

From Bryant Dulin 4/8/15

### What I Want Basalt to Build In Its Open River Space

Short-term thinking gets you in trouble – remember dating in your early 20s? That's why I'm urging the town of Basalt to do some long-term thinking before erecting any buildings, namely a hotel (we already have a hotel being built in Willits and one was just renovated in Basalt), in the unique open downtown space adjacent to the river. Let's sustain this community environmentally, economically and socially by coming up with a long-term plan, instead of taking a short-term instant gratification stance on the planning process. Creating a set of standards and guidelines agreed upon by the community that can be used to evaluate all future development proposals will help Basalt discover its identity, and progress intelligently.

First, let's figure out what we want Basalt to be in 100 years. From there, we ask: What we will need to achieve in the next 50 years to be on path to our 100 year goal? Where will need to be 25 years from now? 10 years from now? A vision and end goals need to be created, so we can move backwards to figure out and plan of what we need to do to succeed in our ambitions. Progressive communities, governments and businesses that have already embarked on long-term planning are a fantastic source for ideas and guidance.

This vision will next require the development of a framework, or standards, to help evaluate ideas that will shape our town, assuring they meet outlined criteria. Thankfully, numerous frameworks exist around the globe and have been thoroughly tested with great success, so we will not have to start from scratch.

After the groundwork is laid, the community will need to collect data so it can benchmark what it is doing currently and measure its progress moving forward, properly train community decision makers to evaluate projects according to the town plan and standards, and work towards keeping the community informed of what is evolving. Simply stated - goals, roles, responsibilities and tasks. A yearly progress report encapsulating progress is a great communication tool.

For any project, large or small, research must be completed. Our decisions from this moment on should always be science and data driven. It is what any business would do before executing an idea, including any developer that would want to build a hotel, residential properties, or grocery store – we need to do the same.

So what do I want Basalt to build? A progressive plan for moving forward that engages all stakeholders, and is science and data driven. Only when there is a framework can anyone say an idea is worthy of our town.

Of course, I have my own selfish, short-term thoughts about what I would want to see done with the open space, instead of a possible hotel:

Build a zero emissions greenhouse that employs aquaponics, an innovative and sustainable organic food-producing methodology that combines aquaculture and hydroponics, and uses only 2% of the water compared to traditional farming methods. It could provide Basalt and the Valley with fresh and locally raised fish and veggies, saving emissions from the reduction of food truck deliveries, while helping the community move closer towards self-reliance. Imagine a restaurant attached to the greenhouse that boasts - what astoundingly would be only the second place in the valley - a patio on the riverfront. Throw in a drop-off location for kayaks and rafts, and divert some of the Rio Grande trail into Basalt for bike traffic, and you may answer the cries for conserving nature and Basalt history (fishing and agriculture), attracting more people and commerce, and the lack of a year-round food market. Let's not also forget the publicity this type of facility would receive given the proximity to the new RMI building and its expected visitors.

The idea above may not be the answer, but it's the type of thinking that would be great to see. This community could benefit from embarking on projects that will inspire, benefit and engage the community, while focusing on the stewardship of our local environment – its past, present and future. Let's take our time on this because there's no need to rush when currently no plan or anything outstandingly creative and well-researched has been presented. Think about it - how can we leverage sustainability and RMI for ideas?

I will personally volunteer my time for free to help guide the creation and execution of a long-term plan. Our next big town meeting is at 5:30PM Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Basalt Library. Please come and push for the development of a

long-term plan before we move forward on any currently proposed development projects. You may contact me at [dulin.bryant@gmail.com](mailto:dulin.bryant@gmail.com).