

March 23, 2015 email from Steve Chase

Dear Neighbor

I am writing to express my strong support for the sensible and, in fact, exciting development of our fabulous downtown redevelopment concept as presented so ably by CCY architects (Basaltines) on behalf of the Lowe Development group (50 years in the RFV). Even though it represents just a small part of the overall revitalization plan, my thoughts are as follows -----

The **condominium community** proposed for the site adjacent to the new RMI is **not**, as has been suggested, for second home owners, but for the young professional community that we're hoping to attract to our town. RMI is projecting 40-50 employees, some of whom would be perfect candidates to occupy the space. I know that most of us balk at the thought of investing that kind of money at this early stage in life, but the demographic that I would focus on – for our town in general – is far from shocked at the cost of real estate and has positioned themselves to prosper and thrive in today's world where similar condos up the road sell for two to three times (or down the road for ½) what these will probably go for. It provides the capacity to make a notch in our need to provide "in town" residential opportunities.

That doesn't address the issue of "**affordable housing**". We all seek to be inclusive in terms of welcoming a broader demographic to become part of our community. When we fail as a community to provide enough "affordable options" and place this on the shoulders of the developers, who do you think finally picks up the tab? In this case, it would become the 42 new homeowners burdened with the increased cost of purchasing a unit. Our council has bemoaned the lack of progress on several deals that would have gone a long way toward our

present goal of creating 200 units within the next couple of years. We all agree that this is the desired outcome. Our collective passion for achieving this goal should be the fuel that keeps our leaders engaged in the process and not the hopes that the next developer will be forced to pick up the can that we've kicked down the road. Lowe Enterprises has already voiced their intent to recognize an affordable housing requirement by possibly participating in projects that are already on the table making that a reality sooner than later. In fact, it's more than likely that we will consummate the affordable housing "deals" on the table at this time within the next year or two, giving us a 100+ unit jump on the projected need.

Since 1996 (Stevens) our community has explored the downtown planning process with professionals and citizen participation. Invariably, all have reached the same conclusion that has been expressed in multiple documents. Each study and consensus has shown development along Two Rivers Road from Old Pond Park to Midland Avenue. In fact, including our last citizen generated effort, the depiction approved by 57% showed a greater percentage of the property covered by building footprints than Lowe's Enterprises is suggesting at this time. Only 17% of the voters considered no development on the site. Their (Lowes) willingness to respect the work of the DAAC has been lauded by nearly all who have followed this process from the beginning. Having a local and well respected developer with a track record for excellence for decades teamed up with an architectural firm from our own community seems almost too good to be true.

What about a **hotel**? Well, not just any hotel, but rather a unique/boutique hotel not aligned with the "cookie cutter" chains, but one with unique character for our town and at a value or price point

that is not available in the mid valley anywhere and worthy of being situated on our park overlooking the river; a hotel that would offer public amenities and showcase our town; a hotel where we could have private a corporate events; a hotel where we could enjoy overlooking the park, the river and across to the new Midland Park (Library Park) and beyond; a hotel that could provide rooms for 40-50 participants of the RMI programs throughout the year. Our other two –“in town” – hotels cater to a more streamlined budget and will likely benefit accordingly. The old Green Drake, now the Basalt Mountain Inn, has done a yeoman’s job of updating their facility in anticipation of our revitalization and should be recognized as such! The Elements in Willets will cater to those wanting to stay out on the highway in a shopping center.

How about “**open space**”? I can appreciate the fear of cutting off access to the river and the open space beyond, given how the Riverside Plaza was allowed to be built, though I think it was otherwise beautifully done! All of the master planning done since 1996 has clearly shown an open buffer of park and wetland space between the proposed development and the river. This has been readily available to the public over the last 19 years. I/we see the proposed development *as a way to frame and celebrate our outdoors* and give our visitors “a taste” of what we have the good fortune to live with and enjoy all year. After all, this is a town park with a short run of the Roaring Fork River and preserved wetlands beyond – accessible by elevated nature trails. This is not a last ditch attempt to safeguard the only open space left, but it will be our fabulous show piece! As a town, we are the gateway to the Frying Pan Valley, Old Snowmass Canyon, Capital Creek and the wilderness up and down East and West Sopris Creek and the ranch

lands atop Missouri Heights. So where does this two and a half acres fit into this picture? If you see this as your last opportunity to preserve the last bit of paradise for the public good, you don't get around much! Where does Crown Mountain Park fit into this equation with regards to the 275 acres of parks already dedicated within Basalt?

Noise? Please, bring on the noise! I/we call this vitality, excitement, energy, vigor, heartiness – life! “If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen”. There will likely be times - maybe a dozen or so - where this area will be a moving party. Knowing that, you may choose not to live there. 1000 people at a music festival? Keep your dreams in line with reality and be careful what you wish for.

Parking! In anticipation of the renewed vitality, would it be too much to ask the council to plan in advance? Should the developer be shouldered with the inevitable success of the park? Our town manager has already looked into the parking lot in the middle school in the summer when class is out. What a great way to showcase our town by directing people across the Swinging Bridge! What about an in town tram from other parking locales?

Finally, what about the **economic benefit** to pursuing this particular path of revitalization? Let's start by addressing the recent loss of 300 construction jobs in our town. The project itself will have a huge impact on this number by itself not to mention the spin off projects that will follow for years because of the success of our revitalization. What about the revenue from the property taxes from the project versus open space or even more non-profits. I'm not aware of any non-profits that have shared a desire to be in Basalt and have the financial backing to take on new construction. At present, going

from my personal report of my taxes, over 50% goes to schools; 10% to the Town of Basalt; 10% to Eagle County and the rest to the fire department, CMC, Crown Mountain Park, etc. A rough estimate for the 42 condominium units at \$500,000 on average will generate approximately \$500,000 in tax revenue per year toward our schools with another 20% to the parks and the Town. This should be fact checked before taken as truth, but it is consistent with my taxes! I'm not aware of the taxes on the hotel and hotel residences and how that might expand the treasury. We should be hard pressed to ignore the contribution that could be made annually on behalf of our school age children. The enhanced quality of the schools would be an important draw for families considering living and investing in Basalt.

Art as a theme – in public spaces and as sector of economic viability may be served by the town's art council and the Wyly and perhaps a joint effort by our present Galleries. Water features may be part of the park and may be part of the projects landscape plan or both. Encouraging artist to live and work in loft style residences and supporting them in some way could bring that special demographic into the town proper.

The “**space between the buildings**” has been called tunnels. I prefer to think of the design as a promenade, a walk way, an esplanade a public walk space as one might see between buildings in Europe – and a space that encourages human interaction. We know that the water cannot be seen from the street at the proposed locations and so the avenue should be welcoming as an access point to the park and the river beyond. It could have the same energy as the Sunday Market, but daily and year round.

This unique opportunity to revitalize our town with local professionals and **overwhelming public support** in the heart of downtown is almost too good to be true and surely too good to pass up. Make sure your voice is heard. Don't allow the vocal minority, using scare tactics and half truths, to undermine the revitalization of our community.

Steve Chase, Basalt full time resident

March 16, 2015 email from Lynn Nichols

Susan Philp

From: Lynn Nichols <lynnnichols@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2015 9:45 AM
To: Susan Philp
Subject: Comment on Pan and Fork Development

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Pan and Fork Redevelopment

In order to be economically viable, the Lowe Enterprise group have said the Pan and Fork project needs to add a 4th floor to the proposed buildings, a hotel with 60 rooms, 40 owner occupied condominiums averaging in sale price between \$500,000-\$600,000 and 12 luxury condos for second home owners. The developers also stated that a "major caveat" was to have a "commitment of use" from RMI to make the hotel successful.

I believe this project is not meeting the REAL needs of the Basalt community and will not bring the economic and social vitality people are hoping for.

Affordable housing is the key ingredient. Basalt needs its community to be living, working and investing in Basalt by bringing their businesses, retail and restaurants to town. According to a recent study, Basalt needs 200 affordable residences in the next 5 years. The average cost of housing in Basalt is \$583,000 and only 14% of households can afford housing in that price range. So why is the town saying "yes" to 52 unaffordable condominiums?

How has the second home owner stimulated our local economy? How are they economically invested in creating jobs and businesses that will fill the large numbers of empty retail space? How has the second home owner participated in other communities in the Roaring Fork Valley and what have been the challenges that they have created for these towns?

To hang the success of the hotel on the commitment from RMI seems like a risky business plan. The architectural sketches show the hotel in summer and early fall with people enjoying the Colorado sunshine. Yes people will come for flyfishing, hiking and biking May thru September. What about the remaining 7 months? Skiers will add to the Hwy 82 congestion and then spend their dollars in Aspen.

The Riverside and Gold River developments have been an overall failure with empty retail, business and residential units. Why will more development produce a different result?

To make the same mistake of using the one asset that is special and unique to Basalt and that no other town in the Roaring Fork Valley has is frustrating. The Roaring Fork River runs right thru the center of Basalt. Look around. The town of Basalt has allowed developers to come in and keep the community from physically, visually and psychologically accessing the Frying Pan and Roaring Fork Rivers. These current projects has basically walled off the river from our community. To call the open space between buildings of this proposed development "living streets" is not descriptive of how it will feel to walk between 4 story buildings.

The town planning process is moving ahead yet I believe we are missing an opportunity. This last remaining parcel in Basalt is unique and presents us with the chance to share a large scale open space without feeling like we have intruded on hotel users or condominium owners "back yards". Basalt has many underutilized buildings that should be redeveloped before we repeat the pattern that has been unsuccessful for Basalt. The Roaring Fork Community Development group could participate in creating successful solutions for the town and its residents instead of selling out to a developer. To have the beauty and access to open space in our daily lives seems far more valuable than a hotel and condos that are no guarantee to bringing economic vibrancy to Basalt.

Lynn Nichols
Basalt