

## Susan Philp

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**From:** Peter McBride <pedro@petemcbride.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2015 5:14 PM  
**To:** Gary Tennenbaum; 'bernie.grauer@basalt.net'; '9lax@comcast.net';  
'robleavitt@basalt.net'; Herschel Ross; Mark Kittle  
**Cc:** Susan Philp; Pam Schilling; Mike Scanlon  
**Subject:** Letter from Pete McBride regarding Town Park

August 11, 2015

Dear Basalt Town Council –

Please accept this letter for tonight's meeting.

While there are many remarkable and unique assets to Basalt (its citizens being #1), I strongly believe it has one of the greatest physical attributes of any small town in the world — two world class Gold Medal rivers converging at its center. And while many travel miles to visit our waterways, the town has historically under appreciated this piece of gold.

So after years of hard work reclaiming the heart of this gem (at the displacement of scores of families), why are we racing so badly to fill it up again with development? Sure, some feel old town could use a shot of energy, but let's NOT squander our best asset in the process. Let's not hide what could be one of the best and only river-front parks in the valley behind three-story high buildings and thousands of square feet of commercial space while we have a surplus of empty commercial space already, and more ramping up to come online.

After spending bundles and taking months to bring our river front property up to flood safety and become visually open and inviting to the public (what happened to the July seeding deadline of the park?), why are we so quick to jump back in to cover it up. While development done wisely can add to town, Resolution #34 appears to have slipped through quietly and unwisely. It has also locked us (the town) in bed with a developer to build out as much as we can and as quickly as possible.

As a former town councilman, I understand how challenging and time-consuming these public / private interactions can be. That is all the more reason not to rush the final stretch, especially when addressing the town's finest natural resource —its downtown riverfront property.

What happens when Mid Valley continues to explode and build out in the next five years? Where will one find some solace amidst the resources that brought many here in the first place – the rivers and open-space. A downtown Basalt River Park would be wonderfully desirable then – and I would argue the exact vitality lure so many frequently say Basalt lacks.

Having worked and seen an array of river towns across the state and abroad, I have repeatedly witnessed communities that cherish and embrace their natural assets, particularly riverfronts, are always rewarded economically too. People come to river parks. They loiter there. Folks rarely trek miles to visit buildings and stores unless, unless they are exceptional.

Basalt can and should take the time to do the same – protect and cherish its riverfront open-space and develop its surroundings wisely–exceptionally.

Yes, infill I support but why not put more of our energies into collaborating and creating working solutions with the owners of old Clark’s Market building where things like parking will not be cost prohibitive and infill development begs to be situated? Challenging – yes, but improvements there wouldn’t block and hinder the town’s gold. It could also compliment the best potential riverfront park in the valley.

Sincerely

Pete McBride

Former Town Councilman

Fan of Basalt and Rivers

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