

April 12, 2015

Via Email

Mike Scanlon  
Town Manager  
Town of Basalt  
101 Midland Ave.  
Basalt, CO 81621

Re: Our Town Planning - Comments on Lowe Enterprises Development Proposal

Dear Mike:

I attended the April 9<sup>th</sup> Community Meeting on the Lowe Proposal, have reviewed the online material, and read CCY Architects' letter regarding Affordable Housing options for the project. I will not be attending the upcoming Town Council Meeting, but wanted to provide comments on certain aspects of the Lowe Proposal, as well as some of the public comments made during last week's discussion.

I am a full-time, 12-year resident of Basalt.

**Not-so-'Affordable Housing' vs. 'Clean Tech' Economic Development:** I worked for the U.S. Forest Service-White River National Forest in the late 1970's and lived in 'affordable housing' (a/k/a a rundown converted garage) in Glenwood Springs. I left the Roaring Fork Valley because it was obvious that I could never 'get ahead' if I stayed. There were very few good-paying, professional positions, and most of those were like mine - 'temporary'. Not much has changed.

Today I wince when I hear people say that they "hope their children will return here to live when they are done with school." Unless they return with family money - how can they? Where are the good jobs that would allow them to have careers and some measure of financial security? *I would rather see the Town partner with other jurisdictions, commercial entities and nonprofits to bring more professional 'clean tech' opportunities to the Valley and diversify our economy then spend time and energy building more not-so-'affordable housing' that only enables employers paying rock bottom wages and results in people working multiple jobs to make ends meet.* Why not facilitate 'clean tech'-based clusters of innovation (comprised of related companies and supporting organizations) around our unique asset - Rocky Mountain Institute? Instead of building more not-so-'affordable housing', let's encourage business formation and growth and attract investment and higher-paying, permanent jobs.

If we must consider more not-so-'affordable housing', I encourage the Town to be very flexible on this issue and to fully vet the three Options outlined in CCY Architects' letter. It should not

be a deal-breaker to locate the requisite 'affordable housing' in the downtown core if that creates undue expense or project delays for the developer.

**Boutique Hotel & Condos:** We need to draw more out-of-town visitors to downtown Basalt, *on a year-round basis*, if a desirable mix of downtown restaurants/retail businesses is going to thrive. Berating local residents to "support local businesses" will not make a dent in the problem. How many hand-embroidered silk shirts and bottles of *Gaja* Barbaresco do you expect us to buy? Rocky Mountain Institute's facility and the Roaring Fork Conservancy's River Center both promise to drive more traffic to the downtown core, but they are not sufficient. As someone said at last week's meeting, we need 'hot beds' filled by people who want to go out to eat and shop.

Thus, I support Lowe's development of a boutique hotel and condos on the riverfront site *provided that:*

- Most, if not all of the condos *are available for rent* when not owner-occupied;
- The hotel and condo units are developed *concurrently*; and
- The development includes a main floor restaurant (the brew pub/taqueria sounds like a good idea) with a view of the river and substantial outdoor seating.

Last week's discussion did not mention a rooftop restaurant (which was included in a prior plan). I would love to see a rooftop facility included in the development as well. It would be a terrific asset for hosting in-Town events.

**Riverfront Park:** A park is not going to draw people to Basalt on the consistent basis needed to maintain vitality downtown. The Roaring Fork Valley is mostly 'open space' – we have a lot to compete with. I also do not believe that the Town has the capacity to organize and hold a series of ticketed/unticketed events at this location that would consistently draw large crowds of people to the downtown core – particularly in the winter months. Nor do I believe that downtown residents would be happy with that scenario in the long run (e.g., noise complaints, trash complaints, traffic complaints). And again, between events in Aspen and Carbondale – we have a lot to compete with.

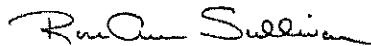
When I view Lowe's proposal for the Riverfront Park, *together with the plans for the Old Pond Park and Midland Park*, I am not troubled by the size of the public open space. I like the way it folds into the Midland Spur Woonerf (a good idea), maintains a view plane to the river from downtown, and improves Lion's Park (another good idea).

The only aspect of the Riverfront Park development mentioned as a possibility last week that I do not support is the addition of a tree house and/or jungle gym. The Riverfront Park should not be turned into another traditional playground. This would detract from the visual

amenities. I support the idea of a fountain (like the one in Aspen) and boulders for children to climb on. If desired, I also support some well-placed public art in the Riverfront Park.

**Timing:** At the April 9<sup>th</sup> Community Meeting there were suggestions made by some members of the public to "go slower." *I am strongly opposed to any further delays in the Our Town Planning process. As a community, we have spent over a year on this effort.* No one can claim that they did not have *multiple* opportunities to participate. It is time to make some decisions and move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rose Ann Sullivan".

Rose Ann Sullivan

Cc: Susan Philp

**Susan Philp**

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**From:** Stephen Chase <aspensailor@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 15, 2015 3:15 PM  
**To:** Mike Scanlon; garytennenbaum@yahoo.com; Rob Leavitt; 'Rick Stevens:; Herschel Ross; 'Bernie Grauer'; Jacque Whitsitt; Mark Kittle; Susan Philp; Chris Touchette  
**Cc:** 'Scott Condon'; 'Gino Rossetti'; 'Kane Bill and Carolyn'; 'Jim Kent'; 'Kathleen Cole'  
**Subject:** Re: The real costs of "no development"  
**Attachments:** The real costs incurred in order to.docx

Please evaluate the attached; fill in the blanks and critique the premise that sometimes the cost of a piece of property outweighs its perceived benefits.....Steve Chase

The real costs incurred in order to “purchase” the CDC portion of the Pan Fork Property and make the entire space a park:

- There is no payback to the town from the developer (\$2.5 million)
- There is no affordable housing element due from developer (9-14 units)
- There is no revenue stream from taxation (property taxes alone on 42 residences @ \$500,000/unit (\$21million = \$170,000/year approx.; schools the beneficiary of 50%; 10% the Town of Basalt; 10% Eagle County; the rest, fire and Crown Mountain Park, etc); **tax revenue from the hotel =??**)
- There is little if any predictable revenue stream – direct (from park usage) or indirect (benefit to the commercial core of downtown)
- There are annual **maintenance costs =??**
- There are no supported amenities for the park (equip. rental, restaurants, and bar.)
- There is a debt service to pay back the bond holders (\$360,000/year for 10 years + the **principal and interest on \$2.5 million** that would have otherwise been eliminated by the developer =??)
- No jobs created during the construction or management following the completion =??
- No housing opportunities created – affordable or otherwise
- Net proceeds from above no longer available for town improvements and maintenance and affordable housing
- As of this writing, the median cost of housing in Basalt (influenced by a large foreclosure inventory) is \$560,000. (Carbondale is \$375,000)