by Jason Sanford, March 22, 2011 -- <http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20110322/COLUMNISTS06/303220025/Ashvegas-B-Tech-president-finds-transparency-hard>

## Ashvegas: Asheville-Buncombe Tech president finds transparency hard

Written by Jason Sanford -- 12:02 AM, Mar. 22, 2011 | [5 Comments](#)

Hank Dunn's feeling a little under siege these days.

As the relatively new president of Asheville-Buncombe Technical College — Dunn just marked his one-year anniversary — Dunn has been dealing with a shrinking state budget and enrollment increase pressures while at the same time instituting a number of policy changes. Some of the changes are controversial.

Dunn's an experienced leader. He knows that facing a certain level of criticism comes with the territory, and that it must be addressed. But he's not happy with some of the anonymous comments he's seen on a few websites, including the Ashvegas blog. So in the spirit of openness, Dunn on Monday spent an hour reviewing some of the complaints.

The issues appear to fall into two categories: communication and policy changes. On both, Dunn says he's doing everything he can to be “as transparent a guy as I can be.”

On the communication front, Dunn is about as open as an administrator can be. He holds a monthly meeting open to any faculty member, staffer or student who wants to air issues, and he holds a monthly lunch meeting with a different group of a dozen or so he picks.

He sends out a weekly email update, and he encourages anyone who wants to talk one on one to enter his office. **Dunn is adamant that no college employee has been disciplined for expressing discontent with his decisions.**

“I'm OK with people disagreeing with me,” he says, as long as they're civil. “My approach is just to tell people what I'm doing.”

Dunn's been talking a lot about his new policies put in place over the last year on campus. He's changed the workweek from 35 hours to 40 hours. He's urged faculty to consider moving to four-week and eight-week classes, rather than the traditional 16-week time frame, which requires significant revisions to schedules and new teaching approaches in the classroom.

There's a new procedure to interview and select new hires, one that some faculty feel diminishes their voice. And he's adopted a program that uses specific metrics that aim to measure and improve student performance.

(Page 2 of 2)

That's all caused more than a little discomfort on campus. Dunn describes it as "high anxiety" rather than low morale. The only way to address it is by being open, he says.

Dunn has the benefit of learning from the administrator who preceded him, Betty Young. She replaced A-B Tech's longtime leader, K. Ray Bailey, but resigned after two years, citing discontent on campus as one reason why she decided to leave. Dunn also knows he needs his campus community behind him as he prepares to launch a wider campaign to persuade the public to approve a quarter-cent sales tax increase in November that would fund school construction and renovation projects.

Dunn's apparent willingness to talk arrives with the freshness of a spring breeze, but it can't just be a season that comes and goes. Transparency is hard work, and Dunn must keep after it.

Contact Jason Sandford at [jsandford@citizen-times.com](mailto:jsandford@citizen-times.com). Find Ashvegas updates online at CITIZEN-TIMES.com/ashvegas and the full blog at [www.ashvegas.com](http://www.ashvegas.com).

## Comments for

# Ashvegas: Asheville-Buncombe Tech president finds transparency hard

[StateEmployee453](#)

5:40 AM on March 22, 2011

Ok, I'll go first.

Staff Turnover - the open-door policy Dr. Dunn mentioned does exist but you'll find few employees, and even fewer students, taking advantage of it. They have seen what happened to other employees and simply will not take a chance. Look at the good employees who have left since Dr. Dunn came on board. Look at the retirements. Do you think long-term state employees would leave a job in this economy if they were happy at AB Tech. Be prepared for the pat responses of "Disgruntled former employee" or "We can't discuss personnel matters" if you ask many questions in this area.

Outsourcing - did anyone follow-up on the very large amounts of money Dr. Dunn claimed to be saving by outsourcing the maintenance staff. These people were some of the lowest paid employees at AB Tech and they were simply swept aside to impress someone in Raleigh with the cost "savings". Notice how no one suggested out sourcing the higher paid administrative jobs.

Media - my biggest criticism goes to the media. Why is it that one of the largest state agencies in the county gets a pass when it comes to hard questions? Frequently, you ask a good question and then don't follow up with the next probing question. Case in point: being a state agency, AB Tech's finances are public information. Why haven't you gotten a list of expenditures and asked why these large amounts of money have been spent in certain areas? Given the economy, doesn't some of the travel seem excessive? What about the equipment purchases? Are all the new positions justified? You will find many AB Tech employees willing to answer your questions - it is public information after all - but don't expect them to endanger his or her job by giving information you don't ask for. There seems to be a bias when talking to people with PhDs as if they wouldn't shade the truth.

## Report Abuse



Score: 2

[mwirishscot2](#)

6:03 AM on March 22, 2011

AB has been of value to our area, BUT, like everything else having to do with government spending, the spending has gotten out of control. Buildings that are no longer just utilitarian and rather need to have appeal much greater than most people's homes have eaten up millions of dollars. The emphasis on "high tech" rather than basic learning is also a waste of taxpayer's money - the basic skill set is the most important thing to build, the rest can be acquired at the next level. Teach them how to THINK, not be dependent on computers and such with no clue how to use their own minds. We have seen this with all of our children that how gone there.

That said, it IS a benefit to our area, but those ATTENDING may need to pay more to go there - this includes my last two children.

In regard to outsourcing, the lowest paying jobs also carried benefits packages that are no longer the norm - and before YOU complain, remember where you are buying your products - YOU already outsourced the jobs of your neighbors in your mantra for more for less. This will CONTINUE to move to other areas of our economy as well, government has overspent and is now fully engaged in this method as well - all in the interest of delivering "more for less".

## Report Abuse



Score: 2

[RedHotPoker](#)

6:55 AM on March 22, 2011

Has he disclosed the 'private donors' who are footing the cost for the sales tax referendum as state law requires?

## Report Abuse



Score: 2

[RedHotPoker](#)

6:58 AM on March 22, 2011

Dunn is ANOTHER overpaid bureaucrat at \$200,000 +++ per year...is he worth it?

## Report Abuse



Score: 0

### [AVLNativeOne](#)

7:54 AM on March 22, 2011

Government entities, including AB Community College, must be relevant. It seems that AB Community College has lost its way over the years as the market has changed. Now AB Community College finds its campus with a crumbling infrastructure; much of their curriculum may not be geared for an actual job in this region when their student graduates; and the campus has been plagued with unrest and discontent over the last three years due to senior leadership changes.

It appears with Volvo's two recent closings, regional manufacturing jobs are in jeopardy of leaving, and the need for an expansive technical curriculum may have passed AB Community College by. A new curriculum direction is difficult with a tight budget and major competitors for students in this market.

Transparency may be the least of Doctor Dunn's issues. The Buncombe County taxpayers are not in a mood for more taxes. He would be well advised to wait for a better environment for his tax increase ballot proposal. Another misstep and he may be a casualty of his own overreaching.

Why does it seem as though all these high priced executive leaders hired from outside Buncombe County have tremendous problems acclimating to WNC?



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Myra Ramsey <mramsey79@charter.net> on behalf of Myra Ramsey  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 02, 2013 10:09 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Gun Shows

Per the email from PARC, I would like to vote against having gun shows in and Around Asheville, Buncombe County and the Ag Center.

Please take this item up at the next meeting.

Thanks,

Myra Ramsey  
24 Merlin Way  
Asheville, NC 28806

mramsey79@charter.net  
828-253-3038

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Heather Rayburn <hrayburn@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Heather Rayburn  
**Sent:** Friday, September 14, 2012 4:43 PM  
**To:** 'Gordon Smith'  
**Cc:** 'Marc Hunt'; 'Chris Pelly'  
**Subject:** RE: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

I appreciate your follow-up, Gordon. We do agree on a lot. This is a huge blow, though. I think the blight argument was very overstated. I don't think you can trust the developer and that the locals (Basilica) should have been given the benefit of the doubt. And at the very least, I wish you all would have put this off until after the election. People we need helping us campaign for Jane have been pouring their energy into this and we're running out of time. Okay, I'm dropping it ... back to work on campaigning. H.

---

**From:** Gordon Smith [mailto:gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 12, 2012 9:30 PM  
**To:** Heather Rayburn  
**Cc:** Marc Hunt; Chris Pelly  
**Subject:** Re: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Heather,

I understand you're disappointed, and the outcome wasn't your preference. The debate had to be decided on the merits of what was before us rather than what we might wish were before us. I feel that Council made the right decision for the residents of Asheville.

I'm sure we'll agree on many, many more issues in the future (and present!).

Gordon

On Wed, Sep 12, 2012 at 5:03 PM, Heather Rayburn <[hrayburn@bellsouth.net](mailto:hrayburn@bellsouth.net)> wrote:

Does my voice count for anything? Today, I feel like it doesn't. When it comes to developers, I don't think residents have much of any voice.

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**From:** Marc Hunt [mailto:[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2012 1:01 PM  
**To:** 'Heather Rayburn'  
**Subject:** RE: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Heather

I really appreciate the way you always research and carefully consider issues, and I am glad you are tuned into this one. I've got a ton of time into this one myself now, and continuing to learn, and if anything appreciate complexity in it. Below is the recent "take" I have been emailing in response to the many that write. Hope you'll read and reflect.

As for specifics that you raise:

- Feasibility of a park - I am really struggling with the idea that the City might divert several years of its meager capital budget for parks to this project. It would mean that other high-priority projects like much-needed renovations to community centers and parks in the river district, and greenways along Town Branch and Clingman Forest would be delayed or not accomplished at all.
- My view is not that we develop every square inch of downtown instead of parks. But in this case, we would seem to have the opportunity to take in \$2.3 million in sale proceeds, and see around \$800K/year in new tax revenues to local governments, plus downtown jobs and economic activity. That would help us be more able to do parks in the long run. The park-only scenario would not provide direct revenues and would likely cost city taxpayers a bunch, but could also help make downtown more vibrant. I do think the plaza idea could provide a nice "best of both worlds" outcome, but as I say below, it is not financially easy to achieve either.
- For what it's worth, I do not think the PARC poll nor its email communications have given respondents an informed choice among the options in light of the tradeoffs. I wish PARC's communications were more broadly and fairly informative as many of the folks who have written me at PARC's prompting and read my response and other coverage feel that they were not well-informed by PARC before they wrote.
- If we were to move forward with McKibbin, I would be insistent on rigorous design standards for this project. When the City owns and sells property, it has negotiating power for design standards well beyond what our zoning ordinance would allow.

You raise a good question about open doors and A/C. I'll poke around internally on that. We need to do lots more to incentivize support private property owners toward energy efficiency.

Thanks again,

Marc

+++++

My current "take":

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. This matter offers complex challenges and complex solutions. There has been a bit of misunderstanding and some outright misinformation afloat regarding it. Please bear with me as I share my current thinking.

Alongside our outstanding regional setting, our vibrant, historic, and authentic downtown is one of our community's great assets. I am fully committed to improving it. The Haywood street site is a critically important opportunity to enhance downtown. 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 the 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 the potential for there to be a public plaza / open space between any development and the Basilica.
- Utilizes construction techniques that ensure no structural damage to the historic Basilica.

**Public Park Space and/or and Buildings?** - Great urban design is key to being a great city. A proper mix of well-designed public spaces, parks, infrastructure elements, and land uses like residential buildings, visitor amenities, retail, and offices is key. 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 and continue to play key roles in getting some great projects accomplished. I do not disagree that a stand-alone well-designed public park might be nice here, but I do not see that as an option here. Master plans the City has developed with exhaustive public input over the last five or so years have established many project priorities, and an additional park in this area of downtown did not register as a strategic priority in those plans. Given Asheville's very 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 high-priority parks and, greenways from other parts of town, I cannot support another full-scale park downtown. Our recently completed Downtown Master Plan did highlight that a combination of a well-designed private development and a public plaza would be a great outcome for this site and could strongly enhance the appeal and vibrancy of the Battery Park area. I am excited about the potential for development of the area just north of the city-owned property into a high-quality publicly-owned plaza - a "pocket park" of sorts - well-designed and including natural horticultural features. That plaza would not be inexpensive itself, and could only be achieved with collaboration and funding support from neighboring property owners, others in the private sector, and various levels of government. I am certain that this plaza in conjunction great architecture for privately-developed buildings and improved pedestrian/transportation infrastructure in that neighborhood would be a great outcome, so I am working hard toward that end.

**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, McKibbin, and City officials. I was disappointed when, on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 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. 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. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority to any group for a site so important to the whole community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza.

**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, with structured parking included. The design McKibbin has preliminarily shared indicate building height, mass, and setbacks, very similar to what the basilica folks have suggested. It also allows for a public plaza to be separately developed fronting the basilica - a project that would be undertaken separately since it would require acquisition of additional property and realignment of Page Avenue. The negotiation is based on McKibbin'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 McKibbin before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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 is a healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel rooms. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the suggestion that we have too many hotels downtown already. 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.

**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. Tax revenue generated from the site is key to expanding our ability to accomplish our goals.

**Next Steps** - Early in 2012, Council directed City staff to continue in the earlier-committed RFP process with McKibbin and other stakeholders including the Basilica and the Asheville design center to see whether or not an acceptable site plan, design, and development agreement might be arranged. That process has been ongoing and Council is to hold a public hearing at our September 11<sup>th</sup> session as to whether to move forward to a contract for sale and development with McKibbin.

**The Scenario I Most Worry About** - Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that ongoing political crossfire and stalemate along with limited unwillingness 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

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**From:** Heather Rayburn [mailto:[hgrayburn@bellsouth.net](mailto:hgrayburn@bellsouth.net)]

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2012 8:21 PM

**To:** Cecil Bothwell; Gordon Smith; Chris Pelly; [mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com](mailto:mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com); [emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com](mailto:emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com); [jandavis@avlcouncil.com](mailto:jandavis@avlcouncil.com); [marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)

**Subject:** Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I know you have to make many difficult decisions as stewards of the city. I realize that the pressure to keep the city's budget and residential taxes in check is a challenge. That said, I believe that the city-owned property in front of the Basilica should be turned into a park and the public supports this option. Not every square inch of urban space has to be maxed out to its full economic potential. The special location of the property calls for special consideration.

We need design standards in downtown Asheville. It makes me angry to picture the McKibbon group developing that property - especially in light of the Aloft, the tacky mess thrown up on Biltmore Avenue. It shouldn't always have to be a fight to get these developers to build structures worthy of our city.

On another note, how do you all feel about the number of city businesses that keep their doors open with the air conditioner running? In light of our global climate crisis and the mountaintop removal situation, it's pretty shocking. Has there been any talk of developing an ordinance to put a stop to it?

Thanks for your time,

Heather Rayburn

96 Holland St.

Asheville, N.C. 28801

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Heather Rayburn <hrayburn@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Heather Rayburn  
**Sent:** Monday, September 10, 2012 5:00 PM  
**To:** 'Marc Hunt'  
**Subject:** Marc RE: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Hi Marc,

I had a chance to read this and think about it, and I believe you make very good points. However, I have a very bad feeling about the McKibbin group. I'm sure you've seen the Aloft hotel at night -- I don't want to see our city developed with no sense of place or respect for the surroundings. I realize tastes vary, but this building is getting more negative attention than positive. John Boyle did an "Answer Man" column yesterday about the garish lighting at the Aloft [http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20120910/COLUMNISTS09/309100029/Aloft-neon-too-bright-](http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20120910/COLUMNISTS09/309100029/Aloft-neon-too-bright-...) ... the trademark loophole allowed the lighting eyesore, however, this is the company's aesthetic. I don't see what they put down on Biltmore as bringing vibrancy. It's depressing -- super-commercial and soul-numbing. The harsh light can't be good for urban wildlife. Clearly, they do not care about the city viewshed. I feel really bad for the property owners around that building -- especially the people in the condos across the street. My vote is that McKibbin had their shot, and they blew it. I hear what you're saying about the City's ability to demand a higher bar on design standards, but I still don't have any faith that this company will build respectfully. I don't like to hear that the Basilica group pulled out of the design charette. However, I have to say, if Asheville can't have a park on that property, I really feel like the Basilica has a bigger stake in creating a better building.

Thanks for checking into the air conditioning issue. Urban Outfitter is the worst for this. Greenlife also runs the air with their doors wide-open(!). It's shockingly common around downtown.

Cheers,  
Heather

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**From:** Marc Hunt [mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2012 1:01 PM  
**To:** 'Heather Rayburn'  
**Subject:** RE: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Heather

I really appreciate the way you always research and carefully consider issues, and I am glad you are tuned into this one. I've got a ton of time into this one myself now, and continuing to learn, and if anything appreciate complexity in it. Below is the recent "take" I have been emailing in response to the many that write. Hope you'll read and reflect.

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- My view is not that we develop every square inch of downtown instead of parks. But in this case, we would seem to have the opportunity to take in \$2.3 million in sale proceeds, and see around \$800K/year in new tax revenues to local governments, plus downtown jobs and economic activity. That would help us be more able to do parks in the long run. The park-only scenario would not provide direct revenues and would likely cost city



taxpayers a bunch, but could also help make downtown more vibrant. I do think the plaza idea could provide a nice "best of both worlds" outcome, but as I say below, it is not financially easy to achieve either.

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- If we were to move forward with McKibbin, I would be insistent on rigorous design standards for this project. When the City owns and sells property, it has negotiating power for design standards well beyond what our zoning ordinance would allow.

You raise a good question about open doors and A/C. I'll poke around internally on that. We need to do lots more to incentivize support private property owners toward energy efficiency.

Thanks again,  
Marc

+++++

My current "take":

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. This matter offers complex challenges and complex solutions. There has been a bit of misunderstanding and some outright misinformation afloat regarding it. Please bear with me as I share my current thinking.

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collaboration and funding support from neighboring property owners, others in the private sector, and various levels of government. I am certain that this plaza in conjunction great architecture for privately-developed buildings and improved pedestrian/transportation infrastructure in that neighborhood would be a great outcome, so I am working hard toward that end.

**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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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. 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. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority to any group for a site so important to the whole community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza.

**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. The design McKibbon has preliminarily shared indicate building height, mass, and set-backs, very similar to what the basilica folks have suggested. It also allows for a public plaza to be separately developed fronting the basilica - a project that would be undertaken separately since it would require acquisition of additional property and realignment of Page Avenue. The 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 is a healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel rooms. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the suggestion that we have too many hotels downtown already. 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.

**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. Tax revenue generated from the site is key to expanding our ability to accomplish our goals.

**Next Steps** - Early in 2012, Council directed City staff to continue in the earlier-committed RFP process with McKibbon and other stakeholders including the Basilica and the Asheville design center to see whether or not an acceptable site plan, design, and development agreement might be arranged. That process has been ongoing and Council is to hold a public hearing at our September 11<sup>th</sup> session as to whether to move forward to a contract for sale and development with McKibbon.

**The Scenario I Most Worry About** - Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that ongoing political crossfire and stalemate along with limited unwillingness 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

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**From:** Heather Rayburn [mailto:hgrayburn@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2012 8:21 PM  
**To:** Cecil Bothwell; Gordon Smith; Chris Pelly; mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com; emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com; jandavis@avlcouncil.com; marchunt@avlcouncil.com  
**Subject:** Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I know you have to make many difficult decisions as stewards of the city. I realize that the pressure to keep the city's budget and residential taxes in check is a challenge. That said, I believe that the city-owned property in front of the Basilica should be turned into a park and the public supports this option. Not every square inch of urban space has to be maxed out to its full economic potential. The special location of the property calls for special consideration.

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On another note, how do you all feel about the number of city businesses that keep their doors open with the air conditioner running? In light of our global climate crisis and the mountaintop removal situation, it's pretty shocking. Has there been any talk of developing an ordinance to put a stop to it?

Thanks for your time,

Heather Rayburn  
96 Holland St.  
Asheville, N.C. 28801

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Marc Hunt - Asheville City Council <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
- Asheville City Council  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 09, 2012 9:25 AM  
**To:** Jan Letendre  
**Subject:** Fwd: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Example of exchange. Please do not share further.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Heather Rayburn" <[hgrayburn@bellsouth.net](mailto:hgrayburn@bellsouth.net)>  
**Date:** September 8, 2012 6:11:41 PM EDT  
**To:** "Marc Hunt" <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Hi Marc,  
Thanks for the response. I'm going to read over this tomorrow -- don't know how you all study all this stuff and still have time for everything else, but I'm grateful you do! Cheers, Heather

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**From:** Marc Hunt [mailto:[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2012 1:01 PM  
**To:** 'Heather Rayburn'  
**Subject:** RE: Public comment on property next to Basilica + energy waste

Heather

I really appreciate the way you always research and carefully consider issues, and I am glad you are tuned into this one. I've got a ton of time into this one myself now, and continuing to learn, and if anything appreciate complexity in it. Below is the recent "take" I have been emailing in response to the many that write. Hope you'll read and reflect.

As for specifics that you raise:

- Feasibility of a park – I am really struggling with the idea that the City might divert several years of its meager capital budget for parks to this project. It would mean that other high-priority projects like much-needed renovations to community centers and parks in the river district, and greenways along Town Branch and Clingman Forest would be delayed or not accomplished at all.
- My view is not that we develop every square inch of downtown instead of parks. But in this case, we would seem to have the opportunity to take in \$2.3 million in sale proceeds, and see around \$800K/year in new tax revenues to local governments, plus downtown jobs and economic activity. That would help us be more able to do parks in the long run. The park-only scenario would not provide direct revenues and would likely cost city taxpayers a bunch, but could also help make downtown more vibrant. I do think the plaza idea could provide a nice "best of both worlds" outcome, but as I say below, it is not financially easy to achieve either.
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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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**From:** Heather Rayburn [mailto:hlayburn@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2012 8:21 PM  
**To:** Cecil Bothwell; Gordon Smith; Chris Pelly; [mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com](mailto:mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com);  
[emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com](mailto:emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com); [jandavis@avlcouncil.com](mailto:jandavis@avlcouncil.com); [marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)  
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Dear Mayor and City Council,

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On another note, how do you all feel about the number of city businesses that keep their doors open with the air conditioner running? In light of our global climate crisis and the mountaintop removal situation, it's pretty shocking. Has there been any talk of developing an ordinance to put a stop to it?

Thanks for your time,

Heather Rayburn  
96 Holland St.

Asheville, N.C. 28801



## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** MacQueen Kim <goldhill@skyrunner.net> on behalf of MacQueen Kim  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 08, 2012 10:57 AM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: Council Session Tuesday

Thanks, Marc.

We're finalizing details on the BID and want an interim board approval on various details - board make-up, budget -- before we sit down w/ council members. That board meeting, I believe, is scheduled for Tuesday.

Marc, we have to get a new system in this City. Right now a firm like McKibbon or the BID committee does years worth of work and sinks lots of private money into a very good opportunity to for the who city BUT all decision making comes down to a dog-and-pony show for the Council. Council should be way out front on these issues and not take its lead from those individuals who find themselves able to get to the council room in the middle of a work day to save themselves a seat.

As with the BID (and I assume the McKibbon group), we are working individuals who have invested a great deal of time, energy, intellectual investment and money into our projects. PARC organizes people to turn out and say 'no' and each appears to weigh the same to council. It's frustrating and seems like no way to do business. Are you concerned about this emperor nero approach to decision making? It feels like 90% show business and 10% of what's good for the city.

Rant over: I'll contact with you to sit down and talk BID this coming week.

Thanks again, and I'll be there on Tuesday.

-kim

On Sep 8, 2012, at 6:24 AM, Marc Hunt wrote:

Kim

Regarding the Haywood project, you probably know that Council will be making a key vote Tuesday. I am concerned that Council chambers and public comment will be dominated by the fearful. As we have discussed before, I think your view of the challenge/opportunity is both insightful and steadying. Would you consider coming again, ready to speak? The agenda is otherwise very light, so I do not expect much waiting around.

Many thanks, and I do want to catch up also on BID.

marc

## Ben Fulmer

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**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:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 23, 2012 9:51 AM  
**To:** 'James Hester'  
**Subject:** RE: City Water issue

Jim

I think their email was clumsily constructed, misleading numerous people who have written us concerned that Council wants to transfer our water system away. A bit frustrating, frankly. PARC is going after City Council on other fronts....

Thanks

marc

---

**From:** James Hester [mailto:hester882@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 21, 2012 7:31 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: City Water issue

I'm confused why PARC implies the opposite? Thank you for your response.

Jim Hester Broker/Realtor

Coldwell Banker Quarters Real Estate

718 Buffalo Creek Road

Lake Lure, NC 28746

Cell: 828 447 0354

Office: 828 625 2020

Fax: 828 625 2060

E-mail [Hester882@bellsouth.net](mailto:Hester882@bellsouth.net)

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**From:** Marc Hunt <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)>  
**To:** James Hester <[hester882@bellsouth.net](mailto:hester882@bellsouth.net)>  
**Sent:** Tue, August 21, 2012 7:23:11 PM  
**Subject:** RE: City Water issue

James

Please know that we on City Council are unanimously working hard in lots of ways to defend our ownership of the water system. No chance that any of us are going to cede control. But we are limited. Please consider expanding your advocacy to let our legislative delegation know, including getting active in supporting the right candidates for state legislature financially and as a volunteer. Seriously.

Marc

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**From:** James Hester [<mailto:hester882@bellsouth.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 21, 2012 3:20 PM  
**To:** [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov)  
**Subject:** City Water issue

Do not relinquish control of Asheville water. I am building a new home in the city of Asheville and will vote to remove any council member that votes to hand over our water to Tim Moffit and cronies.

Jim Hester Broker/Realtor

Coldwell Banker Quarters Real Estate

718 Buffalo Creek Road

Lake Lure, NC 28746

Cell: 828 447 0354

Office: 828 625 2020

Fax: 828 625 2060

E-mail [Hester882@bellsouth.net](mailto:Hester882@bellsouth.net)

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 23, 2012 9:13 AM  
**To:** 'Diane M. Beck'  
**Subject:** RE: Water-Giving it away?

Ms. Beck

It seems that PARC was clumsy in how they constructed their email to you. Council is unanimous and very strongly on record as resisting the water takeover. I think the leaders of PARC would acknowledge that to you if you asked.

I think PARC was more interested in going after City Council on other topics like the Haywood St. project near the Basilica (which you also asked about). I assure you that I am very attentive to what citizens want on that one and other topics that come before us. I have had over 700 email exchanges on this topic so far, and easily have over 100 hours involved in meetings and phone calls with citizens. I believe our current track is reflective of citizen desires. I do not believe that other Council members are ignoring the public either.

The "poll" that PARC conducted was not legitimate. They did not use a professional firm to conduct it, did not adhere to standards for accurate polling, and did not offer the respondents a clear and objective set of informed choices. A political science expert from WCU publicly criticized the poll last week and called it unreliable. PARC leadership seems forever set on fighting any kind of new building in downtown Asheville, an approach I believe is irrational and overly fear-driven. (As for me, I am an advocate of Smart Growth and sustainable development, and a strong opponent of overdevelopment and sprawl). PARC has at times been on the right side of some key issues (e.g., steep slopes, gas turbine plant in Woodfin), and have made a critical positive difference in outcomes.. But they have routinely used misinformation to stir the public, especially when Council does not agree with them. In this case, do you know that PARC's founder, board chair, and primary funder lives in a third floor apartment that would overlook the basilica and park they want to see built?

Sorry to unload a bit as I have above, but it is painful for me and unhealthy for our community to see citizens turned against people they voted for as a result of distorted information and fear mongering. Please consider letting PARC know your thoughts. I am very interested in rational and patient discussion of this and other topics that citizens feel are important. Anyhow, thank you for writing and being concerned. Below is my current "take" on the Haywood street project..

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. This matter offers complex challenges and complex solutions. There has been a bit of misunderstanding and some outright misinformation afloat regarding it. Please bear with me as I share my current thinking.

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- Utilizes construction techniques that ensure no structural damage to the historic Basilica.

**Public Park Space and/or and Buildings?** – Great urban design is key to being a great city. A proper mix of well-designed public spaces, parks, infrastructure elements, and land uses like residential buildings, visitor amenities, retail, and offices is key. 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 and continue to play key roles in getting some great projects accomplished. I do not disagree that a stand-alone well-designed public park might be nice here, but I do not see that as an option here. Master plans the City has developed with exhaustive public input over the last five or so years have established many project priorities, and an additional park in this area of downtown did not register as a strategic priority in those plans. Given Asheville’s very 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 high-priority parks and, greenways from other parts of town, I cannot support another full-scale park downtown. Our recently completed Downtown Master Plan did highlight that a combination of a well-designed private development and a public plaza would be a great outcome for this site and could strongly enhance the appeal and vibrancy of the Battery Park area. I am very excited about the potential for development of the site to include a large publicly-owned plaza – a “pocket park” of sorts - well-designed and including natural horticultural features. I am certain that this plaza in conjunction great architecture for privately-developed buildings and improved pedestrian/transportation infrastructure in that neighborhood would be a great outcome, so I am working very hard toward that end.

**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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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. 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. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority to any group for a site so important to the whole community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza.

**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. The design McKibbon has preliminarily shared indicate building height, mass, and set-backs, very similar to what the basilica folks have suggested. It also allows for a public plaza to be separately developed fronting the basilica – a project that would be undertaken separately since it would require acquisition of additional property and realignment of Page Avenue. The 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 is a healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel rooms. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the suggestion that we have too many hotels downtown already. 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.

**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. Tax revenue generated from the site is key to expanding our ability to accomplish our goals.

**Next Steps** - Early in 2012, Council directed City staff to continue in the earlier-committed RFP process with McKibbin and other stakeholders including the Basilica and the Asheville design center to see whether or not an acceptable site plan, design, and development agreement might be arranged. That process is ongoing and should have us at a decision point within a few weeks – perhaps by late September. Council will simply review progress at its August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**The Scenario I Most Worry About** – Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that ongoing political crossfire and stalemate along with limited unwillingness 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

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**From:** Diane M. Beck [mailto:dianebeck@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 22, 2012 10:54 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Water-Giving it away?

To the Asheville City Council:

Can someone please explain why you would want to give away our water? Really?  
Please don't send some political "spin" on this subject. I want a real reason.  
One that would make sense to the 82% of the Asheville citizens who are against this.  
Are you smarter than all these 82%? Do you know something we don't?  
Please share. We just don't understand why you would do this.

Of course, it appears that many of you on the city council don't care about the opinions of the all the people you represent.  
Examples: Aloft hotel (what an ugly eyesore in what once was a lovely quaint part of town)  
Basilica ( You would actually take less money so a big hotel would be built across the street? Now that is another one I would like explained.)

I look forward to your responses. I look forward MORE to hearing you came to your senses and voted against this senseless act.

Thank you,

Diane Beck  
61 Church Street #401  
Asheville, NC 28801

[dianebeck@bellsouth.net](mailto:dianebeck@bellsouth.net)

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 22, 2012 8:46 AM  
**To:** 'Aliyah Schick'  
**Subject:** RE: property across from the Basilica

Ms Schick

I assure you that I am very attentive to what citizens want here. I have had over 700 email exchanges on this topic so far, and easily have over 100 hours involved in meetings and phone calls with citizens. I believe our current track is reflective of citizen desires. I do not believe that other Council members are ignoring the public either.

The "poll" that PARC conducted was not legitimate. They did not use a professional firm to conduct it, did not adhere to standards for accurate polling, and did not offer the respondents a clear set of informed choices. A political science expert from WCU publicly criticized the poll last week and called it unreliable. PARC leadership seems forever set on fighting any kind of new building in downtown Asheville, an approach I believe is irrational and overly fear-driven. (I, in contrast, am an advocate of Smart Growth and sustainable development, and a strong opponent of overdevelopment and sprawl). PARC has at times been on the right side of some key issues (e.g., steep slopes, gas turbine plant in Woodfin), and have made a critical positive difference in outcomes.. But they have routinely used misinformation to stir the public, especially when Council does not agree with them. In this case, do you know that PARC's founder, board chair, and primary funder lives in a third floor apartment that would overlook the park they want to see built and the basilica?

Sorry to unload a bit as I have above, but it is painful for me and unhealthy for our community to see citizens turned against people they voted for as a result of distorted information and fear. I am very interested in rational and patient discussion of this and other topics that citizens feel are important. Anyhow, thank you for writing and being concerned. Below is my current "take" on the hywood street project..

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. This matter offers complex challenges and complex solutions. There has been a bit of misunderstanding and some outright misinformation afloat regarding it. Please bear with me as I share my current thinking.

Alongside our outstanding regional setting, our vibrant, historic, and authentic downtown is one of our community's great assets. I am fully committed to improving it. The Haywood street site is a critically important opportunity to enhance downtown. 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 the 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 the opportunity for a public plaza / open space
- ☐ Utilizes construction techniques that ensure no structural damage to the historic Basilica.

Public Park Space and/or and Buildings? – Great urban design is key to being a great city. A proper mix of well-designed public spaces, parks, infrastructure elements, and land uses like residential buildings, visitor amenities, retail, and offices is key. 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 and continue to play key roles in getting some great projects accomplished. I do not disagree that a stand-alone well-designed public park might be nice here, but I do not see that as an option here. Master plans the City has developed with exhaustive public input over the last five or so years have established many project priorities, and an additional park in this area of downtown did not register as a strategic priority in those plans. Given Asheville's very 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 high-priority parks and, greenways from other parts of town, I cannot support another full-scale park downtown. Our recently completed Downtown Master Plan did highlight that a combination of a well-designed private development and a public plaza would be a great outcome for this site and could strongly enhance the appeal and vibrancy of the Battery Park area. I am very excited about the potential for development of the site to include a large publicly-owned plaza – a “pocket park” of sorts - well-designed and including natural horticultural features. I am certain that this plaza in conjunction great architecture for privately-developed buildings and improved pedestrian/transportation infrastructure in that neighborhood would be a great outcome, so I am working very hard toward that end.

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**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. The design McKibbon has preliminarily shared indicate building height, mass, and set-backs, very similar to what the basilica folks have suggested. It also allows for a public plaza to be separately developed fronting the basilica – a project that would be undertaken separately since it would require acquisition of additional property and realignment of Page Avenue. The 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 is a healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel rooms. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the suggestion that we have too many hotels downtown already. 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.

**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. Tax revenue generated from the site is key to expanding our ability to accomplish our goals.

**Next Steps** - Early in 2012, Council directed City staff to continue in the earlier-committed RFP process with McKibbon and other stakeholders including the Basilica and the Asheville design center to see whether or not an acceptable site

plan, design, and development agreement might be arranged. That process is ongoing and should have us at a decision point 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 ongoing political crossfire and stalemate along with limited unwillingness 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

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

From: Aliyah Schick [mailto:[aliyahschick@bellsouth.net](mailto:aliyahschick@bellsouth.net)]

Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2012 12:09 PM

To: city council

Subject: property across from the Basilica

I'm more concerned with the council's pattern of not listening to what the residents of Asheville want than I am about this specific issue. Maybe a hotel at that location would be a good thing. I don't know. But I don't think that matters nearly as much as council members continuing to ignore community opinion on development issues. You do it over and over, every time a development issue comes up.

It has gotten so that it is pointless for residents to attend public hearings, and pointless to speak up, because it never seems to make any difference. You all just go ahead and do whatever the developers want.

Is it naive, even foolish, of me to think you are there to represent the people, to bring our desires to the table, and cast council votes on our behalf? It's called democracy, and it's what the founding fathers envisioned. It's up to you, our elected representatives, to keep that American vision alive.

Find out what your constituents want and stand up for them. Please don't let us down.

Aliyah Schick  
219 White Pine Drive  
Asheville

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Friday, August 17, 2012 11:04 AM  
**To:** 'Gary Jackson'; 'Lauren Bradley'  
**Subject:** FW: Basilica Hotel

Gary and Lauren-

No need for you to reply to me or Mr. Hayes on this, I can respond to him appropriately.

I do not know Mr. Hayes, but I think he is getting toward the heart of some key questions that others are starting to ask, and we'll be challenged to address them.

Thanks, and see you Monday.

marc

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

**From:** Tom Hayes [mailto:tehayes@charter.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 17, 2012 10:38 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Basilica Hotel

Council Members,

I want to express my support for the McKibbon proposal Option #2. Getting a deal with the Church to straighten Page is certainly going to be tricky but it is key to the concept in my mind. I don't support a park only option as expressed by PARC.

I do have some questions for the McKibbon proposal. Will McKibbon construct the hotel and plaza with their money? Who is responsible for damage to the Basilica if that is caused by construction? Who maintains the plaza after it is built? What are those costs annually? Will the City pay for the street work? Who will pay for the underground utilities if they need to be rerouted?

I know you have a big responsibility here to negotiate the best deal for all the parties involved. It has to work for everyone. The area will be revitalized because of this project and no longer be an eyesore. The Basilica and the Civic Center will be enhanced by this project.

Thanks.

Tom Hayes

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Tom Hayes <tehayes@charter.net> on behalf of Tom Hayes  
**Sent:** Friday, August 17, 2012 10:38 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
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Thanks.

Tom Hayes

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Friday, August 17, 2012 9:47 AM  
**To:** 'Cecil Bothwell'  
**Subject:** RE: follow-up re: Haywood Street

Cecil

Thanks very much, really, because this helps me understand your view better.

Some quick reflections on your points:

- "The RFP is dated." Yes, it would be ideal to be able to conduct an RFP and move directly to development. If we conduct another RFP, would reliable developers trust us enough to enter the bidding? I worry about that and am actually skeptical. Some that tried to participate in 2008 apparently feel mistreated, and our pulling the plug and starting over would send a strong signal that AVL continues to manage its development partnerships arbitrarily and unreliably. Ideally our earlier RFP could have perhaps been more explicit as to use/design outcomes. If we were to stop now and try to craft a new RFP, there would be a contentious political frenzy over the explicit criteria before a new RFP is issued.
- "The price is too low." The comps in the appraisal Nikki sent suggest to me that 51 Biltmore was significantly overpriced; it seems to stand alone at that level. Would we get a little more were we to have a receptive market? Maybe. Insisting on a sale price significantly higher than our own publicly-available appraisal conducted by a competent MAI appraiser in Feb 2012 would be politically problematic. If re-marketing would result in a price, say, 15% higher, but take 4 more years to get the development done, I think we lose out due to lost tax revenue and economic activity in that period, and that corner of town would remain less-inspiring.
- Perhaps \$3-\$4MM is a high estimate for a park here. You could be right about that.
- I agree it would be nice to have a broad and blank geographic slate encompassing more of the surface parking so as to consider greater street realignment. Two concerns though, acquisition of the private parcels required would be costly at best and perhaps uncertain dependent on seller motivation. Costs of more significant street realignment would add to costs. One thing to consider is that a solid development with a nice plaza could inspire good development later on some of the other surface parking you point to (Michael McDonough has described that to me...)
- RE: mid-range housing versus hotel, I would worry that purchase price and the design standards that the community would insist on might make the economic model for a housing project yield a high price-point for units. Promoting a subsidized affordable/mixed project on this site does not seem feasible politically or funding-wise. I am unconvinced that the basilica's model is economically rational/feasible, and I do not have confidence that they or anyone else could or would be willing to execute a project here that would guarantee workforce affordability.
- Based on reading and research I have been doing, I tend to think hotel/retail mix would best "activate" that portion of town compared to a park or residential. I want to further pick the brains of Michael McDonough and Joe Minicozzi on that question. I think it would further enliven downtown overall and modestly reduce vehicle traffic/parking demand as well because tourists would be staying in town and staying parked instead of commuting in from outlying hotels.
- I think there is likely sufficient demand for a higher-end hotel in downtown, and a hotel would compete with other properties just like apartments would.

It does not seem that you and I see this much differently on many of the points. Where I think we diverge is in the area of principal versus pragmatism.

I am concerned that if we try to perfect the outcome based on ideals, there is very high risk that any project stays derailed due to political contentiousness. The step of installing surface parking exacerbates that risk. And the community would remain internally divided and mistrust of leaders like you and me would build. Staff would be demoralized over Council's start/stop behavior. And we would perpetuate our earned reputation as a place where development happens inefficiently and contentiously, hampering possible future development collaborations that will be critical to the evolution of places like downtown and the river district.

My take is that if we work to hold McKibbon's feet to the fire and get the best possible design outcome through engagement with ADC, we might get a plenty-acceptable project, and if we are not satisfied, we could reject the development agreement. Assuming we could move forward in a positive way with McKibbon, we would still have a significant challenge in getting the plaza part done (not part of the RFP project on the 0.7 acre tract). That separate project would require making a deal with the basilica to get the ¼ acre needed from them, and putting together funding to realign the streets and build the plaza. Public trust would be critical to getting the best possible design and development outcomes on these fronts, especially the plaza phase. Council leadership would be required to earn that trust. And even if we had we developed a more perfect RFP, gotten a higher purchase price, controlled more property for greater and smarter redevelopment scale, we'd still have conflict and find ourselves needing to build trust in order to succeed.

I just think that we can be pragmatic, and get a plenty-acceptable good development and plaza out of this, which does not constitute caving into a developer (even though some will see it that way). And to be clear, I am not defending our overall approach on this project as anything like ideal. It's all about how to best proceed given the current circumstances.

Thanks for listening.

Marc

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**From:** Cecil Bothwell [mailto:[cecil@braveulysses.com](mailto:cecil@braveulysses.com)]

**Sent:** Friday, August 17, 2012 6:44 AM

**To:** Marc Hunt

**Subject:** Re: follow-up re: Haywood Street

Thanks for sending this along.

Do note that I am not among those arguing either/or. I have no problem with some form of development on part of the site. But I think the deal with McKibbon is ill-conceived and dated, and will continue to argue that the price is wrong. If we sell for the price PIP exacted for 51 Biltmore, we could afford a simple, small park on part of the area. Creating another green island.

Using the Pack Conservancy boondoggle as a comparative on park pricing doesn't work for me. It was badly mismanaged. The City would have completed the park at far less cost, and far more quickly. I am still eager to see some kind of actual accounting from that gang, instead of their cheery overview.

The truth is that we don't even seem to know what we're selling on Haywood. With McKibbon's supposed willingness to shift plans based on ADC thoughts about road realignment, what, exactly, are we selling? An idea?

If we want ped traffic to circle from Haywood to the Arcade, are we better off connecting from the library to Battery Park through the decrepit parking deck? Or limiting the footprint of a new building and creating a curve from Haywood around a building? Or better to reroute Haywood closer to the Battery Park apts, creating a

development parcel adjacent to I-240 between the Basilica and the Indigo? Are we better served by a hotel or mid-range housing over retail?

We are really putting the cart before the horse here.

-c

On Aug 16, 2012, at 11:35 AM, Marc Hunt wrote:

Cecil

I have had a number of exchanges with thoughtful citizens on the matter, and I took time to write the below piece to one of them. I wanted to share it with you so that you could understand more of my nuanced take on this. Hope this helps, and that you and I can continue to talk though this despite the strong chance we'll not see it the same.

Marc

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Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,

I really appreciate your continuing to consider this issue. Let me offer more here as to my thinking/analysis.

With the site the city owns on Haywood, the city has the opportunity to sell it for \$2.3MM, and if commercial space (retail, rental-residential, hotel, offices, whatever) is developed on the site, local governments would receive well over \$500K annually in local taxes (property, sales, maybe lodging, and maybe BID). Now one might argue that the demand for commercial development here would otherwise be met elsewhere in the area, so the net annual fiscal benefit would be less depending on whether the alternative development is in the CBD and/or in the city. Because this site is so prime and great development of it would further stimulate the appeal and vibrancy of downtown, the alternative benefits elsewhere (say at TK Tripp's site or Tunnel Rd) would be markedly less. Note that the net proceeds and revenues to local government here would enable local government to provide more for its citizens, including the ability to better fund parks. So if we do not develop the site commercially, we face a lost-opportunity cost of \$2.3MM and hundreds of thousands in annual tax revenues over years.

Developing a park on the site might cost in the range of \$3-4MM (Pack Square Park was \$20-something million). Operating maintaining the park might be in the \$50K-\$100K /year range. (Developing and operating/maintain a public plaza instead would cost significantly less). So the overall cost of the park to local governments would be the combination of out-of-pocket costs and the lost-opportunity costs, and that proves very expensive.

An outcome to developing this as a park would be the delay in development of other parks and greenways. The local government and city budgets are going to be finite and limited as to how much is made available to build and renew parks locally. So what other projects would be delayed? I am attaching an excerpt from our parks master plan. Please look on pages 102-108 to see priorities and rough costs. Note that this master plan does not include the very-high priority parks and greenways in the river district as those are covered in the Wilma Dykeman plan. Nor does it include the outstanding \$1.5 or so current funding shortfall for Pack Square Park nor the cost of further enhancements of that park that some are clamoring for. I assure you that the citizens whose voices advocate for these many other critical priorities feel very passionately about them.

The city's advance budget planning (attached) suggests that we can spend less than \$900K/year the next 3 years on parks and greenways. That falls painfully short of funding needs. Note also that we underpay our staff significantly and are well-behind norms on other things like paving streets, replacing vehicles, and funding affordable housing. When I

suggest that "we cannot afford" this park, it's about the relationship of total funds available to all these needs. Advocates for this park are essentially asking city leaders to scale back on other priorities or perhaps raise taxes because this one park is so important to achieve now. Please understand that advocates for all the other unfunded needs of the city - and there are many - continually make the same appeal, believing that their specific need should trump all others.

Some say we ought to turn this site into a parking lot and build a park in a few years when funding is more plentiful. I suggest this is a risky and unlikely scenario, and that we will be facing similar competing demands and limited funds as long as you and I are around. See the attached op-ed article I put in the ACT in June on big-picture fiscal challenges.

The folks at PARC who are advocating for this park have chosen to cast it as an oversimplified choice between a building and a park, as if the complex tradeoffs outlined above are insignificant or do not exist. Further, the relentless public information campaigns run by PARC and the folks at the Basilica have strongly influenced the media coverage with such messaging as "towering high rise that will overshadow the basilica", "construction activities that will further damage the delicate structure of the basilica", "serving the interests of greedy out of state developers", "ugly hotel", etc. It is that messaging that has overly dominated media coverage and the resultant public take on this, not a patient and analytical examination of aesthetic and economic/fiscal tradeoffs.

I agree with Chris Cooper that the PARC poll was somewhat flawed in its execution. But I believe its biggest shortcoming was that in the wake of the confused information campaigns PARC and the basilica conducted, they offered an ill-informed public an oversimplified choice between a park and development with no indication there would be tradeoffs, sort of like the analogy my wife suggested: "Dear, would you rather have a bowl of spinach or a bowl of ice cream...?" Most citizens spend little time focusing and interpreting complex issue like this.

Having read scores of emails from folks advocating for this park, I get the sense that many indeed are under-informed about the tradeoffs and are reacting defensively in their advocacy of a park. To the extent we would be averting development by building parks, as opposed to pursuing parks that are patiently and objectively determined as strategic priorities, I think we are making a mistake.

Through my years of advocacy for parks and green space in the community I have gotten to know most all the people who have constructively collaborated to get parks built. People that have donated to Beaucatcher and Masters and Waller, people that have served on boards of the Parks and Greenways Foundation, the Greenway Commissions, and other organizations, political leaders of the past, folks who have supported our land trusts, folks who made Pack Square Park happen, etc. It has been striking to me that virtually none of those many park-dedicated people have weighed in in favor of this park. Nor has there been anyone who has stepped forward to suggest creative or collaborative approaches to funding for this park. The message instead has largely been, "City Council, it is your duty to get this park built, please go do that."

Now I gladly acknowledge that the city has made mistakes in the past as to development-partnering initiatives, and the folks at PARC and elsewhere have good reason to fear mistakes here.

I want you to know that I have been putting serious time into understanding this complex situation and providing leadership to ensure a quality outcome. I also believe that with a disciplined and unified approach to ensuring an aesthetically pleasing well-designed building and plaza on this site, we can enhance downtown greatly not unlike the way a full scale park might.

And the painful thing for me is that the irrational political crossfire that is resulting here is serving to unnecessarily split neighbors from each other and citizens from their elected leaders. That is a formula for getting less done over the years, and also in increasing the chances that this site will become a vibrancy-killing parking lot.

Sorry to be so long-winded here. Hope this is somehow helpful, and that you will feel free to share it further.

Marc



<hunt fiscal dilemma op-ed final june 8 2012 revised clean.docx><Pages from master plan draft 10-27-08.pdf><Copy of Parks Projects budget thru 2015.xls>

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** hauntedheadnc <hauntedheadnc@yahoo.com> on behalf of hauntedheadnc  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 16, 2012 8:33 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** McKibbon hotel proposal

Dear City Council members,

I'm writing to you today to express my wholehearted support for the Haywood Street hotel as currently proposed by the McKibbon group.

The fact of the matter is that sometimes growth is good, sometimes there are good places for growth, and while parks are nice -- not every single parcel of empty downtown property should become one. This last point is most salient in light of the fact that thanks to our state's Republican majority, it might as well be illegal now for a city to expand its borders. That means that any new tax revenue in the city of Asheville is going to have to come from growth and development inside the existing city limits -- and the hotel proposal is exactly that kind of growth. It would also be wise to consider the fact that Asheville is already enormously blessed with recreational facilities, passive green space, and park lands -- all of which have to be maintained as it is with taxpayer dollars. Furthermore, it would be prudent to consider that there are already large-scale recreation and park facilities, such as the development of Overlook Park, planned. In short, Asheville has enough park land for the moment and already has plans in place to provide more as the city grows.

As I understand it, Asheville does not have the money to build a new park, and maintaining its current park resources costs an enormous amount of money. To change this situation, such as a fairer distribution of hotel room taxes, would require action from a state government which has already well proven its antipathy to the city of Asheville through legislation that will remove the airport and WNC Agricultural Center from city control and would do the same to the city's water system. Clearly, we cannot count on the state to change anything that would even give Asheville the money to build a park on the Haywood Street location and even if the state were amenable to the idea, changing such laws would probably take years.

What this all means is that as nice as a park might be, there is no money to build one and there really isn't any pressing need for it. And that is why the parcel in question would be best suited for the kind of dense, multi-story development that already makes up the downtown area. We have heard in the media that to build the hotel would invite an Atlantan nightmare of overdevelopment, but that kind of fearmongering is unwarranted and distasteful. Downtown, arguably the most loved district in the city, is dense and it is urban and it will harm nothing there to invite more of the same sort of development that already makes up the area. Despite claims by PARC, this building is not a high-rise and even if it were, there is already one across the street and two more in sight of the proposed building site, so another high-rise would hardly be out of place or scale. The McKibbon group has presented us with an attractive design sensitive to nearby historic architecture, and has proven itself to be a good corporate citizen in other respects such as with its braille art and charity project at the Aloft Hotel.

In short, McKibbon has given us a great design that incorporates the very plaza the project's detractors demand, it has proven a commitment to Asheville, and the location is utterly perfect for this kind of well-designed urban development.

Please approve the hotel project.

Sincerely,

Austin Blythe

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 16, 2012 11:36 AM  
**To:** 'Cecil Bothwell'  
**Subject:** follow-up re: Haywood Street  
**Attachments:** hunt fiscal dilemma op-ed final june 8 2012 revised clean.docx; Pages from master plan draft 10-27-08.pdf; Copy of Parks Projects budget thru 2015.xls

Cecil

I have had a number of exchanges with thoughtful citizens on the matter, and I took time to write the below piece to one of them. I wanted to share it with you so that you could understand more of my nuanced take on this. Hope this helps, and that you and I can continue to talk though this despite the strong chance we'll not see it the same.

Marc  
++++  
Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,

I really appreciate your continuing to consider this issue. Let me offer more here as to my thinking/analysis.

With the site the city owns on Haywood, the city has the opportunity to sell it for \$2.3MM, and if commercial space (retail, rental-residential, hotel, offices, whatever) is developed on the site, local governments would receive well over \$500K annually in local taxes (property, sales, maybe lodging, and maybe BID). Now one might argue that the demand for commercial development here would otherwise be met elsewhere in the area, so the net annual fiscal benefit would be less depending on whether the alternative development is in the CBD and/or in the city. Because this site is so prime and great development of it would further stimulate the appeal and vibrancy of downtown, the alternative benefits elsewhere (say at TK Tripp's site or Tunnel Rd) would be markedly less. Note that the net proceeds and revenues to local government here would enable local government to provide more for its citizens, including the ability to better fund parks. So if we do not develop the site commercially, we face a lost-opportunity cost of \$2.3MM and hundreds of thousands in annual tax revenues over years.

Developing a park on the site might cost in the range of \$3-4MM (Pack Square Park was \$20-something million). Operating maintaining the park might be in the \$50K-\$100K /year range. (Developing and operating/maintain a public plaza instead would cost significantly less). So the overall cost of the park to local governments would be the combination of out-of-pocket costs and the lost-opportunity costs, and that proves very expensive.

An outcome to developing this as a park would be the delay in development of other parks and greenways. The local government and city budgets are going to be finite and limited as to how much is made available to build and renew parks locally. So what other projects would be delayed? I am attaching an excerpt from our parks master plan. Please look on pages 102-108 to see priorities and rough costs. Note that this master plan does not include the very-high priority parks and greenways in the river district as those are covered in the Wilma Dykeman plan. Nor does it include the outstanding \$1.5 or so current funding shortfall for Pack Square Park nor the cost of further enhancements of that park that some are clamoring for. I assure you that the citizens whose voices advocate for these many other critical priorities feel very passionately about them.

The city's advance budget planning (attached) suggests that we can spend less than \$900K/year the next 3 years on parks and greenways. That falls painfully short of funding needs. Note also that we underpay our staff significantly and are well-behind norms on other things like paving streets, replacing vehicles, and funding affordable housing. When I

suggest that "we cannot afford" this park, it's about the relationship of total funds available to all these needs. Advocates for this park are essentially asking city leaders to scale back on other priorities or perhaps raise taxes because this one park is so important to achieve now. Please understand that advocates for all the other unfunded needs of the city - and there are many - continually make the same appeal, believing that their specific need should trump all others.

Some say we ought to turn this site into a parking lot and build a park in a few years when funding is more plentiful. I suggest this is a risky and unlikely scenario, and that we will be facing similar competing demands and limited funds as long as you and I are around. See the attached op-ed article I put in the ACT in June on big-picture fiscal challenges.

The folks at PARC who are advocating for this park have chosen to cast it as an oversimplified choice between a building and a park, as if the complex tradeoffs outlined above are insignificant or do not exist. Further, the relentless public information campaigns run by PARC and the folks at the Basilica have strongly influenced the media coverage with such messaging as "towering high rise that will overshadow the basilica", "construction activities that will further damage the delicate structure of the basilica", "serving the interests of greedy out of state developers", "ugly hotel", etc. It is that messaging that has overly dominated media coverage and the resultant public take on this, not a patient and analytical examination of aesthetic and economic/fiscal tradeoffs.

I agree with Chris Cooper that the PARC poll was somewhat flawed in its execution. But I believe its biggest shortcoming was that in the wake of the confused information campaigns PARC and the basilica conducted, they offered an ill-informed public an oversimplified choice between a park and development with no indication there would be tradeoffs, sort of like the analogy my wife suggested: "Dear, would you rather have a bowl of spinach or a bowl of ice cream...?" Most citizens spend little time focusing and interpreting complex issue like this.

Having read scores of emails from folks advocating for this park, I get the sense that many indeed are under-informed about the tradeoffs and are reacting defensively in their advocacy of a park. To the extent we would be averting development by building parks, as opposed to pursuing parks that are patiently and objectively determined as strategic priorities, I think we are making a mistake.

Through my years of advocacy for parks and green space in the community I have gotten to know most all the people who have constructively collaborated to get parks built. People that have donated to Beaucatcher and Masters and Waller, people that have served on boards of the Parks and Greenways Foundation, the Greenway Commissions, and other organizations, political leaders of the past, folks who have supported our land trusts, folks who made Pack Square Park happen, etc. It has been striking to me that virtually none of those many park-dedicated people have weighed in in favor of this park. Nor has there been anyone who has stepped forward to suggest creative or collaborative approaches to funding for this park. The message instead has largely been, "City Council, it is your duty to get this park built, please go do that."

Now I gladly acknowledge that the city has made mistakes in the past as to development-partnering initiatives, and the folks at PARC and elsewhere have good reason to fear mistakes here.

I want you to know that I have been putting serious time into understanding this complex situation and providing leadership to ensure a quality outcome. I also believe that with a disciplined and unified approach to ensuring an aesthetically pleasing well-designed building and plaza on this site, we can enhance downtown greatly not unlike the way a full scale park might.

And the painful thing for me is that the irrational political crossfire that is resulting here is serving to unnecessarily split neighbors from each other and citizens from their elected leaders. That is a formula for getting less done over the years, and also in increasing the chances that this site will become a vibrancy-killing parking lot.

Sorry to be so long-winded here. Hope this is somehow helpful, and that you will feel free to share it further.

Marc



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 14, 2012 1:08 PM  
**To:** 'Gail Jolley'  
**Subject:** RE: No hotel in front of the Basilica

Ms Jolley

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. This matter offers complex challenges and complex solutions. There has been a bit of misunderstanding and some outright misinformation afloat regarding it. Please bear with me as I share my current thinking.

Alongside our outstanding regional setting, our vibrant, historic, and authentic downtown is one of our community's great assets. I am fully committed to improving it. The Haywood street site is a critically important opportunity to enhance downtown. 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 the 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.

**Public Park Space and/or and Buildings?** – Great urban design is key to being a great city. A proper mix of well-designed public spaces, parks, infrastructure elements, and land uses like residential buildings, visitor amenities, retail, and offices is key. 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 and continue to play key roles in getting some great projects accomplished. I do not disagree that a stand-alone well-designed public park might be nice here, but I do not see that as an option here. Master plans the City has developed with exhaustive public input over the last five or so years have established many project priorities, and an additional park in this area of downtown did not register as a strategic priority in those plans. Given Asheville's very 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 high-priority parks and, greenways from other parts of town, I cannot support another full-scale park downtown. Our recently completed Downtown Master Plan did highlight that a combination of a well-designed private development and a public plaza would be a great outcome for this site and could strongly enhance the appeal and vibrancy of the Battery Park area. I am very excited about the potential for development of the site to include a large publicly-owned plaza – a “pocket park” of sorts - well-designed and including natural horticultural features. I am certain that this plaza in conjunction great architecture for privately-developed buildings and improved pedestrian/transportation infrastructure in that neighborhood would be a great outcome, so I am working very hard toward that end.

**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, McKibbin, and City officials. I was disappointed when, on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 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. 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. I am uncomfortable delegating that much authority to any group for a site so important to the whole community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza.

**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, with structured parking included. The design McKibbin has preliminarily shared indicate building height, mass, set-backs, and public plaza very similar to what the basilica folks have suggested. The negotiation is based on McKibbin'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 McKibbin before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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 is a healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel rooms. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the suggestion that we have too many hotels downtown already. 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.

**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. Tax revenue generated from the site is key to expanding our ability to accomplish our goals.

**Next Steps** - Early in 2012, Council directed City staff to continue in the earlier-committed RFP process with McKibbin and other stakeholders including the Basilica and the Asheville design center to see whether or not an acceptable site plan, design, and development agreement might be arranged. That process is ongoing and should have us at a decision point within a few weeks – perhaps by late September. Council will simply review progress at its August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**The Scenario I Most Worry About** – Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that ongoing political crossfire and stalemate along with limited unwillingness 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:** Gail Jolley [mailto:g9jolley@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 11:03 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** No hotel in front of the Basilica

It seems that the results of PARC's telephone poll are clear: the people of Asheville do not want another hotel towering over the downtown area. Aloft Hotel is almost finished, and it is one of the ugliest buildings we have downtown next to the Indigo Hotel, which is just as ugly, but at least it's off on the edge of things. Why must we have only ugly tall buildings?

Gail Jolley



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 14, 2012 12:56 PM  
**To:** 'MARNIE MIKELL'  
**Subject:** RE: Hotel Plan Near Basilica

Ms Mikell

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. This matter offers complex challenges and complex solutions. There has been a bit of misunderstanding and some outright misinformation afloat regarding it. Please bear with me as I share my current thinking.

Alongside our outstanding regional setting, our vibrant, historic, and authentic downtown is one of our community's great assets. I am fully committed to improving it. The Haywood street site is a critically important opportunity to enhance downtown. 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 the Basilica, the US Cellular Center, and other surrounding buildings.
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authority to any group for a site so important to the whole community. Representatives say that their vision is retail/office/rental apartments with plaza.

**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, with structured parking included. The design McKibbin has preliminarily shared indicate building height, mass, set-backs, and public plaza very similar to what the basilica folks have suggested. The negotiation is based on McKibbin'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 McKibbin before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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 is a healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel rooms. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the suggestion that we have too many hotels downtown already. 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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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**From:** MARNIE MIKELL [mailto:artdept@great-eastern-sun.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 12:43 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Hotel Plan Near Basilica

As a resident of Asheville, I am writing to voice my objection to the proposed hotel plan for the city-owned property across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence. A recent poll conducted by PARC shows that most of those responding favor a public park on that location. It is open greenspace that would display the beautiful Basilica of St. Lawrence, and greenspace that would give a respite from the concrete and steel of the city. The hotel would make a lot of money for one developer. The park would create a memorable experience for Asheville residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for considering my message.



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 14, 2012 12:37 PM  
**To:** 'Summer Rain'  
**Subject:** RE: Selling of our land once again

Ms Rain

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. This matter offers complex challenges and complex solutions. There has been a bit of misunderstanding and some outright misinformation afloat regarding it. Please bear with me as I share my current thinking.

Alongside our outstanding regional setting, our vibrant, historic, and authentic downtown is one of our community's great assets. I am fully committed to improving it. The Haywood street site is a critically important opportunity to enhance downtown. I am committed to an outcome for the site which:

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years ago. There is no downside to seeing this process through, and I support the City's completing its discussions with McKibbin before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin.

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 is a healthy and growing demand of quality downtown hotel rooms. I want to learn more about that, and do not immediately buy into the suggestion that we have too many hotels downtown already. 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.

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The Scenario I Most Worry About – Surface parking lots kill downtown vibrancy. I fear that ongoing political crossfire and stalemate along with limited unwillingness 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

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

From: Summer Rain [mailto:jsrain@bellsouth.net]  
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2012 5:06 PM  
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov

Cc: letters@citizen-times.com; letters@mountainx.com; PARC

Subject: Selling of our land once again

There is so little land left downtown that adding one more towering hotel is totally insane in my eyes. The terribly designed looming building going up across from The City Bakery is another example that City Council has shown they have little or no aesthetic training or judgement in making decisions that this very issue demands. And now to sell off one, if not the last strip, of empty land to another group, church or private person to have again a poorly designed structure built in what was a lovely charming and historical downtown that pulled in the only source of revenue, tourists, that downtown has is once again being endangered. Tourists don't need to be right in the heart of our once historical downtown to come and stay in a hotel. Selling to the church will also destroy this last piece of historical land.

Please use common sense stop this madness of selling off more of our HISTORICAL DOWNTOWN.

J.S.Rain

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** joseph.minicozzi@gmail.com on behalf of Joseph Minicozzi  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 7:47 PM  
**To:** hunt.marc@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Downtown Master Plan

I did a word scan in the Master Plan. Remember, at the time of the plan, the McKibbon Proposal was just done, and was accepted as a proposal *to happen*. Even with that, the plan did recommend working in some open space at the McKibbon site. PARC will contend that "redevelopment" means 'open space', but I highly doubt that is what the intention was. Any urban designer worth their salt would stick a building in that site to finish the block and not leave it hanging with 60 Haywood (Charlie's Condo). So my read of the plan is that the Master Plan clearly intends a building AND open space at that site, but it leaves room for discussion on what kind of open space it shall be, it could be a plaza (hardscape) or greenspace. I think 95% of the landscape architects in the profession would lean toward hardscape because of the traffic at the Civic Center and the maintenance issues of grass/trees in a location that will be on the north side of a building. Charlie somehow doesn't understand the sun. He refuses to acknowledge the sun's path. When the City proposed the parking deck at that location, he claimed that the deck "would block the sun from the Battery Park Apartments". Not only was the deck lower than the majority of the apartments (I think all of them actually), it was also on the north face of the building. Last time I checked, we are still in the northern hemisphere, and the sun comes from the south. Anyway...

See below \*\*\*, this is SUPER IMPORTANT for the discussion. PS, if my memory serves me right, PARC was against the master plan. Sasha would remember. The rest of these are other items I found in the plan. Also, have staff check the "City Center Plan" to see if there is anything clear about open space in that.

### **In the main plan:**

More residential uses Downtown requires more public and open spaces. The South Slope district is especially in need of parks. This Master Plan recommends locating parks at 2½-minute walking intervals, as recommended by the 1920s-era Nolan Plan. (p. 30)

#5. Provide places for public parks, recreation, and culture. "Priority Pedestrian" streets should be placed within a larger network of parks. Existing parks serve as important (and heavily used) centers of community activity and identity that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. New open spaces and parks will be needed to serve a growing residential population Downtown. Securing, improving, and maintaining new parkland is a challenge, but key opportunities for establishing them include existing City-owned parcels, land purchases, land reclaimed from NC DOT ownership, and public park space incorporated by agreement into large new developments. (See the Parks & Greenways and Priority Pedestrian Streets diagrams in the appendix for Strategy 3 for further detail.) (p.75)

This was listed as a "Development Initiative on P. 32:

The proposed Haywood Park mixed-use hotel, housing, and retail proposal on Haywood, Page, and Battery Park. The proposed hotel development for RFP Parcel A at the Civic Center and the Basilica.

### **In the Appendix (which wasn't adopted officially, but included for further conversation & work)**

Define RFQ and RFP criteria on public land to support urban design framework goals. Seize these near-term opportunities to foster positive change. Encourage joint-ventures for park or plaza space in the redevelopment

of City-owned land at Haywood and Page Streets Include civic or retail uses on the ground level of all City-owned RFP sites. (S3-4)

\*\*\***Page S3-29** has a Parks and Greenways diagram. SEE THIS PAGE! You'll see how vague it is, but it does recommend a little nub of a park in front of the basilica. It keeps the rest of the site as development. This is pretty key, really. If you think about it, the McKibbon proposal was already in, and contemplated a full development of the site. Through public input, there was lots of opinions to get some open space into the site, and its apparent that the Master Plan added it in. I think the other items in the plan were diplomatic ways of suggesting that it happen. Its notable that this location and the triangle park in the Block area are the only two places where a real suggestion was placed.

Require that no point in a public park or plaza space, or any locally-designated landmark building with sun-dependant features be shaded by a new building for more than two hours between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, observed on the equinox. Where no right-of-way exists between the proposed project and the public space, a 50-foot buffer free of any shadow regulations may be observed. (S4-4)

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Joe Minicozzi  
828-301-8073



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Summer Rain <jsrain@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Summer Rain  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 5:06 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Cc:** letters@citizen-times.com; letters@mountainx.com; PARC  
**Subject:** Selling of our land once again

There is so little land left downtown that adding one more towering hotel is totally insane in my eyes. The terribly designed looming building going up across from The City Bakery is another example that City Council has shown they have little or no aesthetic training or judgement in making decisions that this very issue demands. And now to sell off one, if not the last strip, of empty land to another group, church or private person to have again a poorly designed structure built in what was a lovely charming and historical downtown that pulled in the only source of revenue, tourists, that downtown has is once again being endangered. Tourists don't need to be right in the heart of our once historical downtown to come and stay in a hotel. Selling to the church will also destroy this last piece of historical land.

Please use common sense stop this madness of selling off more of our HISTORICAL DOWNTOWN.

J.S.Rain

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** MARNIE MIKELL <artdept@great-eastern-sun.com> on behalf of MARNIE MIKELL  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 12:43 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Hotel Plan Near Basilica

As a resident of Asheville, I am writing to voice my objection to the proposed hotel plan for the city-owned property across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence. A recent poll conducted by PARC shows that most of those responding favor a public park on that location. It is open greenspace that would display the beautiful Basilica of St. Lawrence, and greenspace that would give a respite from the concrete and steel of the city. The hotel would make a lot of money for one developer. The park would create a memorable experience for Asheville residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for considering my message.

Marnie Mikell

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Gail Jolley <g9jolley@gmail.com> on behalf of Gail Jolley  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 11:03 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** No hotel in front of the Basilica

It seems that the results of PARC's telephone poll are clear: the people of Asheville do not want another hotel towering over the downtown area. Aloft Hotel is almost finished, and it is one of the ugliest buildings we have downtown next to the Indigo Hotel, which is just as ugly, but at least it's off on the edge of things. Why must we have only ugly tall buildings?

Gail Jolley

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** MacQueen Kim <goldhill@skyrunner.net> on behalf of MacQueen Kim  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 10:52 AM  
**To:** Manheimer Esther; Hunt Marc; Davis Jan; Bellamy Terry; Smith Gordon  
**Subject:** basilica - my two cents

I was impressed by the information provided by Mr. McGibbon last Tuesday, and believe the structure he proposes would be an asset to downtown Asheville.

The park idea is untenable. I know this because I work closely with DARN as it has worked incredibly hard to recreate Pritchard Park into the small oasis it now is. NO ONE who insists they want another park downtown has ever come out to help us clean Pritchard, plant in Pritchard or to help program the park. In short, it is yet another Asheville story of 'I'll tell you what I want, then you pay for it and make it work.'

PARC PAC's recent phone survey was very biased (i.e., describing the BID as an 'unelected board,' when the interim board itself has not yet completed its by-laws and does not know how the board would be put in place). One prominent member of the basilica 'side' of the issue, told me he received three survey calls in one evening (to the same phone), giving him three chances to vote against McGibbon. Very scientific.

As the next-door-neighbor of this property (many talk about the impact on the Basilica, few contemplate the impact on the tax-generating businesses and residents to the other side of the property), I believe this proposal may not be perfect. Not much in this life is perfect. But it is as good as we are likely to get, and a damn sight better than what we have lived with for the past five to seven years.

Please let's move forward with this. You won't make everyone happy, but let's get something going and stop treating every developer like they have come to this town to spread a disease.

Thanks for allowing me to rant! It's been a long summer!

- Kim

Kim MacQueen  
Gold Hill Associates  
828/252-7153

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Thomas Berner <tberner@charter.net> on behalf of Thomas Berner  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 09, 2012 8:27 AM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: land use

Very nicely thought out and presented. Thank you. T. Berner

Sent from my iPad

On Aug 5, 2012, at 11:47 AM, "Marc Hunt" <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:

Mr Berner

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 McKibbin 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 McKibbin'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 McKibbin before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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, McKibbin, and City officials. I was disappointed when, on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 McKibbin 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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

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

From: Tom Berner [mailto:tberner@charter.net]

Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2012 5:14 PM

To: City Council; PARC

Subject: land use

Please, please, a GREEN SPACE in front of the Basilica! Tom Berner, city resident, tax payer and voter. Thank you.

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 12:16 PM  
**To:** 'Gurley'  
**Subject:** RE: St. Lawrence Green

Ms Gurley

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.

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Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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.

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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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: Gurley [mailto:mfgurley@charter.net]

Sent: Sunday, June 24, 2012 7:20 PM

To: City Council; PARC

Subject: St. Lawrence Green

Council Members,

I would like to add my name to the long list of Asheville citizens who appreciate our city green spaces. Setting aside public areas for enjoyment by residents and visitors is quite important. It is rare that the Council has the rare opportunity to make this important addition of a park in downtown Asheville. The location across from the beautiful Basilica of St.

Lawrence could hardly be improved upon as a site in which we could all enjoy a restful moment.

Please consider carefully before letting this slip through our fingers.

Thank you for thinking of the future,  
Marianne Gurley

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 12:13 PM  
**To:** 'Mary Johnson'  
**Subject:** RE: Parks over pavement

Ms Johnson

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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: Mary Johnson [mailto:rmmjohnson@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, June 25, 2012 11:53 AM

To: City Council; PARC

Subject: Parks over pavement

You got it. I am for another park and want you to listen! Please hear the voices of the residents of Asheville. When we moved here in 1982 the city motto was COOL, GREEN ASHEVILLE. Mary and Randy Johnson

Sent from my iPhone

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 12:13 PM  
**To:** 'Ruby D. Moore'  
**Subject:** RE: st. lawrence

Ms Moore

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.

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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.

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**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.

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**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:** Ruby D. Moore [mailto:rubydaliwal@yahoo.com]  
**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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 12:10 PM  
**To:** 'S DUMONT'  
**Subject:** RE: St Lawrence green space

Ms Dumont

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

A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

**From:** S DUMONT [mailto:sarahdumont@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 25, 2012 5:10 PM  
**To:** City Council; PARC  
**Subject:** St Lawrence green space

Good Day,

I strongly urge you to earmark the space proposed for hotel/parking development as a green space park. This will greatly enhance the downtown Asheville area, serving residents as well as tourists. We have adequate hotel rooms in or near downtown, but are sadly lacking in beautiful natural areas for locals and visitors to relax and recreate in. Asheville needs this to keep attracting tourists.

Please listen to the wishes of those of us who love Asheville, pay taxes, and vote, and make the progressive choice to say yes to preserving and creating a nurturing and beautiful space for all Asheville to enjoy for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Dumont

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 12:10 PM  
**To:** rsternberg1@bellsouth.net  
**Subject:** RE: Land in front of St. Lawrence'

Ms Sternberg

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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

**From:** Rachel Sternberg [mailto:rsternberg1@bellsouth.net]  
**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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 12:07 PM  
**To:** 'Robert Eaton Kelley'  
**Subject:** RE: Create St. Lawrence Green!

Ms Kelley

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.
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A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: Robert Eaton Kelley [mailto:reatonkelley@charter.net]

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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 12:06 PM  
**To:** 'Richard Stiles'  
**Subject:** RE: St Lawrence

Richard

Below is my current take. If I am opposed to anything, it is to a project that crowds the Basilica. As for the 51 Biltmore project, I know there was some process of review of the design that occurred in the public light, though I was not involved. Seems like most of the focus was on the controversy over finance/cost. As long as this project involves the City partnering directly with a developer, I am certain the demand for great design will be strong. Please continue to weigh in on that.

Thanks, and hope you are well.

Marc

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**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

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**From:** Richard Stiles [mailto:Richard.Stiles@ProsperaFinancial.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2012 10:36 AM  
**To:** City Council; PARC  
**Subject:** St Lawrence

Mayor and City Council,

I'm responding in regards to the City's deliberations surrounding the public property in front of the St Lawrence Basilica. While I appreciate the economic impact a hotel would contribute to the tax base, I'm opposed to crowding the historic Basilica with just another commercial big box.

Possibly if the proposed development was historic in nature or of such unique design as to compliment the existing church property I might feel differently; however, McKibbon's contribution to the City's "skyscape" on Biltmore Ave is visual proof that either the developer or the proposed development needs further review.

This reminds me of the 1980s effort to build a mall downtown. Too many in the leadership were convinced the mall was the answer when in fact we have learned that Asheville's success is derived from rebuilding upon our unique architectural inventory.

Guastavino's masterpiece must not be comprised! Treat it as a lode-stone and if a building is necessary, let it be complimentary and not a distraction.

Your consideration is appreciated,  
Richard Stiles

Richard Stiles

Hansen Stiles & Associates  
117 Cherry Street  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Phone (828)255-5227  
Fax (828)505-4952

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This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the system manager.

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 11:54 AM  
**To:** 'Cindi Sutherland'  
**Subject:** RE:

Ms Sutherland

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 McKibbin 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 McKibbin’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 McKibbin before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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**From:** Cindi Sutherland [mailto:sutherlandc@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2012 11:21 AM  
**To:** City Council; PARC  
**Subject:**

Please do what is innately in accord with the beauty of the city!

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 11:54 AM  
**To:** 'sandy jones'  
**Subject:** RE: PLEASE!

Ms Jones

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.
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<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.

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There is no downside to seeing this process through, and I support the City’s completing its discussions with McKibbin before any decision is made by

Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: sandy jones [mailto:smilesandyj@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, June 27, 2012 11:22 AM

To: City Council; PARC

Subject: PLEASE!



why must you close our city in with large looming hotels...that take away from the beauty and uniqueness of this city?

the aloft hotel....at that spot you could see the sunset over our mountains....now all you see is a tall building that blocks the reason people come here. to enjoy the outdoors.

I used to live near charlotte....and the people that visit here are always asking me why so many buildings are being built in asheville.... THEY DO NOT COME HERE FOR THE HOTELS! They like the outdoor venues, festivals, music, and outside cafes, art galleries, walking the streets and going into the unique stores. I have been told numerous times if asheville starts becoming like other bigger cities...where the streets are closed in by building after building....they will just stay home.

PLEASE LISTEN....we don't NEED another hotel...or high rise of any sort.  
This is my second letter to you.

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 11:53 AM  
**To:** susankokora@charter.net  
**Subject:** RE: a park

Ms Kokora

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.
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A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: Susan Kokora [mailto:susankokora@charter.net]  
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 to 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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 11:49 AM  
**To:** 'Cathy Early'  
**Subject:** RE: St Lawrence Green

Ms Early

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:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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**From:** Cathy Early [mailto:cearly@plumdogfinancial.com]  
**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.

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](http://www.plumdogfinancial.com)**

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



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 11:47 AM  
**To:** 'Tracy Hildebrand'  
**Subject:** RE: Land across from Basilica

Tracy

Sorry to delay in responding to you. Your message came just as we went with some old NOC friends (Grants, Hammonds, ...) on a Grand canyon trip (great one!), and I am still catching up.

Below is my current take on this. This is more complicated than some would have you believe...

Hope you guys are well!

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. Let me share my current thinking on the project.

I am committed to an outcome for the site which:

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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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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

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

From: Tracy Hildebrand [mailto:traceanna@bellsouth.net]

Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2012 6:39 PM

To: City Council; PARC

Subject: Land across from Basilica

Dear City Council,

I urge you to reconsider the sale of the land across from Basilica to be developed into a hotel. Instead, I hope you will consider other options, including a greenway or selling the land to the Catholic church.

Thank you

Tracy Hildebrand

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 11:44 AM  
**To:** 'Mike Walker'  
**Subject:** RE: St Lawrence Basilica "Park"

Mr Walker

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 McKibbin 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 McKibbin’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 McKibbin before any decision is made by Council. I will only support a development agreement with McKibbin if the project strongly supports all the principals outlined above, and if it does not, we should abandon the partnership with McKibbin. 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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

**From:** Mike Walker [mailto:walkmex@yahoo.com]  
**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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 11:43 AM  
**To:** 'Ann Green'  
**Subject:** RE: McKibbon plan

Ms Green

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.
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A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: Ann Green [mailto:veganchik@hotmail.com]  
Sent: Saturday, June 30, 2012 5:38 AM  
To: City Council; PARC  
Subject: McKibbon plan

Please listen to the citizens who elected you and make a green space in front of the Basilica instead of allowing one (not even local) company to build yet another hotel!  
Thank you.  
Ann Green

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Richard Stiles <Richard.Stiles@ProsperaFinancial.com> on behalf of Richard Stiles  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2012 10:36 AM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** St Lawrence

Mayor and City Council,

I'm responding in regards to the City's deliberations surrounding the public property in front of the St Lawrence Basilica. While I appreciate the economic impact a hotel would contribute to the tax base, I'm opposed to crowding the historic Basilica with just another commercial big box.

Possibly if the proposed development was historic in nature or of such unique design as to compliment the existing church property I might feel differently; however, McKibbon's contribution to the City's "skyscape" on Biltmore Ave is visual proof that either the developer or the proposed development needs further review.

This reminds me of the 1980s effort to build a mall downtown. Too many in the leadership were convinced the mall was the answer when in fact we have learned that Asheville's success is derived from rebuilding upon our unique architectural inventory.

Guastavino's masterpiece must not be comprised! Treat it as a lode-stone and if a building is necessary, let it be complimentary and not a distraction.

Your consideration is appreciated,  
Richard Stiles

Richard Stiles

Hansen Stiles & Associates  
117 Cherry Street  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Phone (828)255-5227  
Fax (828)505-4952

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## Ben Fulmer

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**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**

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**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**

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**From:** S DUMONT <sarahdumont@bellsouth.net> on behalf of S DUMONT  
**Sent:** Monday, June 25, 2012 5:10 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** St Lawrence green space

Good Day,

I strongly urge you to earmark the space proposed for hotel/parking development as a green space park. This will greatly enhance the downtown Asheville area, serving residents as well as tourists. We have adequate hotel rooms in or near downtown, but are sadly lacking in beautiful natural areas for locals and visitors to relax and recreate in. Asheville needs this to keep attracting tourists.

Please listen to the wishes of those of us who love Asheville, pay taxes, and vote, and make the progressive choice to say yes to preserving and creating a nurturing and beautiful space for all Asheville to enjoy for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Dumont

**Ben Fulmer**

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**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**

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**From:** Mary Johnson <rmjohnson@gmail.com> on behalf of Mary Johnson  
**Sent:** Monday, June 25, 2012 11:53 AM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** Parks over pavement

You got it. I am for another park and want you to listen! Please hear the voices of the residents of Asheville. When we moved here in 1982 the city motto was COOL, GREEN ASHEVILLE. Mary and Randy Johnson

Sent from my iPhone

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Gurley <mfgurley@charter.net> on behalf of Gurley  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 24, 2012 7:20 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence Green

Council Members,

I would like to add my name to the long list of Asheville citizens who appreciate our city green spaces. Setting aside public areas for enjoyment by residents and visitors is quite important. It is rare that the Council has the rare opportunity to make this important addition of a park in downtown Asheville. The location across from the beautiful Basilica of St. Lawrence could hardly be improved upon as a site in which we could all enjoy a restful moment.

Please consider carefully before letting this slip through our fingers.

Thank you for thinking of the future,  
Marianne Gurley

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Annette DuPont <porkydu@gmail.com> on behalf of Annette DuPont  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 23, 2012 9:34 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: area in front of the Basilica

thanks for your thorough reply - it does sound complicated but I did like the proposal on the you tube video.

On 6/22/12, Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> wrote:

> Hey Annette

>

> This situation is a lot more complicated than PARC would have you believe.

> My take is outlined below. WE can talk further if you like, but only

> after July 10<sup>th</sup> Cat and I about to launch on a Grand Canyon trip! With

> Gordon, Susan, Drew, Judy, others<sup>ſ</sup> Best to you and Dean, 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 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 long-time chairman of

> the Asheville Greenway Commission and land conservation professional,

> I am a strong advocate for parks and green space. Some in the

> community are promoting the idea of a park here as being a simple

> choice. 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 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 <sup>3</sup>signature park<sup>2</sup>. 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.

> By the way, to see more of my take on Asheville's fiscal challenges,  
> check this out:  
> [http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20120609/OPINION03/306090005/City](http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20120609/OPINION03/306090005/City-faces-grinding-fiscal-dilemma?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7Cfrontpage%7Cs)  
> -faces  
> -grinding-fiscal-dilemma?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7Cfrontpage%7Cs  
>

> 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 open to the idea of a properly  
> designed high-quality hotel (not an imposing ugly one) because that  
> might 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). Many in the community  
> seem to fear a <sup>3</sup>high-rise<sup>2</sup> 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, with a  
> willingness to entertain City input. 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, 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: Annette DuPont <porkydu@gmail.com>  
> Date: Thu, 21 Jun 2012 17:51:26 -0400  
> To: councilgroup <AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov>,  
> "AshevillePARC@gmail.com" <AshevillePARC@gmail.com>  
> Subject: area in front of the Basilica

>

> I feel strongly that the area in front of the Basilica would be best  
> served by a green space. It is the most beautiful architectural  
> building in Asheville and needs to be able to be seen from all  
> directions. Also, Asheville is in need of more green spaces and areas  
> for visitors to relax as they stroll through down town. Money should  
> not be the issue especially since the Catholic church is willing to  
> buy the land. Thank you.

> Annette DuPont

>

>

>

>

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Lorraine Plaxico <lplaxico@charter.net> on behalf of Lorraine Plaxico  
**Sent:** Friday, June 22, 2012 6:15 AM  
**To:** 'City Council'; 'PARC'  
**Subject:** park

PLEASE consider that Asheville is a tourist magnet because we are so unique, so unlike every other town. Great cities have great parks. Parks are destinations too. Look at Washington DC. New York. London. We really have very few downtown. The Basilica is our touch of Europe..please keep it that way!

Thank you,  
Lorraine

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Carole Wilson <quietlykayaking@gmail.com> on behalf of Carole Wilson  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 21, 2012 6:57 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** McKibben Project

Please City Council--look at the history of opposition to this McKibben project--and please think strongly about selling this land to the Basillica. We have enough sterile uncreative bldgs. like BB&T ruining the viewsheds. Not everything is about money, and people in Asheville aren't here for city life. I do not know anyone for this personally. Thanks, Carole Wilson

**Ben Fulmer**

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**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 McKibbon 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**

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**From:** Joe and Frances Sechler <f105driver@gmail.com> on behalf of Joe and Frances Sechler  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 21, 2012 11:45 AM  
**To:** City Council , PARC  
**Subject:** Oppose MccKibbon Project

I strongly oppose the MccKibbon project - the proposed hotel in front of the Basilica. Smart cities, especially those which rely primarily on tourists for revenue, establish and maintain beautiful parks and greenways. That is what we need in the subject vacant lot; no more concrete and high rises. There's plenty of lodging for tourists. We need to find them more places to sit in the shade and soak in the total ambiance of Asheville.

Hotel - no; park - yes

Joe Sechler

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 21, 2012 8:53 AM  
**To:** Leonard Carrier  
**Subject:** Re: PARC proposal

Mr Carrier

Thanks for writing me, using civil language, 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 consistent with a siteplan 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. Some in the community are promoting the idea of a park here as being a simple choice. 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 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 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. By the way, to see more of my take on Asheville’s fiscal challenges, check this out:

<http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20120609/OPINION03/306090005/City-faces-grinding-fiscal-dilemma?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7Cfrontpage%7Cs>

**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 open to the idea of a properly designed high-quality hotel (not an imposing ugly one) because that might 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). 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, with a willingness to entertain City input. 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, 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

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**From:** Leonard Carrier <[lcarrrier@charter.net](mailto:lcarrrier@charter.net)>  
**Date:** Mon, 11 Jun 2012 15:29:50 -0400  
**To:** councilgroup <[AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto: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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 21, 2012 8:30 AM  
**To:** Marcell Williams  
**Subject:** Re: Basilica of St. Lawrence

Mr Williams

Thanks for writing me regarding the future of the city-owned parcel across from the USCellular 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.
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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 consistent with a siteplan 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 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 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. By the way, to see more of my take on Asheville’s fiscal challenges, check this out:

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**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, with a willingness to entertain City input. 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, 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

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**From:** Marcell Williams <[mwnc31@aol.com](mailto:mwnc31@aol.com)>

**Date:** Fri, 8 Jun 2012 06:58:10 -0400 (EDT)

**To:** councilgroup <[AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov)>, <"PARC <[ashevilleparc@gmail.com](mailto:ashevilleparc@gmail.com)">

**Subject:** Basilica of St. Lawrence

I am writing to express my concern regarding the vacant lot across from the church. For the life of me I can't understand why the city don't sell the lot to the church. All we need is another hotel/motel in the downtown district. It is so crowded now that I hardly go down town anymore and this would be one more reason to stay away. The lot would make a great place for a park and it would connect the church and the grove arcade area. It would be a great place for people to stop

and relax for a few minutes as they enjoy our town. Seems \$ is the deciding factor in everything that is done nowadays. Please let the people decide the fate of the lot. Let "us" the people decide. Thank you for your time. Carolyn R. Williams. 20 Sedgefield Road, Candler, NC 28715 (yes, I'm live in the city limits)

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Kathy Patrick <msclarkin@gmail.com> on behalf of Kathy Patrick  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 10:59 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** greenway

I feel strongly that a greenway/park is the best way to use this property....what a beautiful addition to our wonderful city!

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Martha Wight <martha7b@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Martha Wight  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 9:40 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** Park in front of St. Lawrence

A park makes the most sense, please use the land in front of the church wisely and think twice before voting for another high rise that detracts from our lovely city instead of adds to it. Eventually a high rise will become old and out of date, but a park will be everlasting green and easily loved by those downtown.

martha Wight  
64 Willowbrook Road  
Asheville, NC

**Ben Fulmer**

---

**From:** Lynn Eddy <Lynn.Eddy@charter.net> on behalf of Lynn Eddy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 9:32 PM  
**To:** 'City Council'; 'PARC'  
**Subject:** Across from the Basilica

Please don't take away the charm of our city any more than has already been done. Certainly it's not all about tourists, but most of them don't seek out Asheville for its luxury hotels. The space across from the Basilica should be a beautiful park!

Lynn Eddy  
25 Gardenwood Lane  
Asheville, 28803

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Sara May <maybloomer@yahoo.com> on behalf of Sara May  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 6:20 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** We need a park across from the Basilica, not another hotel

Dear Asheville City Council members,

Please heed the above message and act on it--do the right thing!

Thanks,  
Sara May  
38 Campground Road  
Asheville, NC 28805

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** marci@aquamystique.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 6:12 PM  
**To:** City@aquamystique.com;PARC  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence Basilica

I am horrified to find out that a hotel (!!!!!) might be built across from the basilica, destroying the look at and the look from this priceless piece of Asheville architectural history. We don't need another hotel downtown!!!

For God's sake, don't do this. Allow the church, which is paying good money, to beautify the space for the benefit of the city and all its residents and tourists.

Keep the basilica visible to everyone.

Sincerely,

Marcianne Miller  
149 Beverly Rd.  
Asheville, NC 28805  
phone: 828-505-3185  
email: [marci@aquamystique.com](mailto:marci@aquamystique.com)



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Lew Gelfond <mail@lewelfond.com> on behalf of Lew Gelfond  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 4:53 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** land in front of Basilica of St. Lawrence

Dear City Council Members - I am opposed to selling the parcel of land in front of the church to be used for a hotel. The church is a beautiful landmark, and the residents of Asheville would be better served if the parcel of land in front of it were developed as a park. Susan Jensen, 43 Vermont Court 28806

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Bill Maloney <maloneyw@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Bill Maloney  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 2:51 PM  
**To:** 'City Council'; 'PARC'  
**Subject:** Sell the land to the Basilica

To City Council Members:

I would like to see the City sell the land to the Basilica of St. Lawrence.

We have plenty of hotels and the occupancy is around 63%.

We have only One Historic Basilica.

Asheville is a Tourism City. People do not come here to see our hotels.

Invest in one more reason why people should visit us.

Selling the property to the Basilica is wise for tax dollars and it's a smart investment in the future of Asheville.

Sincerely,

Bill Maloney  
President, Software Solutions of Asheville, Inc.  
*Custom Microsoft Database Applications*  
*MCAS Microsoft Certified Application Specialist*

Office: 828-258-1171  
Cell: 828-230-0103  
[www.swsolution.com](http://www.swsolution.com)

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Michael Wechter <mswclu@att.net> on behalf of Michael Wechter  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 2:38 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Cc:** mswclu@att.net  
**Subject:** property accross from the Basilica

It's time that council listen to those it has been elected to represent. There are 2 hotels already within a block that are hardly bursting at the seams with occupancy! Why must this city consistently grant almost every developers wish list to the detriment of the residents? (McKibbon is already building another hotel on Biltmore, how many more are needed?)

Thank you,  
Michael Wechter

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Lynn Morningstar <Lynn\_Morningstar@ZuckerStar.net> on behalf of Lynn Morningstar  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 19, 2012 2:38 PM  
**To:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** NO HOTEL

NO HOTEL ACROSS FROM THE BASILICA IN ASHEVILLE NORTH CAROLINA.

Lynn Morningstar  
209 White Pine  
Asheville, NC 28805

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Cicada Brokaw <tub65966@temple.edu> on behalf of Cicada Brokaw  
**Sent:** Friday, June 15, 2012 2:42 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: It is Time enough already

Hi Marc,

Thanks for your thoughtful reply. I believe we need to find ways to increase green space throughout the city. I do not have an answer for how to find the money, except that it seems there must be a way to design and maintain parks so that maintaining them does not cost as much money as you are saying it costs. Also, unless there is a study showing the level and types of use for a park in that location, I think it is speculative to assume that a successful design for a green park in that location could be created.

I would like to see that possibility among the choices being considered by the Council.

Sincerely,

Cicada Brokaw

On Jun 6, 2012, at 3:49 PM, Marc Hunt wrote:

> Mr. Brokaw

>

> 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  
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> to maintain site-lines to the Basilica.

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> 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  
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 > 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.  
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> sell the property to a developer just as the City might, a point that  
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 >  
 >  
 > Marc Hunt  
 > Asheville City Council Member  
 >  
 >  
 > -----Original Message-----  
 > From: Cicada Brokaw [mailto:tub65966@temple.edu] On Behalf Of Cicada  
 > Sent: Friday, June 01, 2012 1:47 PM  
 > To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
 > Subject: It is Time enough already  
 >  
 > It is time enough already for City council to permanently ditch plans  
 > to build on the site across from the Basilica and to convert this area  
 > to a park, to some green space. Green space is sorely needed near the  
 > Civic center and across from the Basilica. The amount of concrete and  
 > asphalt in this area chokes the area. Please step up to the plate and  
 > do something visionary! Place this park into a plan for our city's  
 > future!  
 > Sincerely,  
 > Harold Cicada Brokaw Dennis  
 >  
 >

**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**

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**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**

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**From:** Gary Soldow <garysanta@charter.net> on behalf of Gary Soldow  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 09, 2012 3:21 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** St Lawrence Green

Dear City Council Members:

You were elected to represent your constituents. The McKibbin Company is not (or at least should not be) one of your constituents. It would appear that a clear majority of Asheville residents (your actual constituents) do not want a McKibbin hotel in the location of what could be St Lawrence Green.

The Asheville Citizen Times had a statistic that points out that Asheville hotel occupancy is in the neighborhood of 60%. That, of itself, makes it very clear that there is absolutely no need for another hotel.

Please attend to the wishes of Asheville residents and turn the area in front of the basilica into a park.

Gary Soldow, Ph.D.

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Friday, June 08, 2012 1:51 PM  
**To:** Esther Manheimer  
**Subject:** pls send me your standard Haywood St email response

Good timing on your vacation, getting pretty wild on the streets her! PARC to stage picket/protest at the site tomorrow.

Met with D Pearson this AM... a more reasonable person than I had anticipated.

Marc

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Ted <digbygroove@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Ted  
**Sent:** Friday, June 08, 2012 8:00 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Park or developed

I want to go on record and express my desires that council leave the land undeveloped, and used as a public park

Ted williams

West Asheville

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Marcell Williams <mwnc31@aol.com> on behalf of Marcell Williams  
**Sent:** Friday, June 08, 2012 6:58 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC <ashevilleparc@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Basilica of St. Lawrence

I am writing to express my concern regarding the vacant lot across from the church. For the life of me I can't understand why the city don't sell the lot to the church. All we need is another hotel/motel in the downtown district. It is so crowded now that I hardly go down town anymore and this would be one more reason to stay away. The lot would make a great place for a park and it would connect the church and the grove arcade area. It would be a great place for people to stop and relax for a few minutes as they enjoy our town. Seems \$ is the deciding factor in everything that is done nowadays. Please let the people decide the fate of the lot. Let "us" the people decide. Thank you for your time. Carolyn R. Williams. 20 Sedgefield Road, Candler, NC 28715 (yes, I'm live in the city limits)

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** JJ Kitt <jjkitt@yahoo.com> on behalf of JJ Kitt  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 10:42 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Green space

The thought of another high-rise hotel in downtown Asheville is absurd. Especially given the location that you're considering across from the church. Listen to the voices of the majority of the people in the community who strongly oppose this hotel. Our tax money, our decision!

Joseph Kitt

Sent from my iPhone

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 10:17 AM  
**To:** 'John Huie'  
**Subject:** RE: Keep the space green!

John

Below is the response I have been providing folks lately. This situation is more complex than meets the eye. I know you can understand that given the great things you have done over the years for the community. Glad to talk further.

Thanks  
Marc



**Marc Hunt**  
**City Council Member**  
55 Cambridge Rd.  
Asheville, NC 28804  
Cell 828.273.2172  
marchunt@avlcouncil.com

++++++

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 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, with a willingness to entertain City input. 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



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**From:** John Huie [mailto:John@JohnHuie.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 9:15 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
**Subject:** Keep the space green!

TO: City Council  
FROM: John Huie, Citizen

Turn the space across from the Basilica into the GREEN SPACE it must be!

It will add to the uniqueness of downtown Asheville.

Just do it!

John Huie  
Asheville, NC



**John C. Huie, Ph. D.**

**Educational Consultant**

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**828 989 9100 – Charlotte Office**  
**828 225 1702 - FAX**

**[John@johnhuie.com](mailto:John@johnhuie.com)**  
**<http://www.johnhuie.blogspot.com>**





## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Frank Coney <fcms1982@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Frank Coney  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 10:08 AM  
**To:** 'Marc Hunt'  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed McKibben Purchase

Dear Marc,

Thank you for the detailed response to my inquiry about the lot across the street from the Basilica. You seem to have a reasonable and balanced approach to this issue. I would point out, however, that yet another hotel downtown is not the best use of the land. We have three relatively new hotels downtown: the Indigo, the New Bohemian and the ugly box on Biltmore. Then there are the numerous existing hotels such as the very well done Haywood Park Hotel. Why not a mixed use building with perhaps a restaurant, nightclub, professional offices, and perhaps a floor of condos? The conditions you set forth in your email sound good, but like so many intentions of City Council, I am concerned they won't hold up if the developer threatens to pull out of negotiations if he can't have his way. I can only hope you will do what is in the long term interest of most of the city's residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Frank Coney

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**From:** Marc Hunt [mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 3:59 PM  
**To:** 'Frank Coney'  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed McKibben Purchase

Mr. Coney

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.
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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, with a willingness to entertain City input. 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

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**From:** Frank Coney [<mailto:fcms1982@bellsouth.net>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 11:54 AM

**To:** [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto: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

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**From:** John Huie <John@JohnHuie.com> on behalf of John Huie  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 9:15 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Keep the space green!

TO: City Council  
FROM: John Huie, Citizen

Turn the space across from the Basilica into the GREEN SPACE it must be!

It will add to the uniqueness of downtown Asheville.

Just do it!

John Huie  
Asheville, NC



**John C. Huie, Ph. D.**

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**<http://www.johnhuie.blogspot.com>**



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Mark Hansman <gushansman@aol.com> on behalf of Mark Hansman  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 4:19 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Land across bassillica

You have no right to sell this land to your greedy cooperate friends, you don't own it, the tax payers do. Why don't you stop your underhanded back room deals city council is like Taminy hall. Think of the people for once

Sent from my iPhone

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Tyler Martin <tyler4abundance@gmail.com> on behalf of Tyler Martin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 10:54 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** SAVE OUR TOWN

My daddy taught me to learn from my mistakes. Please, .... be careful about the property in front of Civic Center/St. Lawrence /Libary/Grove Arcade.

STAPLES..... You struggled to get the size of that billboard reduced, after initially allowing it to be put up.

US CELLULAR.... You are breaking city sign regulations, after receiving a few bucks from another corporation.

McKIBBEN..... You know that a park will be a blessing, for us and all tourists, and this is the reason we voted you into office - assets for all.

Tyler Martin  
134 Skyview Drive  
Asheville



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Vicki Rowe-Currence <rowecurrence@gmail.com> on behalf of Vicki Rowe-Currence  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 5:30 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: Basilica Green

marc

thanks for your reply. it was well thought out and i appreciate it. the video also helped.

you two have a great time in the canyon! give my love to cat

vicki

On Wed, Jun 6, 2012 at 4:40 PM, Marc Hunt <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:

Vicki

Below is the standard reply I am providing folks that write. I know you care deeply about Asheville, and thanks for that. As you read, you'll see that this a complex matter with no simple solutions. As for the park idea, the challenge of funding it is very real.

Cat and I are doing a Grand canyon trip in a couple weeks!

Hope to see you soon.

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.

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A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt

Asheville City Council Member

**From:** Vicki Rowe-Currence [mailto:[rowecurrence@gmail.com](mailto:rowecurrence@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 4:01 PM  
**To:** [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov); PARC  
**Subject:** Basilica Green

I live at 38 Woodcrest Road in the city and I want a Basilica green, not a hotel built in that space across from the basilica and Civic Center

Vicki Rowe-Currence  
[828-252-7880](tel:828-252-7880)

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 5:03 PM  
**To:** 'Harry Woggon'  
**Subject:** RE: PLEASE A PARK NEXT TO THE BASICILA OF ST. LAWRENCE

Mr and Mrs Woggon

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.

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“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.

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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

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

From: Harry Woggon [mailto:hakw@charter.net]  
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:** 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.

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We need Green Space and trees for all our citizens.

Thank you

Harry and Genelda Woggon

118 Macon Ave, Asheville

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** William W. Crownover <billcrownover@bellsouth.net> on behalf of William W. Crownover  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 4:11 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: Property near St. Lawrence Cathedral

Thank you for your reply and I understand your position. Thank you for being thorough and up front.

Bill

On 6/6/12 3:46 PM, "Marc Hunt" <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> wrote:

> Mr. Crownover  
>  
> 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 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, with a  
> willingness to entertain City input. 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  
 >  
 >  
 > -----Original Message-----  
 > From: Bill Crownover [mailto: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**

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**From:** Vicki Rowe-Currence <rowecurrence@gmail.com> on behalf of Vicki Rowe-Currence  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 4:01 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Basilica Green

I live at 38 Woodcrest Road in the city and I want a Basilica green, not a hotel built in that space across from the basilica and Civic Center

Vicki Rowe-Currence  
828-252-7880

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 4:01 PM  
**To:** 'FRED FLAXMAN'  
**Subject:** RE: A park in front of the Basilica

Mr Flaxman

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.
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- 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 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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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**From:** FRED FLAXMAN [mailto:[fflaxman@frontier.com](mailto:fflaxman@frontier.com)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 4:47 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Cc:** PARC  
**Subject:** A park in front of the Basilica

A tree-shaded public park in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence, using land already owned by the City of Asheville for the purpose, would seem to be a non-brainer for those who want to improve the appearance, functionality, and joyful daily use of downtown. Please support this idea for the future benefit of this great little city!

*Fred Flaxman*

Author of [\*Sixty Slices of Life ... on Wry: The Private Life of a Public Broadcaster\*](#),  
winner of the 2011 Pinnacle Book Award for memoir.

Rave reviews at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [Rhapsody in Books](http://Rhapsody in Books), [Reading at the Beach](http://Reading at the Beach), [BookPleasures.com](http://BookPleasures.com), [The Book Nook](http://The Book Nook), and [Radio World](http://Radio World).

Editor of [The Timeless Tales of Reginald Bretnor](http://The Timeless Tales of Reginald Bretnor).

Producer/Presenter of [Compact Discoveries](http://Compact Discoveries).

36 Pickens Lane,  
Weaverville, NC 28787-9321 - telephone:  
828-645-8580

[www.fredflaxman.com](http://www.fredflaxman.com)

[www.sixtyslices.com](http://www.sixtyslices.com)

[www.compactdiscoveries.com](http://www.compactdiscoveries.com)

[www.bretnor.com](http://www.bretnor.com)

[fredflaxman.wordpress.com/](http://fredflaxman.wordpress.com/)

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 3:48 PM  
**To:** 'Butch Giusto'  
**Subject:** RE: Basillica Hotel Sellout

Mr Giusto

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.
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A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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**From:** Butch Giusto [mailto:bgiusto@radiotechnologies.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 30, 2012 10:04 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; 'PARC'  
**Subject:** Basilica Hotel Sellout

Why reproduce the mistakes of most cities that lose their green space to developers? Why add even more traffic and congestion to an already congested downtown?

Who bebfits from this project? Certainly it is not the citizens of Asheville.

***Butch Giusto***  
***President***



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**828.333.0005 cell**



**866.309.0196 Fax**  
**[bgiusto@radiotechnologies.com](mailto:bgiusto@radiotechnologies.com)**

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 1:55 PM  
**To:** 'Margaret Foxx'  
**Subject:** RE: green space vs. high rise

Ms. Foxx

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.
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A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: Margaret Foxx [mailto:foxxjim@charter.net]  
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 12:45 PM  
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
Subject: green space vs. high rise

When tourists visit they are looking to see what the establishment of Asheville value. The older the cities visited, the more the treasure of the old becomes evident. In Rochester, NY there is a beautiful park in front of St Mary's Church. There is a monument to George Washington, shade, benches and a refuge for office workers downtown. Savannah GA's main attraction is its parks, shade and benches .

We have the Basilica - by the same architect as the Grand Central Station in NYC! It is beyond common sense that a high rise hotel is even being considered for that space. What we have to do is get rid of the cement and make a park worthy of Asheville. A monument to Thomas Wolfe perhaps, or a reference to the TB sanitoriums we were once famous for, Robert E. Lee and the school he founded here. Be real!

Margaret Mary Z. Foxx

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 1:54 PM  
**To:** k4noff@charter.net  
**Subject:** RE: St. Lawrence

Ms Kelly

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.
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A few more thoughts:

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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.

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**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:** k4noff@charter.net [mailto:k4noff@charter.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 1:04 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence

Please, No hotel in front of St. Lawrence Church. Make a park for all to enjoy.  
Kathy Kelly  
Asheville, NC 28805

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 1:54 PM  
**To:** 'SMITH CRAIG T'  
**Subject:** RE: Let's have a park.

Mr. Smith

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.

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

A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: SMITH CRAIG T [mailto:smithcraigt@gmail.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2012 1:06 PM  
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
Subject: Let's have a park.

A park at the Basilica would serve Asheville as a very positive space forever. The city should be very demanding as to what is built on the site if the land is sold to the church. The Basilica should come up with much more and attractive plan than they have presented to date.

Sent from my iPhone

**Ben Fulmer**

---

**From:** SMITH CRAIG T <smithcraigt@gmail.com> on behalf of SMITH CRAIG T  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 1:06 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Let's have a park.

A park at the Basilica would serve Asheville as a very positive space forever. The city should be very demanding as to what is built on the site if the land is sold to the church. The Basilica should come up with much more and attractive plan than they have presented to date.

Sent from my iPhone



## Ben Fulmer

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**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 1:04 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** St. Lawerence

Please, No hotel in front of St. Lawrence Church. Make a park for all to enjoy.  
Kathy Kelly  
Asheville, NC 28805

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Margaret Foxx <foxxjim@charter.net> on behalf of Margaret Foxx  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 12:45 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** green space vs. high rise

When tourists visit they are looking to see what the establishment of Asheville value. The older the cities visited, the more the treasure of the old becomes evident. In Rochester, NY there is a beautiful park in front of St Mary's Church. There is a monument to George Washington, shade, benches and a refuge for office workers downtown. Savannah GA's main attraction is its parks, shade and benches .

We have the Basilica - by the same architect as the Grand Central Station in NYC! It is beyond common sense that a high rise hotel is even being considered for that space. What we have to do is get rid of the cement and make a park worthy of Asheville. A monument to Thomas Wolfe perhaps, or a reference to the TB sanitoriums we were once famous for, Robert E. Lee and the school he founded here. Be real!

Margaret Mary Z. Foxx

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** bentcreek <bentcreek@ioa.com> on behalf of bentcreek  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 12:40 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;'PARC'  
**Subject:** re bid

I was contacted by PARC and agree with them. "It's modeled on the much-criticised Convention and Visitors Bureau, which collects the hotel room tax and spends it on peeling signs and direct payments to zipline companies and nightclubs." As a business that pays the hotel room tax I am quite disappointed in how the money is spent. When there is tax money being spent there needs to be some one in charge of spending that money that must answer to the tax payer and voter. I would recommend we find a better way to fund for downtown clean ups. Forget more festivals.

*Jodee & Doug Sellers*



## Bent Creek Lodge

Website: [www.bentcreeknc.com](http://www.bentcreeknc.com)  
Email: [bentcreek@ioa.com](mailto:bentcreek@ioa.com)  
Phone: 1-877-231-6574 toll free

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Eloise E Clark <eclark@bgsu.edu> on behalf of Eloise E Clark  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 9:17 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** RE: RE:

Thank you for your thoughtful and comprehensive reply. I very much agree with the outcome that you have outlined and hope that it can be achieved. I am mostly opposed to adding another "box" that will house visitors and yes bring in money, but will do nothing for the aesthetics of the area. I have seen examples of structures that would compliment the site and would both enhance the area and add to the coffers... but the Council needs to be very determined in its expectations with any builder. Good luck in your deliberations. I am a relative newcomer to Asheville, but when I was first here some group was trying to raise money for the downtown development. Does it still exist? And if not do you know persons who would be willing to restart it? I am not a wealthy person, but I would work for a good cause. Thanks again, Eloise \_\_\_\_\_

From: Marc Hunt [marchunt@avlcouncil.com]  
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 2:40 PM  
To: Eloise E Clark  
Subject: RE:

Ms. Clark

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.

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A few more thoughts:

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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

From: Eloise E Clark [mailto:[eclark@bgsu.edu](mailto:eclark@bgsu.edu)]  
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 12:34 PM  
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
Subject:

To Whom it May Concern:

Please do nothing to detract from the elegance and beauty of the Basilica. A small park in the space would make a wonderful enhancement for the city and for this most special building. Eloise E. Clark

P.S. The current almost completed hotel on Biltmore is a terrible eyesore. Anything at all similar would really trash the downtown area.

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** FRED FLAXMAN <fflaxman@frontier.com> on behalf of FRED FLAXMAN  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 4:47 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Cc:** PARC  
**Subject:** A park in front of the Bascilica

A tree-shaded public park in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence, using land already owned by the City of Asheville for the purpose, would seem to be a non-brainer for those who want to improve the appearance, functionality, and joyful daily use of downtown. Please support this idea for the future benefit of this great little city!

## *Fred Flaxman*

Author of [\*Sixty Slices of Life ... on Wry: The Private Life of a Public Broadcaster\*](#),

winner of the 2011 Pinnacle Book Award for memoir.

Rave reviews at [Amazon.com](#), [Rhapsody in Books](#), [Reading at the Beach](#), [BookPleasures.com](#), [The Book Nook](#), and [Radio World](#).

Editor of [\*The Timeless Tales of Reginald Bretnor\*](#).

Producer/Presenter of [\*Compact Discoveries\*](#).

36 Pickens Lane,  
Weaverville, NC 28787-9321 - telephone:  
828-645-8580

[www.fredflaxman.com](http://www.fredflaxman.com)

[www.sixtyslices.com](http://www.sixtyslices.com)

[www.compactdiscoveries.com](http://www.compactdiscoveries.com)

[www.bretnor.com](http://www.bretnor.com)

[fredflaxman.wordpress.com/](http://fredflaxman.wordpress.com/)

**Ben Fulmer**

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**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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 12:29 PM  
**To:** 'Jeanne Charters'  
**Subject:** RE: The Basilica

Ms Restivo

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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

---

**From:** Jeanne Charters [mailto:jcharters@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 12:17 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
**Subject:** The Basilica

Dear Asheville City Council members,

Please, I implore you to not sell the space in front of the Basilica to the McKibbin chain. In doing so, I believe you are not only sullyng a great tourism draw in our city, but that you are also damaging your own credibility as a group.

The Old Tripp Restaurant location is close to downtown and would make a great hotel location.

Jeanne Restivo

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Jeanne Charters <jcharters@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Jeanne Charters  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 12:17 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** The Basilica

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Jeanne Restivo

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 12:08 PM  
**To:** 'Tony Cecil'  
**Subject:** RE: Land across from the Basilica.

Mr. Cecil

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.

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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

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

From: Tony Cecil [mailto:forcruzur@aol.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, June 05, 2012 11:44 AM  
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
Subject: Land across from the Basilica.

Hi everybody.As an ex real estate dev.(I did 37 Hiawassee motel to condo's) I would think the city would be better served to make something for everyone to use and enjoy.thanks Tony Cecil

Sent from my iPad

**Ben Fulmer**

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**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

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**From:** Tony Cecil <forcruzur@aol.com> on behalf of Tony Cecil  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 05, 2012 11:44 AM  
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## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Cheryl Orengo <ctorengo@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheryl Orengo  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 9:57 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: Land next to Basilica

Oh, we ride the French broad river trail occasionally and then the Hominy Creek Road to the end and it is still only a 3 mile ride which is just a leisurely ride for us and other cyclists who like to ride for miles on greenways. It's a start but so many cities around the country have at least a 10 mile greenway. People like us who like to ride bike tours and greenways for 50 miles a day search for rides around the east coast and Asheville is loosing those riders:-)

On Mon, Jun 4, 2012 at 2:29 PM, Marc Hunt <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:

Cheryl

I would be insistent on great design here- the type of design that you describe as attracting you to downtown. Note that we own this site and can control the design very tightly compared to other projects downtown where we did not own the site. Considering whether a project on someone else's land complies with our zoning ordinance is a different matter than negotiating a sale that incorporates stringent design standards.

I do not think you'll find many folks that have fought for more funding for parks and greenways in Asheville than me. Converting this site to a park like Pritchard Park and then maintaining it would require several million\$\$\$. I just see no way it can rise to priority status for the City to afford. We are struggling to give our staff more than a 1% raise over four years, and we owe other parts of town greenways and open space.

Did you know you can ride now from French Broad River Park through the Waller Tract and back all on protected greenways plus very peaceful and quiet Hominy Creek Rd., a total of five miles?

Thanks again,

marc

**From:** Cheryl Orengo [mailto:[ctorengo@gmail.com](mailto:ctorengo@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 12:10 PM



**To:** Marc Hunt

**Subject:** Re: Land next to Basilica

Thank you but I am totally opposed to another 6 story building like the many others that were approved by City Council that take away from the beauty of Asheville (which it seems like you support). People flock downtown to see beautiful architecture and enjoy wonderful meals they do not come to look at huge square buildings with windows! My husband and I go downtown to eat, have dessert once each weekend. We enjoy the beautiful architecture like the Basilica. I personally think, as do many others that the site across from the Basilica is a fine place for a park.

One of the reasons why Asheville's parks and greenways are so expensive is because of the VERY expensive sculptures, stone walls, fountains and benches incorporated into the sites while building. Pritchard park is not like that and is very beautiful, people sit on rocks and concrete. An example of a local greenway long enough to be useful is in tiny Morganton! It is lovely and was doable because they simply put in an asphalt path and then added extras as time went by. We go all the way to Morganton to ride it when we want to do a nice, leisurely 20 mile ride. We ride the 4 mile trail with the 1/2 mile trail to the school up and back two times. When we want to ride greenways for several days we go to Ohio where they also have hundreds of miles of greenways called "metro parks" and because of that clever name Ohioians vote to fund them year after year!

A park can be just a park, highlighted by plants and trees instead of expensive structures and a park would be beautiful across from the Basilica and the civic center and used by many! If there has to be a hotel because of a money shortage it should compliment the Basilica by having a historic appearance and the building of the structure should not include anything that could harm the Basilica. Hopefully the city council will approve that kind of thing instead of another 6 story box!

FYI- I am also one of the many Ashevilleians that is upset by the name "US Cellular Center". That was not handled well either.

On Mon, Jun 4, 2012 at 11:38 AM, Marc Hunt <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:

Ms. Orengo

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:

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Marc Hunt

Asheville City Council Member

**From:** Cheryl Orengo [mailto:[ctorengo@gmail.com](mailto:ctorengo@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 10:46 AM  
**To:** [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov); +PARC+  
**Subject:** Land next to Basilica

Dear Council Members,

I agree with Parc with the situation of park versus another high rise hotel in downtown Asheville next to the Basilica. The park gets my vote! We now have enough new structures in Asheville that look like boxes with windows. The beautiful architecture of Asheville is now laden with modern high rise box structures that are taking away from the beauty of Asheville and the mountains. People come to Asheville's downtown because it is beautiful and vibrant so we need to preserve what we have left by adding another park area, not another boxey hotel next to a beautiful, historic building like the Basilica. It appears as if the people of Asheville own the area next to the Basilica so please listen to Ashevilleans not a corporate hotel chain!

Yours respectfully, Cheryl Orengo

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PEACE - It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart. (unknown)

Cheryl Thomas Orengo, BS, ICCE, CD(DONA), PCD(DONA)

Phone- [828-258-3327](tel:828-258-3327)

[www.peacefulbeginning.org](http://www.peacefulbeginning.org)

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## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 9:32 PM  
**To:** dutchoc@buncombe.main.nc.us  
**Subject:** RE: Green space

I think a high-quality well-designed park would be great. A half-way effort would not. No chance anytime soon of the \$ several million it would require to do it right, however. No chance. PARC and others have led a push to see a park here, but not a single person has stepped forward to indicate leadership of a fundraising effort.

The City's fiscal situation is getting worse for some complex reasons beyond our control - relating to growth in demand for our services versus our ability to gather revenues from those that use the services.. There is some push to again cut back our funding of affordable housing trust fund in the budget this year.... I do think our city is doing well on many fronts and we'll be fine in general; we just do not have capacity for much spending.

So I am looking for something that is win-win.

Best,

marc

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

From: dutchoc@buncombe.main.nc.us [mailto:dutchoc@buncombe.main.nc.us]  
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 8:33 PM  
To: Marc Hunt  
Subject: RE: Green space

Marc we are all well. Gregor is graduating this year also. How could it have happened so fast. The proposed structure looked lovely and vibrant.

As you are aware the devil is in the details...thanks for keeping watch.

Do we really need more hotels or businesses? A park would not stop the area from being alive and used. Dutch and Marc

On Mon, June 4, 2012 2:42 pm, Marc Hunt wrote:

> Marc and Dutch

>

> First, how are you guys and Gregor? Cannot believe Taylor is set to  
> graduate this year...

>

> And 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. Not  
> sure you guys will agree with me on this....but I'd be glad to discuss it further.

>

> 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.
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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:
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- > A few more thoughts:
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>

> City-Led or Basilica-Led Development? - Parishioners of the Basilica

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>

>

> Marc Hunt

> Asheville City Council Member

>

>

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: dutchoc@buncombe.main.nc.us [mailto:dutchoc@buncombe.main.nc.us]

> Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 12:28 PM

> To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov

> Subject: Green space

>

> Marc and I have been following this issue for a few years. We agree

> with PARC that it should be a park. Every one of you on the City

> Council know that beautiful green spaces will bring more money to our

> city. A tall building will bring darkness to an area that should be a

- > gathering place for visitors and citizens. New development has proven
- > to be ugly for the most part. Please act for all of us and do not put a building there.
- > Thanks, Marc Nishino and Dutch O'Connor
- >
- >
- >



**Ben Fulmer**

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**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:** Marie Moore <smoore1934@gmail.com> on behalf of Marie Moore  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 7:21 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: land across from the Basilica

Thank you, Marc.  
Marie S. Moore

On Mon, Jun 4, 2012 at 7:16 PM, Marc Hunt <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:

Ms. Moore

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.

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Marc Hunt

Asheville City Council Member

**From:** Marie Moore [mailto:[smoore1934@gmail.com](mailto:smoore1934@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 7:13 PM  
**To:** [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov); PARC  
**Subject:** land across from the Basilica

Dear Members of the City Council,

Please don't let the City's need for money overcome the best long range plan for the citizens of Asheville. A park would add so much to that part of the City. No, it wouldn't bring a lot of money but it would invite people to spend in other ways.

Please don't ok the plan for a hotel.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marie S. Moore, Asheville

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Marie Moore <smoore1934@gmail.com> on behalf of Marie Moore  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 7:13 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** land across from the Basilica

Dear Members of the City Council,

Please don't let the City's need for money overcome the best long range plan for the citizens of Asheville. A park would add so much to that part of the City. No, it wouldn't bring a lot of money but it would invite people to spend in other ways.

Please don't ok the plan for a hotel.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Marie S. Moore, Asheville

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 4:25 PM  
**To:** 'Alfred Lyons'  
**Subject:** RE: Park in front of Basilica

Mr. Lyons

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 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.

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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

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

From: Alfred Lyons [mailto:[alfredlyons@yahoo.com](mailto:alfredlyons@yahoo.com)]  
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 2:59 PM  
To: [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov); PARC  
Subject: Park in front of Basilica

Dear members of Asheville council,

Please do not sell the land to a hotel. Please consider a park in front of the Basilica. I am a city resident and voter.

Thank you,

Alfred Lyons  
708 New Haw Creek Rd  
Asheville, NC 28805

Sent from my iPhone

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 2:47 PM  
**To:** 'Ann Bury'  
**Subject:** RE: City property

Ms Bury

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.
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<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.

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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

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

From: Ann Bury [mailto:annbur@charter.net]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 30, 2012 8:23 PM  
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
Subject: City property

To Asheville City Council Members:

I think the space across the street from the Basilica should be used as a park which all residents and tourists can enjoy. It should have shade trees and benches in it where people can have a place to rest, reflect or read about the attractions nearby--the Grove Arcade, the Basilica, the Library, and the former Thomas Wolfe Auditorium.

Let's not have another hotel in the downtown area. That would only serve a few people from out-of-town, and the park will serve residents as well as tourists.

Ann Bury  
230 Lovely Lane, Asheville, NC 28803

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 2:47 PM  
**To:** moonspirit48@bellsouth.net  
**Subject:** RE: Make St. Lawrence GREEN

Kathleen

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.

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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:** moonspirit48@bellsouth.net [mailto: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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 2:39 PM  
**To:** 'Tom Donohue'  
**Subject:** RE: Land

Mr Donahue

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.
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A few more thoughts:

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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

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

From: Tom Donohue [mailto:dono3356@me.com]  
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2012 1:48 PM  
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
Subject: Land

The city has enough hotels, let the church use the land for a park.

Sent from my iPhone

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Tom Donohue <dono3356@me.com> on behalf of Tom Donohue  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 1:48 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Land

The city has enough hotels,let the church use the land for a park.

Sent from my iPhone

**Ben Fulmer**

---

**From:** cody b. hughey <dancerbeez@gmail.com> on behalf of cody b. hughey  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 1:29 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Greenspace at the Basilica

Hello decision makers,

In my opinion as an Asheville resident of 15 years, I believe that having a beautiful green space in front of the Basilica is the best move for the city. There's no refuge in downtown for a respite in the summer months--and Pritchard Park is filled with concrete. Let's keep that section and make it green! What beauty that would be in that spot near the Civic Center and connecting the library, the Grove Arcade and the other walking areas around there.

Blessings,

Cody Hughey  
West Asheville Resident

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 11:21 AM  
**To:** 'Stanley Corwin'  
**Subject:** RE: Land use in front of the Basilica

Mr Corwin

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.

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A few more thoughts:

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hotel (see above video link). A plan much like this is what I would aim to see achieved by McKibbin or another hotel developer.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

**From:** Stanley Corwin [mailto:colnstash@att.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 9:04 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
**Subject:** Land use in front of the Basilica

Please not another luxury hotel --Two have recently been built in the downtown area. Please go with the option presented by St. Lawrence.  
Colette Corwin

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 11:19 AM  
**To:** 'Amy Renigar'  
**Subject:** RE: Please make St. Lawrence GREEN

Ms. Renigar

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.

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- 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, 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.

**City-Led of 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:** Amy Renigar [mailto:amyrenigar@gmail.com]  
**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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 11:18 AM  
**To:** 'C. Walgate'  
**Subject:** RE: St. Lawrence Green Space

Mr Walgate

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.

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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, 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.

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hotel (see above video link). A plan much like this is what I would aim to see achieved by McKibbin or another hotel developer.

**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

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**From:** C. Walgate [mailto:cwalgate@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 01, 2012 12:02 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** FW: St. Lawrence Green Space

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**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

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 11:14 AM  
**To:** 'Esther Cartwright - AvL'  
**Subject:** RE: Park not Hotel

Ms Cartwright

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.
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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, 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.

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Marc Hunt  
Asheville City Council Member

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**From:** Esther Cartwright - AVL [mailto:ecartwright@avltech.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 11:12 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; PARC  
**Subject:** Park not Hotel

Please do not sell the lot across from the Basilica to a developer and instead turn it into a green space we can all use and enjoy.  
Kind Regards,  
Esther Cartwright

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Esther Cartwright - AvL <ecartwright@avltech.com> on behalf of Esther Cartwright - AvL  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 11:12 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Park not Hotel

Please do not sell the lot across from the Basilica to a developer and instead turn it into a green space we can all use and enjoy.

Kind Regards,  
Esther Cartwright



## Ben Fulmer

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**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

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**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:** Stanley Corwin <colnstash@att.net> on behalf of Stanley Corwin  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 9:04 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Land use infront of the Basilica

Please not another luxury hotel --Two have recently been built in the downtown area. Please go with the option presented by St. Lawrence.  
Colette Corwin

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** bwweather <bwweather@bellsouth.net> on behalf of bwweather  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 3:24 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** property across from the basilica

Dear City Council members,

I implore you to not sell the property across from the basilica to the McKibbon hotel people. Building a hotel on this site would be a terrible idea. The city already has two new hotels (including the one going up on Biltmore Ave.) in the downtown area and does not need another one. Please look at the pictures of a proposed park and imagine what a wonderful asset that would be to Asheville. We citizens have already voiced our strong opposition to erecting a large building on this site--please listen to us.

Sincerely,

Barbara Weatherall  
10 Trappers Run Dr.  
Asheville NC 28805

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Cheryl Orengo <ctorengo@gmail.com> on behalf of Cheryl Orengo  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 10:46 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;+PARC+  
**Subject:** Land next to Basilica

Dear Council Members,

I agree with Parc with the situation of park versus another high rise hotel in downtown Asheville next to the Basilica. The park gets my vote! We now have enough new structures in Asheville that look like boxes with windows. The beautiful architecture of Asheville is now laden with modern high rise box structures that are taking away from the beauty of Asheville and the mountains. People come to Asheville's downtown because it is beautiful and vibrant so we need to preserve what we have left by adding another park area, not another boxey hotel next to a beautiful, historic building like the Basilica. It appears as if the people of Asheville own the area next to the Basilica so please listen to Ashevilleians not a corporate hotel chain!

Yours respectfully, Cheryl Orengo

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PEACE - It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart. (unknown)

Cheryl Thomas Orengo, BS, ICCE, CD(DONA), PCD(DONA)  
Phone- 828-258-3327  
[www.peacefulbeginning.org](http://www.peacefulbeginning.org)

**Ben Fulmer**

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**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**

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**From:** Ann Bury <annbur@charter.net> on behalf of Ann Bury  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 30, 2012 8:23 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** City property

To Asheville City Council Members:

I think the space across the street from the Basilica should be used as a park which all residents and tourists can enjoy. It should have shade trees and benches in it where people can have a place to rest, reflect or read about the attractions nearby--the Grove Arcade, the Basilica, the Library, and the former Thomas Wolfe Auditorium.

Let's not have another hotel in the downtown area. That would only serve a few people from out-of-town, and the park will serve residents as well as tourists.

Ann Bury  
230 Lovely Lane, Asheville, NC 28803

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** alfredsoncobb@charter.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 30, 2012 3:25 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** McKibbon plan

Dear Council members,

Although I understand why you want to allow the McKibbon group to build on the Basilica lot, I am against this plan. The Basilica is one of our historic prizes and to allow it to become a minor structure in that part of town would be a shame.

One of your goals, so I understand, is to make the downtown a good place for residents. With the low occupancy rate of the condos in town, might I suggest one of the reasons for this is due to the lack of adequate small green spaces. Pritchard Park is not exactly a place where most downtown residents want to hang out. People come to Asheville for natural surroundings and if there were some more small park spaces, then it would make them feel more like downtown is a place to live. Many larger cities have such spaces. More tax revenue would come from filling those empty condo spaces. We already have hotel and condo spaces being built on Biltmore Avenue. Do we have to cover every inch of Asheville with such buildings?

You need to have hotels on the outskirts of the center of downtown, say, South French Broad where the market is located. What about buying out the old motel that is on Patton and building there? It is an eyesore anyway and a more contemporary style of building would fit there. There needs to be some shuttle access for downtown to move these people around. Even the hotels on Tunnel Road should have a combined shuttle service to get people into downtown so they don't have to use their cars.

Let's think twice before overdeveloping a small space that can be an attractive space for downtown, the church and the residents. Pack place is too big of scale, except for outdoor events or tourists milling around. Everything cannot be for the tourists.

Please consider not approving this project.

Sincerely,  
Linda Alfredson



**Ben Fulmer**

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**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

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**From:** Butch Giusto <bgiusto@radiitechnologies.com> on behalf of Butch Giusto  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 30, 2012 10:04 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;'PARC'  
**Subject:** Basillica Hotel Sellout

Why reproduce the mistakes of most cities that lose their green space to developers? Why add even more traffic and congestion to an already congested downtown?

Who bebfits from this project? Certainly it is not the citizens of Asheville.

***Butch Giusto***  
***President***



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**866.309.0196 Fax**  
[bgiusto@radiitechnologies.com](mailto:bgiusto@radiitechnologies.com)

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Alfred Lyons <alfredlyons@yahoo.com> on behalf of Alfred Lyons  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 29, 2012 2:59 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** Park in front of Basilica

Dear members of Asheville council,

Please do not sell the land to a hotel. Please consider a park in front of the Basilica. I am a city resident and voter.

Thank you,

Alfred Lyons  
708 New Haw Creek Rd  
Asheville, NC 28805

Sent from my iPhone

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2012 2:50 PM  
**To:** jennifer@valuescentre.com  
**Subject:** RE: Construction near Basilica of St. Lawrence

Ms. Quinn

Thank you for contacting me regarding the property near the Basilica and the Civic Center.

My priority for use of the property aligns with the goal that many parishioners at the Basilica favor – a sensible development that complements surrounding properties, contributes to the vitality of downtown, has a significant set-back from the Basilica, and includes public open space. I do not favor a towering high-rise crowding the basilica. I also feel strongly that any construction not harm the structural integrity of the Basilica. Where I perhaps disagree with some parishioners is that I feel that the City needs to engage an appropriate development partner directly so as to assure that the development that does occur serves the needs of the entire community, including the members of the Basilica. The Diocese has proposed to acquire the property and on its own determine the design and uses. I will not be able to support relinquishing control of the design and development process to the Basilica or any other buyer. The property and its relationship to downtown redevelopment is too critical.

I feel strongly that surface parking is not a good use of the property and will oppose that. I do not favor a public park as it is simply unaffordable given all the other park and greenway priorities the city has.

Again, thank-you for your input.

**Marc Hunt**  
**Member, Asheville City Council**

**From:** jennifer@valuescentre.com [mailto:jennifer@valuescentre.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2012 5:05 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Construction near Basilica of St. Lawrence

Dear City Leaders,

In a recent message from Asheville PARC, the following concern was expressed about constructing a high rise hotel across the street from the Basilica of St. Lawrence:

"Many worry that construction of a hotel so close to the church could damage it. The church has one of the world's largest unsupported elliptical domes, and at age 103, heavy construction nearby risks damage to the structure."

**I must say this touched a nerve for me. In 2002, St Peter's Catholic Church in Charlotte lost its Alter Fresco due to nearby construction. The work of art had been created by Asheville-resident and NC-native son Ben Long.**

Personally, I am in favor of the church having a set back building and plaza or the city having a park at the location. I am not against high rises in general, but I am for the preservation of our irreplaceable, historic buildings.

Benjamin F. Long came to Charlotte to create a fresco behind the main altar of St. Peter's Catholic Church at 507 South Tryon St. The magnificent wall inspired great admiration among art lovers in the city, and led to further commissions. The city of Charlotte is built on granite. Therefore, the construction on both sides of the church required dynamite to be used. All the vibrations from dynamite and jackhammers due to the construction shook the foundation which caused the windows to break and was responsible for the fresco falling at St. Peter's Catholic Church.

See related story here:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1454&dat=20020222&id=wA1PAAAIBAJ&sjid=Uh8EAAAIBAJ&pg=5653,1376678>

Thank you,

Jenny Quinn

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** jennifer@valuescentre.com  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2012 5:05 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com  
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In a recent message from Asheville PARC, the following concern was expressed about constructing a high rise hotel across the street from the Basilica of St. Lawrence:

"Many worry that construction of a hotel so close to the church could damage it. The church has one of the world's largest unsupported elliptical domes, and at age 103, heavy construction nearby risks damage to the structure."

**I must say this touched a nerve for me. In 2002, St Peter's Catholic Church in Charlotte lost its Alter Fresco due to nearby construction. The work of art had been created by Asheville-resident and NC-native son Ben Long.**

Personally, I am in favor of the church having a set back building and plaza or the city having a park at the location. I am not against high rises in general, but I am for the preservation of our irreplaceable, historic buildings.

Benjamin F. Long came to Charlotte to create a fresco behind the main altar of St. Peter's Catholic Church at 507 South Tryon St. The magnificent wall inspired great admiration among art lovers in the city, and led to further commissions.

The city of Charlotte is built on granite. Therefore, the construction on both sides of the church required dynamite to be used. All the vibrations from dynamite and jackhammers due to the construction shook the foundation which caused the windows to break and was responsible for the fresco falling at St. Peter's Catholic Church.

See related story here:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1454&dat=20020222&id=wA1PAAAAIBAJ&sjid=Uh8EAAAAIBAJ&pg=5653.1376678>

Thank you,

Jenny Quinn

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 11, 2012 10:10 AM  
**To:** 'Charlie Thomas'; Elaine Lite  
**Cc:** Cecil Bothwell  
**Subject:** Visit to discuss Haywood parcel?  
**Attachments:** Diocese Letter of Intent.pdf; PRCA Master Plan Priorities.pdf

Charlie and Elaine

Would you have time to sit down with me today or tomorrow regarding the Haywood parcel? Today at either 2:00 or 4:00 might be ideal, as I'll be in town to meet with Occupy folks at 3:00 anyhow. But I am pretty open all weekend. I think it would be helpful to compare notes. Glad to meet wherever you like. Please invite a couple other folks involved with PARC if you think that would be helpful. cc'ng Cecil here in case he would like to join.

Wanted to make sure you have seen my recent standard response to folks who are writing, pasted below.

PS – Cecil, if you'd like to join the Occupy session with me, it is their 3:00 GA, Pritchard Park.

Thanks

Marc  
273-2172 cell

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for writing me on this. Below are some thoughts I have recently been sharing on the subject.

The choices are not simple as suggested by some. For instance, the scenario some view as the "church proposal" involves sale of the property by the church to a developer who would construct a building 7 stories high, same height as the original tentative suggestion by the developer selected by the City, just sited differently and set back from the Basilica..

Since you have a strong preference for conversion of the site to a park, let me address that in a little detail.

I too would love to see only a park on the site. But I am concerned that it is not realistic. Attached is the list of priorities and approx. costs excerpted from our Parks Master Plan. You can see that it totals well over \$50 million when you consider the long-term priorities that do not have costs yet attached. A downtown park is not prioritized. These priorities were established based on exhaustive public input from hundreds of citizens. You can find the entire plan on the City's website. While the Plan does make reference elsewhere to the need for urban parks generally in the downtown area, it says the same for neighborhoods throughout town.

Our Parking Enterprise Fund, the net proceeds of which fund our transit system, originally paid for this site. The Parking fund needs to be made whole. In addition to the \$2MM+ cost that would need to be justified as to park acquisition, converting the site to a park would cost multiple million more dollars more, and then there would be the challenge or funding the operations and maintenance. We struggle to spend even \$1 million/year in capital outlay for parks.

Pack Square Park is an enormous commitment to a downtown park that is not fully funded yet despite heroic efforts by many, and I am currently putting some serious work in with advocates trying to figure out how we can financially make it thrive going forward, no easy task.

I hope you see that our resources to build parks are extremely limited and our priorities are great. A park on this site is just not feasible in the next several years.

Hope you find all of this helpful, and I apologize for the length – it is a complex situation. And please know that this is not about anyone wanting to support a certain developer or developers in general. It is about making the best of a difficult situation in the interest of all our citizens.

Marc Hunt

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#### An Open Letter Regarding the Haywood St. Property Across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence February 7, 2012

Many citizens have written me recently regarding the future of the City-owned area across from the Basilica of Saint Lawrence. I appreciate and share the concerns being expressed. The Basilica is a historical and architectural treasure we must protect, and the Catholic Church has always been a strong contributor to our community. I want to assure citizens that as a member of City Council, I will be insistent on very high standards for any development that might occur. I have worked very hard to understand the complex situation and come to a stance that I believe represents the best interests of our citizens. I'm also concerned about significant misunderstanding in the community of the City's path and its options. Let me explain:

- The property has in recent years been made up of substandard surface parking and dilapidated unoccupied structures. In 2007, the City set out to see the property returned to the tax rolls and converted to a much better use - one that would complement surrounding buildings and become a strong positive element for the vitality of downtown. In order to assure the best possible outcome, the City began an open and fair process of soliciting preliminary proposals from qualified potential partners. This carefully-designed RFP process gives the City final approval authority of uses, design, and timeline for development.
- After very active encouragement by the City of a broad range of possible partners (including the Basilica and the Diocese of Charlotte, who chose not to make a proposal then), McKibbin Hotel Group came out in 2008 as being the best-qualified with a design judged to be a reasonable starting point for negotiation. Let me emphasize here that McKibbin's preliminary suggested design, including its seven-story height (two stories shorter than the Vanderbilt Apts. directly across the street), was to be only a starting point.
- Next steps under the process with McKibbin would be negotiation of a development agreement and final design. The City, at its own choosing, could reject any proposals made by the developer and abandon the negotiation if an acceptable arrangement were not to materialize. Negotiation with McKibbin did not proceed in 2008 due in-part to the disruption of the economic crash that year and the pending adoption of the Downtown Master Plan which would provide further guidance/regulation for development of the site. The process has been slower than hoped-for, but it has not been terminated.
- A few weeks ago, the Diocese of Charlotte transmitted a Letter of intent to the City, a copy of which is attached. Note that this letter is the entirety of the proposal the City has received from the Diocese. Key elements of the proposal include:
  - o The Diocese would advance \$1.0 million to the City for the property upon completion by the City of demolition of the dilapidated buildings and conversion of the property to surface parking, a requirement the City estimates would cost it greater than \$500,000. At that stage, the City would have netted less than \$500,000 for the sale, and I would assume the Diocese would begin operating the site as surface parking. Because the parking operation on the property might prove financially lucrative for the Diocese, there could be incentive for the Diocese to maintain the site as surface parking for many years to come. I feel very strongly that surface parking is a poor long-term use of the site, and I am not willing to expose the City and downtown to that outcome.
  - o The Diocese would only advance an additional \$1 million if and when development of buildings on the property would occur. It could be many years before the City would realize that final installment of the purchase price. There are



some parishioners of the Basilica advocating for near-term sale and development of the property, but again, timing would be uncertain.

o Fiscal outcome in the interest of our citizens is only part of the picture here, but note that under a successful McKibbon proposal, the City would receive well over \$2 million at the time of purchase and a steady flow of tens of thousands of dollars in property and sales tax revenue annually for years to come. Under the Diocese proposal, the City would net less than \$500,000 at purchase, uncertainty as to if/when additional purchase money might arrive, and little or no tax revenues going forward. Again, this is not about just money for me, but I do have a fiduciary responsibility to our citizens and am troubled by such a possible trade-off. The Diocese would completely control the shape and character of any development, subject only to the City's zoning regulations. While I believe that the Diocese would only allow a use and design that would not harm the Basilica, I prefer an approach where the City can assure its citizens that the use and design serves the interest of the entire community (including the Basilica).

o The Diocese has not directly proposed that a park, piazza, fountain, or any certain design of development be installed on the property. A parishioner of the Basilica has suggested that the Diocese might consider such things, but the City has not heard that from the Diocese or its designated representative.

- Importantly, the City does not have the flexibility to abandon the RFP process and negotiate directly with the Diocese. If the City wants to fairly entertain the offer from the Diocese, it would first have to open the process to competitive offers from any and all comers, and it would then have to consider the highest bid regardless of the buyer or the plans for the site. The City could easily lose control of the property's future in this scenario. Heading down this path of very uncertain outcomes is not one I am willing to support.

- Another suggestion that I have heard much about since yesterday is that the site be retained by the city and converted to a city park. As former chairman of the City's Greenway Commission, I am a strong advocate for parks and open space. I do not support this site as a park because our planning indicates many other sites around town as much higher priorities for parks and open space and because conversion of this site to an urban park would require millions. If the City wished to negotiate directly with the Diocese, it would declare the existing RFP process dead and start all over with a fairly-administered competitive process to identify a qualified partner. The Diocese would have to participate and prevail in that process in order for the City to negotiate directly.

As I hope you can see, there is no reasonable scenario where the City could simply abandon the RFP process and either accept the Diocese proposal or begin a direct negotiation with the Diocese. It is also not true that McKibbon would unilaterally control the final design/implementation on the site. There is misinformation about all this in the community, and I hope you will help clear that up by sharing this with others.

Given the situation as it stands today, I believe the prudent course is for the City to fairly continue the process that we began in 2007 and carefully consider whether we can arrive at an acceptable arrangement for development with McKibbon. I want you to know that I will be insistent on assuring that McKibbon is at least as qualified to perform as they were earlier, that a final design meets the needs of the entire community including the Basilica, and that if the City does move forward with McKibbon, the development would be a very positive outcome for the City and the neighborhood. I would be insistent that any demolition/construction activity not threaten the structural integrity of the Basilica. I would also avidly promote that the design incorporate open park-like space on the north side near the Basilica, and that the architectural design of the entire project complement the Basilica and support the historic character of the Basilica. Some have suggested the Diocese consider negotiating/partnering with McKibbon in the development to assure that such things occur, and I would hope the two parties will meet soon to consider that. Nothing I have heard causes me to think any of this is out of reach and that we cannot end up with a spectacular outcome for all concerned.

Again, thank you for your interest and concern about the future of this project and our community.

Truly yours,

Marc Hunt  
Member, Asheville City Council

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Tom Byers <tandcbyers@gmail.com> on behalf of Tom Byers  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2012 4:05 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** your opinion piece

Hello, Marc. Hope things are well with you and yours.

Excellent column in today's paper about the property opposite the Basilica. I think it will be very helpful and constructive for you to have offered that commentary. When I recently received from PARC their e-mail showing a conceptual view of a huge expanse of green lawn in front of the Basilica, I thought it very disappointing that the vision of the person circulating that message (Cecil Bothwell, perhaps???) was not at all appropriate to that setting.

There were probably multiple factors that caused you to offer the commentary. When I attended the presentation at UNCA last week about Rafael Guastavino, designer of the Basilica, there was a lot of obvious concern about protecting the Basilica. The attendees seemed eager to get the presenter, an MIT faculty member who like Martin Eakes is a MacArthur Award recipient, to come out in some sort of opposition to construction activity around the Basilica area . . .

- Tom

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Mark Sligh <marksligh@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mark Sligh  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 10:24 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** RE: Sale of City land near Basilica

Your open letter seems to be exactly what was needed in this situation. Thank you for putting it together. I support your approach to this issue, and I will share the information with others whenever I have the opportunity. Please be sure to contact me if there is anything else I can do to help (including being present at City Council meetings when this issue will be discussed).

--- On **Wed, 2/8/12, Marc Hunt** <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:

From: Marc Hunt <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)>  
Subject: RE: Sale of City land near Basilica  
To: "Mark Sligh" <[marksligh@yahoo.com](mailto:marksligh@yahoo.com)>  
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2012, 8:51 PM

Mr Sligh

Thank you. You might be interested in more detailed thoughts from me, below.

Marc Hunt

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An Open Letter Regarding the Haywood St. Property Across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence

February 7, 2012

Many citizens have written me recently regarding the future of the City-owned area across from the Basilica of Saint Lawrence. I appreciate and share the concerns being expressed. The Basilica is a historical and architectural treasure we must protect, and the Catholic Church has always been a strong contributor to our community. I want to assure citizens that as a member of City Council, I will be insistent on very high standards for any development that might occur. I have worked very hard to understand the complex situation and come to a stance that I believe represents the best interests of our citizens. I'm also concerned about significant misunderstanding in the community of the City's path and its options. Let me explain:

- The property has in recent years been made up of substandard surface parking and dilapidated unoccupied structures. In 2007, the City set out to see the property returned to the tax rolls and converted to a much better use - one that would complement surrounding buildings and become a strong positive element for the vitality of downtown. In order to assure the best possible outcome, the City began an open and fair process of soliciting preliminary proposals from qualified potential partners. This carefully-designed RFP process gives the City final approval authority of uses, design, and timeline for development.
- After very active encouragement by the City of a broad range of possible partners (including the Basilica and the Diocese of Charlotte, who chose not to make a proposal then), McKibbin Hotel Group came out in 2008 as being the best-qualified with a design judged to be a reasonable starting point for negotiation. Let me emphasize here that McKibbin's preliminary suggested design, including its seven-story height (two stories shorter than the Vanderbilt Apts. directly across the street), was to be only a starting point.
- Next steps under the process with McKibbin would be negotiation of a development agreement and final design. The City, at its own choosing, could reject any proposals made by the developer and abandon the negotiation if an acceptable arrangement were not to materialize. Negotiation with McKibbin did not proceed in 2008 due in-part to the disruption of the economic crash that year and the pending adoption of the Downtown Master Plan which would provide further guidance/regulation for development of the site. The process has been slower than hoped-for, but it has not been terminated.
- A few weeks ago, the Diocese of Charlotte transmitted a Letter of intent to the City, a copy of which is attached. Note that this letter is the entirety of the proposal the City has received from the Diocese. Key elements of the proposal include:
  - o The Diocese would advance \$1.0 million to the City for the property upon completion by the City of demolition of the dilapidated buildings and conversion of the property to surface parking, a requirement the City estimates would cost it greater than \$500,000. At that stage, the City would have netted less than \$500,000 for the sale, and I would assume the Diocese would begin operating the site as surface parking. Because the parking operation on the property might prove financially lucrative for the Diocese, there could be incentive for the Diocese to maintain the site as surface parking for many years to come. I feel very strongly that surface parking is a poor long-term use of the site, and I am not willing to expose the City and downtown to that outcome.
  - o The Diocese would only advance an additional \$1 million if and when development of buildings on the property would occur. It could be many years before the City would realize that final installment of the purchase price. There are some parishioners of the Basilica advocating for near-term sale and development of the property, but again, timing would be uncertain.
  - o Fiscal outcome in the interest of our citizens is only part of the picture here, but note that under a successful McKibbin proposal, the City would receive well over \$2 million at the time of purchase and a steady flow of tens of thousands of dollars in property and sales tax revenue annually for years to come. Under the Diocese proposal, the City would net less than \$500,000 at purchase, uncertainty as to if/when additional purchase money might arrive, and little or no tax revenues going forward. Again, this is not about just money for me, but I do have a fiduciary responsibility to our citizens and am troubled by such a possible trade-off. The Diocese would completely control the shape and character of any development, subject only to the City's zoning regulations. While I believe that the Diocese would only allow a use and design that would not harm the Basilica, I prefer an approach where the City can assure its citizens that the use and design serves the interest of the entire community (including the Basilica).

o The Diocese has not directly proposed that a park, piazza, fountain, or any certain design of development be installed on the property. A parishioner of the Basilica has suggested that the Diocese might consider such things, but the City has not heard that from the Diocese or its designated representative.

- Importantly, the City does not have the flexibility to abandon the RFP process and negotiate directly with the Diocese. If the City wants to fairly entertain the offer from the Diocese, it would first have to open the process to competitive offers from any and all comers, and it would then have to consider the highest bid regardless of the buyer or the plans for the site. The City could easily lose control of the property's future in this scenario. Heading down this path of very uncertain outcomes is not one I am willing to support.
- Another suggestion that I have heard much about since yesterday is that the site be retained by the city and converted to a city park. As former chairman of the City's Greenway Commission, I am a strong advocate for parks and open space. I do not support this site as a park because our planning indicates many other sites around town as much higher priorities for parks and open space and because conversion of this site to an urban park would require millions.

If the City wished to negotiate directly with the Diocese, it would declare the existing RFP process dead and start all over with a fairly-administered competitive process to identify a qualified partner. The Diocese would have to participate and prevail in that process in order for the City to negotiate directly.

As I hope you can see, there is no reasonable scenario where the City could simply abandon the RFP process and either accept the Diocese proposal or begin a direct negotiation with the Diocese. It is also not true that McKibbon would unilaterally control the final design/implementation on the site. There is misinformation about all this in the community, and I hope you will help clear that up by sharing this with others.

Given the situation as it stands today, I believe the prudent course is for the City to fairly continue the process that we began in 2007 and carefully consider whether we can arrive at an acceptable arrangement for development with McKibbon. I want you to know that I will be insistent on assuring that McKibbon is at least as qualified to perform as they were earlier, that a final design meets the needs of the entire community including the Basilica, and that if the City does move forward with McKibbon, the development would be a very positive outcome for the City and the neighborhood. I would be insistent that any demolition/construction activity not threaten the structural integrity of the Basilica. I would also avidly promote that the design incorporate open park-like space on the north side near the Basilica, and that the architectural design of the entire project complement the Basilica and support the historic character of the Basilica. Some have suggested the Diocese consider negotiating/partnering with McKibbon in the development to assure that such things occur, and I would hope the two parties will meet soon to consider that. Nothing I have heard causes me to think any of this is out of reach and that we cannot end up with a spectacular outcome for all concerned.

Again, thank you for your interest and concern about the future of this project and our community.

Truly yours,

Marc Hunt

Member, Asheville City Council

**From:** Mark Sligh [mailto:marksligh@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 10:09 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Sale of City land near Basilica

I support the proposal to sell City-owned properties near the Basilica to the McKibbon Group to build a hotel. The land sale will benefit the taxpayers financially, as will the downtown investment by the McKibbon Group. It sounds like this proposal will also create much-needed jobs. It would be irresponsible not to consider such suggestions. The proposal should be monitored closely to insure that the hotel design fits in as well as possible with existing structures nearby. PARC's early involvement suggests that it will be.

**Ben Fulmer**

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## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 07, 2012 9:33 PM  
**To:** 'Sharon Willen'  
**Subject:** RE: a parc not a parking lot

I appreciate our exchange and your willingness to think with me. I promise to remain diligent.

Marc

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**From:** Sharon Willen [mailto:sharonwillen@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 07, 2012 8:08 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Subject:** Re: a parc not a parking lot

Thank you for providing the most thoughtful and complete response to our expressed concerns thus far. I hope that the process proceeds in a fair and transparent way and that people with the values you have stated are still in position to carry the vote when important design, fiduciary, and construction decisions are to be made.

Sharon Willen

On Feb 7, 2012, at 7:51 PM, Marc Hunt wrote:

Ms Willen

Thanks for contacting me about this project. Below are thoughts I recently put together on the matter.

Marc Hunt

\*\*\*\*\*

### **An Open Letter Regarding the Haywood St. Property Across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence February 7, 2012**

Many citizens have written me recently regarding the future of the City-owned area across from the Basilica of Saint Lawrence. I appreciate and share the concerns being expressed. The Basilica is a historical and architectural treasure we must protect, and the Catholic Church has always been a strong contributor to our community. I want to assure citizens that as a member of City Council, I will be insistent on very high standards for any development that might occur. I have worked very hard to understand the complex situation and come to a stance that I believe represents the best interests of our citizens. I'm also concerned about significant misunderstanding in the community of the City's path and its options. Let me explain:



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- The Diocese has not directly proposed that a park, piazza, fountain, or any certain design of development be installed on the property. A parishioner of the Basilica has suggested that the Diocese might consider such things, but the City has not heard that from the Diocese or its designated representative.
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Again, thank you for your interest and concern about the future of this project and our community.

Truly yours,

**Marc Hunt**

Member, Asheville City Council

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**From:** Sharon Willen [<mailto:sharonwillen@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 06, 2012 4:57 PM  
**To:** [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov); [letters@citizen-times.com](mailto:letters@citizen-times.com)  
**Subject:** a parc not a parking lot

Please make a decision in favor of the church's offer to purchase the land across from Basilica St. Lawrence rather than the offer from the hotel developer. This area, so close to the Civic Center, the Grove Arcade, Historic Montford, and other notable city features should be developed as a beautiful park attracting visitors much as Pack Place does on the other side of town.

Sharon

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Sharon Willen <sharonwillen@gmail.com> on behalf of Sharon Willen  
**Sent:** Monday, February 06, 2012 4:57 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com  
**Subject:** a parc not a parking lot

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Sharon

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, February 06, 2012 3:47 PM  
**To:** Elaine Lite;Elaine Lite;Charlie Thomas  
**Cc:** Cecil Bothwell  
**Subject:** Haywood St. Property  
**Attachments:** Diocese Letter of Intent.pdf

Elaine and Charlie

I wanted to share the below document with you. I finished it and began sending it about the time PARC put out its email. Could you please share this with other PARC leaders? I'd be glad to discuss this with any of you.

Thanks  
Marc

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### **An Open Letter Regarding the Haywood St. Property Across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence February 6, 2012**

Many citizens have written me recently regarding the future of the City-owned area across from the Basilica of Saint Lawrence. I appreciate and share the concerns being expressed. The Basilica is a historical and architectural treasure we must protect, and the Catholic Church has always been a strong contributor to our community. I want to assure citizens that as a member of City Council, I will be insistent on very high standards for any development that might occur. I have worked very hard to understand the complex situation and come to a stance that I believe represents the best interests of our citizens. I'm also concerned about significant misunderstanding in the community of the City's path and its options. Let me explain:

- The property has in recent years been made up of substandard surface parking and dilapidated unoccupied structures. In 2007, the City set out to see the property returned to the tax rolls and converted to a much better use - one that would complement surrounding buildings and become a strong positive element for the vitality of downtown. In order to assure the best possible outcome, the City began an open and fair process of soliciting preliminary proposals from qualified potential partners. This carefully-designed RFP process gives the City final approval authority of uses, design, and timeline for development.
- After very active encouragement by the City of a broad range of possible partners (including the Basilica and the Diocese of Charlotte, who chose not to make a proposal then), McKibbon Hotel Group came out in 2008 as being the best-qualified with a design judged to be a reasonable starting point for negotiation. Let me emphasize here that McKibbon's preliminary suggested design was to be only a starting point.
- Next steps under the process with McKibbon would be negotiation of a development agreement and final design. The City, at its own choosing, could reject any proposals made by the developer and abandon the negotiation if an acceptable arrangement were not to materialize. Negotiation with McKibbon did not proceed in 2008 due in-part to the disruption of the economic crash that year and the pending adoption of the Downtown Master Plan which would provide further guidance/regulation for development of the site. The process has been slower than hoped-for, but it has not been terminated.

- A few weeks ago, the Diocese of Charlotte transmitted a Letter of intent to the City, a copy of which is attached. Note that this letter is the entirety of the proposal the City has received from the Diocese. Key elements of the proposal include:
  - The Diocese would advance \$1.0 million to the City for the property upon completion by the City of demolition of the dilapidated buildings and conversion of the property to surface parking, a requirement the City estimates would cost it greater than \$500,000. At that stage, the City would have netted less than \$500,000 for the sale, and I would assume the Diocese would begin operating the site as surface parking. Because the parking operation on the property might prove financially lucrative for the Diocese, there could be incentive for the Diocese to maintain the site as surface parking for many years to come. I feel very strongly that surface parking is a poor long-term use of the site, and I am not willing to expose the City and downtown to that outcome.
  - The Diocese would only advance an additional \$1 million if and when development of buildings on the property would occur. It could be many years before the City would realize that final installment of the purchase price.
  - Fiscal outcome in the interest of our citizens is only part of the picture here, but note that under a successful McKibbon proposal, the City would receive well over \$2 million at the time of purchase and a steady flow of tens of thousands of dollars in property and sales tax revenue annually for years to come. Under the Diocese proposal, the City would net less than \$500,000 at purchase, uncertainty as to if/when additional purchase money might arrive, and little or no tax revenues going forward. Again, this is not about just money for me, but I do have a fiduciary responsibility to our citizens and am troubled by such a possible trade-off. The Diocese would completely control the shape and character of any development, subject only to the City's zoning regulations. While I believe that the Diocese would only allow a use and design that would not harm the Basilica, I prefer an approach where the City can assure its citizens that the use and design serves the interest of the entire community (including the Basilica).
  - The Diocese has not directly proposed that a park, piazza, fountain, or any certain design of development be installed on the property. A parishioner of the Basilica has suggested that the Diocese might consider such things, but the City has not heard that from the Diocese or its designated representative.
- Importantly, the City does not have the flexibility to abandon the RFP process and negotiate directly with the Diocese. If the City wants to fairly entertain the offer from the Diocese, it would first have to open the process to competitive offers from any and all comers, and it would then have to consider the highest bid regardless of the buyer or the plans for the site. The City could easily lose control of the property's future in this scenario. Heading down this path of very uncertain outcomes is not one I am willing to support.

If the City wished to negotiate directly with the Diocese, it would declare the existing RFP process dead and start all over with a fairly-administered competitive process to identify a qualified partner. The Diocese would have to participate and prevail in that process in order for the City to negotiate directly.

As I hope you can see, there is no reasonable scenario where the City could simply abandon the RFP process and either accept the Diocese proposal or begin a direct negotiation with the Diocese. It is also not true that McKibbon would unilaterally control the final design/implementation on the site. There is misinformation about all this in the community, and I hope you will help clear that up by sharing this with others.

Given the situation as it stands today, I believe the prudent course is for the City to fairly continue the process that we began in 2007 and carefully consider whether we can arrive at an acceptable arrangement for development with McKibbon. I want you to know that I will be insistent on assuring that McKibbon is at least as qualified to perform as they were earlier, that a final design meets the needs of the entire community including the Basilica, and that if the City

does move forward with McKibbin, the development would be a very positive outcome for the City and the neighborhood. I would be insistent that any demolition/construction activity not threaten the structural integrity of the Basilica. I would also avidly promote that the design incorporate open park-like space on the north side near the Basilica, and that the architectural design of the entire project complement the Basilica and support the historic character of the Basilica. Some have suggested the Diocese consider negotiating/partnering with McKibbin in the development to assure that such things occur, and I would hope the two parties will meet soon to consider that. Nothing I have heard causes me to think any of this is out of reach and that we cannot end up with a spectacular outcome for all concerned.

Again, thank you for your interest and concern about the future of this project and our community.

Truly yours,

***Marc Hunt***

Member, Asheville City Council

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Monday, February 06, 2012 3:28 PM  
**To:** 'Whitney Smith de Vargas'  
**Subject:** RE: City Considers Land Sale  
**Attachments:** Diocese Letter of Intent.pdf

Ms Smith de Vargas

Thank you for contacting me on this matter. See below for a letter on this topic I just completed. I'd be glad to answer any follow-up questions or discuss it further.

Marc Hunt

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Truly yours,

**Marc Hunt**

Member, Asheville City Council

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**From:** Whitney Smith de Vargas [mailto:wsmith@biltmore.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 06, 2012 2:54 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com  
**Subject:** Re: City Considers Land Sale

I would say either let the Basilica have it or have the park. Either one will work well for that area and will not pose a threat to the church. We have a bunch of hotels already, I think that there is probably a better area for a hotel somewhere else that is close to downtown instead.

**Whitney Smith de Vargas**

Corporate Coordinator  
Biltmore Inspirations & Biltmore For Your Home  
1 N. Pack Square  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Phone: 828.225.6778  
Fax: 828.225.6744



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## City Land Sale?

**Monday, February 6, 2012**





### **Satellite View of the Basilica of St. Lawrence**

If the McKibbin Group gets its way, this view of the Basilica of St. Lawrence might soon be your best way to see it.

McKibbin wants to buy several City-owned properties in front of the Basilica to build a high-rise hotel, potentially blocking sight lines between several public buildings – Pack Memorial Library, the Vanderbilt, the Basilica, the Civic Center, the Battery Park Hotel, and the Grove Arcade.

Many worry that construction of a hotel so close to the church could damage it. The church has one of the world's largest unsupported elliptical domes, and at age 103, heavy construction nearby risks damage to the structure.

*But Council has another reasonable option.*

The Church itself has offered to buy the property, with a plan to immediately use the area for parking and later build a smaller building, set back from the church with a public plaza in front.

So there are actually three proposals for the land:

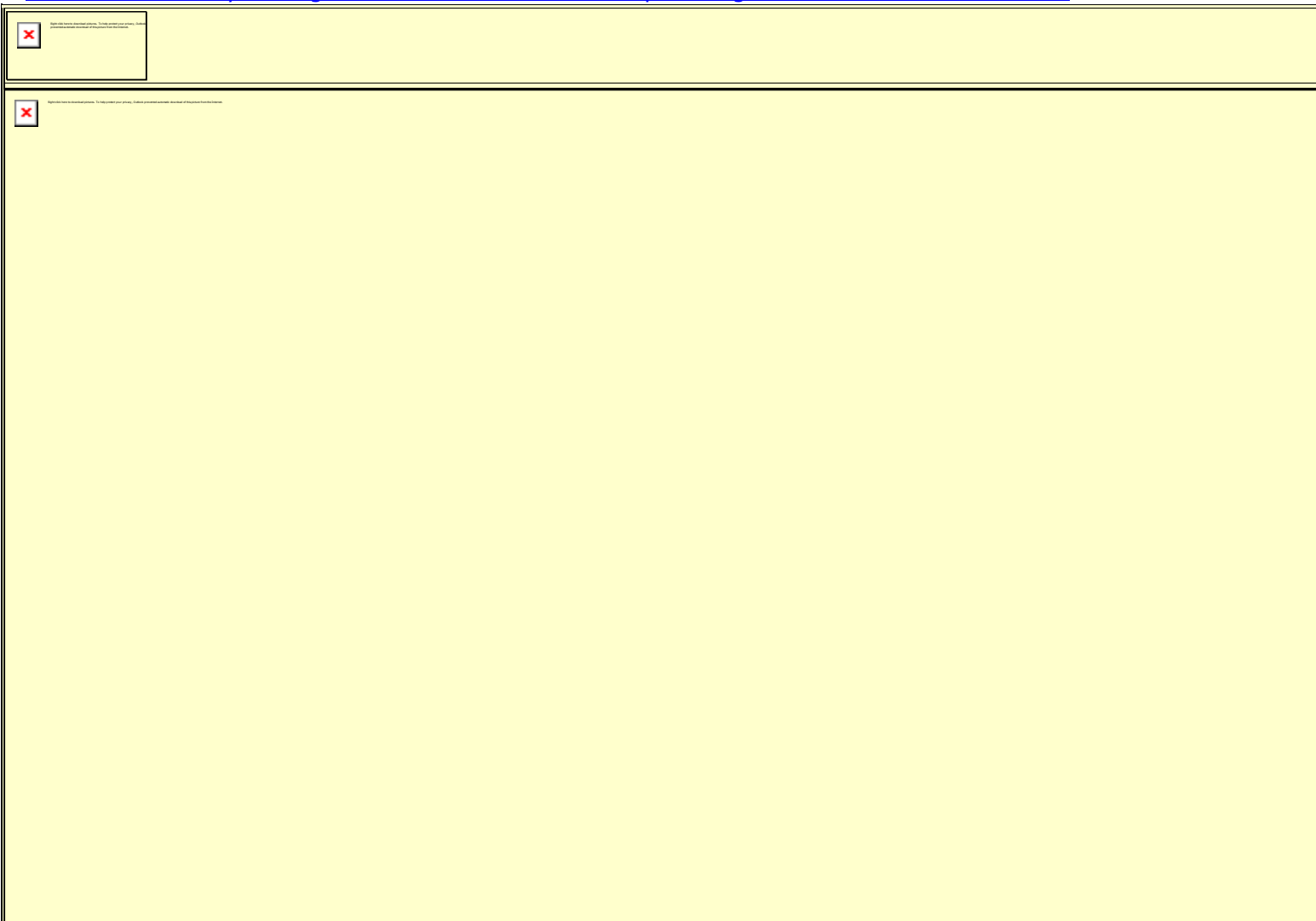
1. A high-rise hotel. Cities lose their local character quickly when the corporate giants come to town. (This new hotel would be just across the street from this new sign: U.S. Cellular Center);
2. The Church's set-back building, with a plaza; or
3. A city park, pictured below.

Check out the video below from the last time a developer tried to build on that spot.

Please email City Council and let them know your thoughts on this!



Thanks,  
from the folks at PARC.

[Video from three years ago when a builder wanted to put a high rise in front of the Basilica](#)



A City Park?

[Click here to email City Council and the Citizen-Times, please!](#)

 <small>Make sure you have entered all the information correctly. If you have, click here to go to the next step.</small>	
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