

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** kseltzercreations@gmail.comkseltzercreations@gmail.com  
<kseltzercreations@gmail.com> on behalf of  
kseltzercreations@gmail.comkseltzercreations@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 5:03 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;+PARC+  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence property

Please do not build on this beautiful land . Keep it green and a park for all to enjoy !  
Thank you!!

Sent from my iPhone

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Bethany Dellinger <bethanydellinger@gmail.com> on behalf of Bethany Dellinger  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 11, 2012 3:48 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** support the plaza

Dear City Council,

Please support the St. Lawrence Piazza Plaza proposal today. A European-style plaza would bring much needed class to that area of downtown, as well as provide a lovely view of our historic Basilica. Who doesn't long for beauty and the sense of community a historically-in-tune plaza would provide, verse the utilitarian commercialism of yet another hotel? Think of St. Marco Square in Venice. Why can't Asheville have a hip and welcoming spot to linger before or after one of the many performances at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium?

Greenville, SC has done a wonderful job of highlighting the Reedy River which runs through downtown by creating a green park and multiple community gathering spots along the way, making it a downtown with a "destination." Can't a plaza such as the one proposed by St. Lawrence's be Asheville's own stand-out destination?

Let's give Asheville an artistic landmark worthy of the mountains that draw locals and visitors to our city in the first place.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bethany Dellinger

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Doug Abernethy <asheville@me.com> on behalf of Doug Abernethy  
**Sent:** Monday, September 10, 2012 10:06 PM  
**To:** Gordon Smith; AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Public park

Think of it this way. Would you all have the courage to do the right thing and save land for say... The parkway or a national park if it came up today? Maybe the park will not reap the financial benefits you seek, but aren't there some things much more important? Please reconsider your stand on a park. Just saving the land for a green public park would be noble. Heck, we will plant the grass! Take a progressive stand for your citizens and the powerless.

Doug Abernethy

Sent from iPad

On Sep 10, 2012, at 9:42 PM, Gordon Smith <[gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com](mailto:gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:

Thanks, Doug, for your interest in this issue. Downtown development brings out strong opinions, and I've heard a lot of them regarding the Haywood Street property. Everyone involved cares about the future of the city, and everyone wants an outcome we can be proud of for generations to come. Please forgive the length of this message. There's a lot of information to cover!

### *Current conditions and opportunities*

We know that the current situation is undesirable for everyone. Surface parking and dilapidated buildings create dead space in our city center. It's blight, and the city should not support it.

The process of putting city-owned land up for sale began in 2005 as a way to support affordable housing in Asheville, and Asheville continues to have an acute affordable housing crisis.

Proceeds from a land sale could go immediately to the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). The AHTF loans money at low interest to builders who will help create affordable housing in our city limits. The great thing about these loans is that the money comes back to the fund, where it can be reallocated again and again. AHTF funds can immediately begin building hundreds of affordable housing units for working people in Asheville.

This will create construction jobs, and the resulting buildings will add to our city's tax rolls, allowing additional investments in parks, police, and transportation. Affordable housing and corridor density are crucial to making our local economy stronger and more sustainable over the long term.

Further, it is only through building on that site that we're going to connect Haywood Street and the Grove Arcade via the Civic Center and beautiful Basilica of St. Lawrence for residents and visitors alike.

*In response to some of the many ideas out there:*

-- Leaving the area as surface parking would continue the current dead space problem without helping with affordable housing needs or pushing towards creation of a plaza.

-- Creating another city park would (1) postpone the series of river parks and greenways currently underway; (2) create no property tax revenue or fulfill other economic development goals; (3) leave affordable housing needs unmet; (4) be financially impossible without a broad partnership that is currently not being contemplated by anyone; (5) be very costly in a time when parks budgets are stretched to the max.

-- I have enormous respect for the people who attend the Basilica of St. Lawrence, and I fear they may not know all of the facts about what's been going on. The Basilica was one of nine entities that were deemed qualified, along with the McKibbin Group, back in 2007. The Basilica did not submit a proposal when the process was open. Matt Mores, who was representing the Basilica at the time, was interested in seeing a nine-story hotel on the site.

Earlier this year, after an initial letter demanding that the City take or leave an offer less than half of what was being offered by The McKibbin Group, the Basilica representatives began broadcasting urgent warnings of dire consequences. In response to these concerns, the Asheville Design Center offered to mediate discussions between McKibbin and Basilica representatives. A different Basilica representative, Lou Bisette, was brought to the table. These discussions were fruitful, producing six agreed-upon design principles. Then the Basilica abruptly withdrew from these talks and released Mr. Bisette, bringing back their original spokesman, Matt Mores. The McKibbin Group and the Asheville Design Center remain open to resuming those discussions.

The Basilica does not have a contract with the Kessler Group, whom they suggest will do their building, and my understanding is that they do not have the necessary funding to bring a project to completion.

Changes in representation, walking away from negotiations about design principles, shifting desires for what should be built, the lack of a firm agreement with a developer, and the lack of capital – All of these things lead me to having less confidence in the Basilica's ability to achieve a desirable outcome in a reasonable time frame.

### *Protecting the integrity of the Basilica*

When the city sells this property, we will be able to sculpt a development agreement with the buyer. Any development agreement should include requirements for seismic monitoring and consultation with a geotechnical engineer. If integrity of Basilica is threatened, then construction must stop until a solution is reached.

There must be a significant buffer space between any new building and the architectural treasure of the Basilica in order to assure its structural integrity. That buffer space can take the form of a world-class plaza/piazza if all of the parties involved will cooperate to make it happen. The Basilica will have to be the lead entity in doing so, because they already own the necessary land. We can reroute the roads, make a safer intersection, and create a lovely plaza. It will require cooperation, and I'm hopeful we can get there.

Further, any proposed building would be the first under new design guidelines we approved in 2010 after a lengthy public Downtown Master Plan process. The new guidelines were described by the Asheville Citizen Times as embodying a compromise between development interests and critics of new downtown construction.

Aesthetic tastes vary wildly, but no matter your opinion of Aloft or Indigo, built under the old rules, every building built from now on will fall under the new design guidelines. Also, the proposed building would be shorter than the historic apartment buildings on either side of it and would use brick facades to correspond with the surrounding structures.

Lastly, I am open to all suggestions about how we can further improve any development agreement in order to arrive at the best possible outcome.

*In conclusion*

The McKibben Group is prepared to invest more than \$25 million into our downtown. As people cry out for economic relief, it would be folly to reject this investment. The property tax revenues will help all of our citizens in perpetuity.

The \$2.3 million sale price of the land can go directly to creating affordable housing in our community. I will not vote for the project unless Council agrees to dedicate money to this purpose.

The decision will neither create nor prohibit a park/plaza. We need a welcoming space to join Haywood to Grove Arcade and to complement the Basilica and Civic Center. There can be a plaza, and step one will be the Basilica saying they want it and being willing to either build it or partner with others who want to do so.

We need to do away with the urban blight that exists there now.

Our new design guidelines coupled with a development agreement will ensure the highest quality building and protection of the structural integrity of the Basilica.

I hope this information is helpful,

Gordon Smith

On Sat, Sep 8, 2012 at 9:21 AM, Doug Abernethy <[asheville@me.com](mailto:asheville@me.com)> wrote:

Please consider the public park solution for the land across from the Basilica We need a balanced approach to our city's growth. Leave our children a better place.

Doug Abernethy

Sent from iPad

## 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**

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**From:** Susan Sihler <ssihler@yahoo.com> on behalf of Susan Sihler  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 29, 2012 11:48 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Cc:** Robert Phillips  
**Subject:** Haywood/Page site

Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to plead with you not to let the McKibbon group build another hotel in Asheville and especially not on the Haywood/Page site.

In my opinion they have already "defaced" our beautiful downtown architecture with the ugly and out-of-place Aloft Hotel.

We have a city filled with very interesting and historic buildings, one of which is the treasured Basilica of St. Lawrence. It behooves us to think of developing space on the Haywood/Page site that not only enhances the Basilica, but also provides some green space in downtown Asheville.

Both tourists and residents of Asheville will benefit. There is more to consider here than the income and tax revenue and "pleasing" the developers who are getting more than due consideration from City Council and the City Planning. How about some planning that will help to preserve and enhance our unique city?

Thank you!

Susan Sihler  
17 Wisteria Drive  
Asheville, N.C. 28804



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Leonard Carrier <lcarrier@charter.net> on behalf of Leonard Carrier  
**Sent:** Monday, August 27, 2012 8:23 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Basilica

Dear Members of City Council,

Do you really represent the taxpaying citizens of Asheville? It's hard to say. One thing I do know, which is that only 13% of your electorate favor building a hotel on the City-owned property adjoining St. Lawrence Basilica. That means that 87% favor something else. That 87% is divided between the PARC proposal of a green space, and the Catholic Church offer, which would also protect Guastavino's master work and our most famous landmark.

I find the solution to be a simple one. Why doesn't City Council ditch the offer of McKibbon and Kessler? Instead, negotiate a compromise between the Church and PARC. I can't imagine why anyone hasn't thought of this.

But, please, please, don't vacillate and conduct another study. Either do your business or get off the Council and make way for those who will look after those who elected you. Otherwise, you will be remembered for simply bleating like baby sheep--poor little lambs who have gone astray.

Sincerely,

Leonard S. Carrier  
26 Stonebridge Dr.  
Asheville 28805

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Sally G Kammann <sk22334@gmail.com> on behalf of Sally G Kammann  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 14, 2012 2:55 PM  
**To:** Mayor Bellamy  
**Subject:** Re: Development of Site near US Cellular Center and Basilica of St. Lawrence

Mayor Bellamy,

Thank you for your reply.

Yes, you understand my position correctly. As a member of DARN, who has worked over the past several years on Pritchard Park, I do not support another downtown park. I would like to see it developed as buildings and a plaza which will be much easier to maintain and keep attractive. As you know, city parks with planting require costly annual maintenance. If the city of Asheville had an unlimited budget for beautification and upkeep, I would prefer green and more color. However, since that is not the case (what city does have that budget?), I think something attractive with some green plantings of trees and bushes is preferable to grass and flowers which require constant care.

Thank you for all your hard work and for listening.

Sally Kammann

On Tue, Aug 14, 2012 at 2:03 PM, Mayor Bellamy <[MayorBellamy@avlcouncil.com](mailto:MayorBellamy@avlcouncil.com)> wrote:  
Ms. Kammann,

Thank you for your email. I appreciate your position on the Haywood Street Property. Today we will be given an update on the status of the project. This is not the public hearing on accepting the McKibbon's proposed development.

I want to be clear in my understanding of your position - you would like the city to forgo an agreement with McKibbon, and begin negotiating with Kessler and Basilica with the knowledge that they too want to develop a multi-story building there and not a park?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mayor Bellamy

On Tue, Aug 14, 2012 at 12:31 PM, Sally G Kammann <[sk22334@gmail.com](mailto:sk22334@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Hello Mayor Bellamy and City Council members,

Much is happening at this time that will greatly impact the beauty and viability of downtown Asheville. As a resident of downtown, I am writing to urge you to vote for the Basilica and Kessler proposal for the city property across the street from the church and the civic center.

The building and plaza designed by the Kessler group is beautiful and very harmonious with one of our "crown jewel" of downtown Asheville. It will become another draw for visitors and area residents. Shops and restaurants which generate sales tax will add to the downtown value. It is my experience that we can more than a sufficient number of hotel rooms available for our out of town visitors.

The Kessler group has proved that they can deliver an attractive, pleasing building. The McKibbon group, on the other hand, has delivered a disappointing, architecturally inappropriate building.

Please vote for accepting the Basilica proposal.

Thank your time and attention.

Sally Kammann

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** beth searles <b\_searles@yahoo.com> on behalf of beth searles  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 14, 2012 1:19 PM  
**To:** Marc Hunt  
**Cc:** ashevillencouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Re: St Lawrence Plaza

Mr. Hunt,

Thank you very much for your response and the helpful information provided below. It is encouraging to read that you see the value of the Basilica's rendering/plans thus far, and its pedestrian-friendly, aesthetic and long-term strengths for the community.

I've seen the McKibbon Group's hotel renderings recently, and I am relieved that they have come up with something more acceptable than was probably originally conceived. It would be short-sighted, though, to assume it is automatically, now, the best choice over the Plan you have admitted has merit.

NOtice that the 6 levels of the rendered St. Lawrence Plaza have a tiered effect, and the effect is far more open and site-line-friendly, than the solid levels that the Hotel would include, even with a fountain/plaza segment. The St. L. Plaza is commercially viable and is multi-use and is a more dynamic use of the space from the viewpoint of the community, and tourists. It is aesthetically superior to McKibbon Group's design, it can be argued, and is more far-sighted in its benefits to Asheville overall. Hotel developers come and go, and other hotel sites can and will be available, but this site has a unique situation relative to a historical treasure, as well as being part of an active downtown corridor. Another hotel is just not the wisest decision in the big scheme, I would have to agree with those making that argument.

There still does remain the issues of fairness about opening up the RFP process after such a dated proposal by the McKibbon Group. I can't and don't speak for the Basilica, of course, but I suspect that the desire to have a shot at controlling development stems from the same issue you appear to have - not completely trusting that the other will do the job exactly as wanted or needed. Your concerns about the Basilica owning the site and developing it seem to be a red herring, though, since anyone developing that site has to answer to the City's requirements, correct? Negotiations can still be hammered out I would assume. The question comes down to the development that will end up on that site....which is the best long-term choice for the Basilica and the community/city?

It seems wrong to suggest that the BASilica with its selected (and proven) developer/architect fails to qualify as a valid competitor for the site at least as much as the McKibbon Group.

The Basilica is squarely and definitively a part of Asheville, and has been for over a hundred years. It would act in the interest of itself, of course, AND in the interest of the community and city - all of which are intertwined in a way that the McKibbon Group is not. The Basilica plan has already compromised on key issues that the city has indicated and would obviously remain amenable to such issues. It should not, of course, be given short shrift in any serious consideration of development that so directly affects its own well-being. I hope and fully suspect the Council is sensitive to that.

The Basilica has of course made its intentions known that it has no long-term interest in being in the development business, beyond what's necessary for the issue at hand, but has found a developer it trusts, a proven developer not unknown to Asheville; and it has architects and consultants who are intimately acquainted with the unique aspects of the Basilica's construction and architecture. That is entirely a plus, and in the case of such an old structure, with a worrisome defect, it seems to be a necessity. NO matter how forward-thinking McKibbon Group may be, (and as a customer of the Chapel Hill Aloft Hotel, I happen to like the hotel, in general) they are not invested in this area or in the Basilica in quite the same way. In fact, up to the time of the

revealing of their plan , I understand they had made no real attempt to talk with anyone involved with the Basilica re development. That may be revealing.

At the end of the day, though, I sense and am encouraged that there's far more sensitivity and trending toward common ground between all parties than was originally apparent. I would hope that ongoing discussions are fruitful, but I believe the Basilica should have the respect it deserves and be given a fair opportunity to bid for ownership and development of the site , according to city wishes, and to help develop that property with the best possible intentions for the Basilica and the whole community.

That is ultimately the biggest concern for the Basilica and its supporters.

Again, I thank you very much for your response, Mr. Hunt, and your intentions to remain open to the best solutions, and I am happy to see that you are open to the merits of the Basilica's St. Lawrence Plaza plan. I hope that whatever happens, the current sensitivity to "doing right" by the historical Basilica and the community continues.

Sincerely Beth Searles

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**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com>  
**To:** 'beth searles' <b\_searles@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 5, 2012 11:37 AM  
**Subject:** RE: St Lawrence Plaza

Ms Searles

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 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

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**From:** beth searles [mailto:b\_searles@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 12, 2012 2:58 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Cc:** basilica@bellsouth.net  
**Subject:** St Lawrence Plaza

July 12, 2012

To members of Council,

My husband and I wish to eagerly voice our support for the Basilica's impressive development plans for the Haywood St. property across from Basilica. It strives, in good faith, to work with the City and compromise on several key issues, and most importantly, protects the interests of the Basilica, and, we believe, the interests of many Asheville citizens who are weary of decisions that inflate commercial interests over vision and aesthetics for the city of Asheville.

To ignore a perceived groundswell on this issue is unwise and short-sighted. The rancor is destined to grow significantly I suspect, but that is one issue of many.

This plan effectively compromises by offering both significant revenue and a far more aesthetic and tourist-friendly plan. On reviewing the proposal (at [www.stlawrenceplaza.com](http://www.stlawrenceplaza.com)) my husband and I find these plans to be highly dynamic and forward-thinking for the area in question, and the addition of Kessler as a reputable developer offers a sophisticated direction. I should add that my husband is not without business acumen in this area, as he has experience as a real estate agent and commercial real estate investor and developer on a small scale.

The old business adage that one must take care of the goose that lays the golden egg, if you wish to continue receiving golden eggs, is appropriate here. The golden egg for Asheville, you certainly know, is primarily tourism - a tourism based on a city that has earned high marks for its unique appeal architecturally, geographically and historically, among other factors. Inappropriate hotel development chosen purely for the revenue at the expense of aesthetics, vision and respect for historical value is objectionable - particularly for a city like Asheville.

To fail to consider the Basilica's plan versus an out-of-town developer who specializes in contemporary high-rise hotels with minimalist (block-y) exteriors, (when that hotel can surely be built in a more appropriate location, not to mention the questionable need for another hotel in this area) is purely lacking wisdom and vision. To remain inflexible and rigid in the face of this proposal and to cling to an old proposal by McKinnon group is a choice that veers into questionable ethics, as well. One can argue it is boiling down to greed versus vision.

I believe the majority of this Council is totally capable of recognizing these points, and I hope and pray the Council seriously considers this plan , and respects the voice of the venerable Basilica, and its community supporters. It is , quite simply, the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration of our points, and for your service to the city and your constituents,  
Elizabeth and Mark Searles

[b\\_searles@yahoo.com](mailto:b_searles@yahoo.com)



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Andra Cagle <h2andra@yahoo.com> on behalf of Andra Cagle  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 2:30 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence Green

St. Lawrence Green would put a park where people are: going and coming from the Civic Center, the Church, the Arcade, Pack Memorial Library, the Battery Park, and the Vanderbilt.

Any saved greenspace is valuable-would New York be the same without Central Park? Large buildings block the great views that people come to visit and/ or move to Asheville. Please don't make us into every other city!

Thank You,

Andra Cagle  
Concerned citizen of Asheville

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** SchreiberE@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 2:12 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Please make the area a park!

We badly need more open space in down town for people to enjoy. Downtown traffic and congestion is bad now. Please don't allow development of the area across from the Basillica and Civic Center.

St. Lawrence Green would put a park where people are: going and coming from the Civic Center, the Church, the Grove Arcade, Pack Memorial Library, the Battery Park, and the Vanderbilt.

Thank you!

Betty Anne and Gary Schenk  
Weaverville, NC

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Mary Evers <mdevers03@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mary Evers  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 1:19 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Proposed construction in the St. Lawrence Church area

Honorable Mayor and Council Persons: As 32 year residents of Asheville we ask that you support either a park or the sale of the land to the Church as per their plan for a plaza and residential construction. The least appealing plan is the McGibbon Hotel Plan, and we totally oppose it. Downtown needs more green areas and the intersection in front of the Church is in dire need of fixing to reduce the number of streets intersecting there. More congestion and traffic in this area is NOT needed. Thank you for your consideration. David & Mary Evers, 24 Finalee Ave., Asheville NC 28803-2544

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Jean Ann Wheelock <jeanann.wheelock@gmail.com> on behalf of Jean Ann Wheelock  
**Sent:** Monday, August 13, 2012 10:16 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** property across from Basilica

Respectfully submitted to all Council members:

After seeing all the proposals and hearing from all sides, we still prefer that the city-owned property across from the Basilica of St Lawrence and our civic center and library be put to its best and highest use as a green, family-friendly, public space.

Very sincerely,

Russ and Jean Ann Wheelock  
22 Hibriten Drive  
Asheville, NC 28801

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Marc Hunt <marchunt@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Marc Hunt  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 05, 2012 10:58 AM  
**To:** 'Christopher Pratt'; 'Esther Manheimer'  
**Cc:** 'Cecil Bothwell'; 'Chris Pelly'; 'Gordon Smith'; 'Jan Davis'; 'Mayor Bellamy'; 'Maggie Burleson'; paula@mckibbonhotels.com  
**Subject:** RE: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

Dr. Pratt

We have exchanged emails before, and I think you know my general take on the situation, but I wanted to share my updated view which I provide to folks who write.

Thank you for being in touch.

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. 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 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

+++++

**From:** Christopher Pratt [mailto:christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, August 02, 2012 11:12 AM

**To:** Esther Manheimer

**Cc:** Dr. Christopher Pratt; Cecil Bothwell; Chris Pelly; Gordon Smith; Jan Davis; Marc Hunt; Mayor Bellamy; Maggie Burleson; paula@mckibbonhotels.com

**Subject:** Re: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

Dear Councillor Manheimer, Asheville City Council, Mayor Bellamy,

Thank you for your reply, however, isn't it time our City Council stops playing games with this process. Why is Council ignoring the facts? One might wonder if this isn't SOP for our City government. We all know that:

- the Basilica also submitted a bit in the first RFQ and it was acknowledged in writing by the City, and
- that the Basilica's proposal should be given full consideration first as it is rightfully due through the historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

One might ask Is someone withholding information from the Council, and if so why, or is it that the Council is choosing to ignore the record.

Your email and the McKibbon invitation forwarded by the City regarding an August 7 design presentation, and also to the public announcement of the same in the Asheville Citizen-Times on July 30 convey misleading and apparently false information which one could only imagine you and your colleagues and McKibbon knew. Did you not?

The reference in the publicity regarding McKibbon meeting with the Basilica is misleading and should be publicly retracted. There is no approved relationship or collaboration between the

Basilica and either the McKibbon Group or the Asheville Design Center. No such engagement was ever approved and the Basilica is not aware of, let alone were they consulted about any designs that they may be presenting or you may be considering.

The St. Lawrence Plaza web site presents the only approved messaging from the Basilica. The Basilica's stand has always been to support a developer only if and when the Basilica has been granted a historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

There is no authorized support from the Basilica for the 2007 McKibbon RFQ, moreover, there is vigorous objection from the Basilica to any hotel being built on this Haywood site. Please refer to the letter from the Basilica counsel on May 24, 2012 written to the city, available via a link on the web site. That is the only direction approved by the Basilica.

We understand that the city staff's desire is to keep this five year RFQ alive, but this is not

a position we support.

However, it is also then incumbent on the City to keep the Basilica proposal alive and give it all consideration due to it first as it is rightfully due through the historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

At this time, the Basilica has not authorized any Basilica representatives who will be attending the August 7th presentation. This is the first we are hearing about that meeting and any supposed collaboration with the Basilica.

I believe the Basilica Pastor/Rector will be responding more formally with a letter to John McKibbin. The only engagement to date with a developer by the Basilica is with the Kessler Development Group for a plaza with residential retail and commercial, and this will go forward only when the city approves private negotiations with the Basilica.

We believe ONLY the Basilica will be able to draw world class architectural design expertise to this project and ensure that the Basilica is protected during construction. This is a liability we believe no developer should undertake without full approval and support of the Basilica.

Please let's stop wasting taxpayer money and time and acknowledge what is the crux of this matter that:

- the Basilica also submitted a bid in the first RFQ and it was acknowledged in writing by the City, and
- that the Basilica's proposal should be given full consideration first as it is rightfully due through the historical private state statute arrangement (G.S. 160A-266) with the city for the development of the Haywood site.

If you have not already, please view the proposed St. Lawrence Plaza online at:

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

and the Petition supporting the St. Lawrence Plaza at:

[\*\*http://www.change.org/petitions/city-council-of-asheville-north-carolina-negotiate-to-sell-property-opposite-basilica-to-diocese-of-charlotte\*\*](http://www.change.org/petitions/city-council-of-asheville-north-carolina-negotiate-to-sell-property-opposite-basilica-to-diocese-of-charlotte)

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Pratt and Mrs. Jimmie Cochran Pratt, MPA



## Chairmen, New Generations of Global Entrepreneurs

120 Norwood Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28804-3618 USA  
+828-253-8158  
[christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com)

On Wed, Aug 1, 2012 at 9:35 AM, Esther Manheimer <[emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com](mailto:emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com)> wrote:

Mr. Pratt: I believe McKibbon is, on its own initiative, holding this public meeting. Anyone can reserve the space and make their own presentation. I would certainly welcome Kessler to do the same.

Thank you for the email.

-Esther Manheimer

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**From:** Christopher Pratt [mailto:[christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 31, 2012 9:03 PM  
**To:** Maria Mason; Bud Hansbury; PARC; [AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov)  
**Cc:** Carmen Ramos-Kennedy; Anne Fitzgerald Smith; Briggs Sherwood; Jane Whitman; Sue & Jim Donato; Bob Long - Musician; Will Teller -Musician; Thomas Nelson -Musician; Blaine Greenfield; Charlie Thomas; Allison Biddix; John Bascom -Musician; Alex Burch -Musician; Bill & Marleen Hutt; Frank Kirkland  
**Subject:** Re: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

**Did the McKibbon group develop this plan “Through meetings with the Basilica” as this email states?**

**And when will the Kessler Group be given the same opportunity?**

**Chris**

On Tue, Jul 31, 2012 at 5:46 PM, Maria Mason <[mariamaso@gmail.com](mailto:mariamaso@gmail.com)> wrote:

EXCELLENT, Dr. Pratt.

Hey, everyone: PASS THIS ON!!!

Respectfully yours,

Maria Mason

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Christopher Pratt <[christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com)>

**Date:** July 31, 2012 4:35:59 PM EDT

**To:** "Dr. Christopher Pratt" <[christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.jimmie.pratt@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Fwd: FW: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

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

**From:** Maggie Burleson <[MBurleson@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:MBurleson@ashevillenc.gov)>

**Date:** Tue, Jul 31, 2012 at 3:04 PM

**Subject:** FW: McKibbon Hotel Group Public Meeting - Haywood Street Project

**To:** Cecil Bothwell <[cecil@braveulysses.com](mailto:cecil@braveulysses.com)>, Chris Pelly <[chrispelly@avlcouncil.com](mailto:chrispelly@avlcouncil.com)>, Esther Manheimer <[emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com](mailto:emanheimer@vwlawfirm.com)>, Gordon Smith <[gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com](mailto:gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com)>, Jan Davis <[jandavis@avlcouncil.com](mailto:jandavis@avlcouncil.com)>, Marc Hunt <[marchunt@avlcouncil.com](mailto:marchunt@avlcouncil.com)>, Mayor Bellamy <[mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com](mailto:mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com)>

City Council is invited to the following:

## **McKIBBON HOTEL GROUP TO PRESENT FIRST DESIGN DRAWINGS**

### **FOR HAYWOOD STREET PROPERTY**

*Public invited to preview plans for mixed-use hotel, plaza/piazza, restaurant and retail development*

(ASHEVILLE, NC –07/31/12) **McKibbon Hotel Group, Inc.** will present the first design drawings for their proposed development of the city-owned Haywood Street site, across the street from the Basilica of St. Lawrence and the U.S. Cellular Center on **Tuesday, August 7 at 5:30 p.m.** at the **U.S. Cellular Center Banquet Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 87 Haywood Street, Asheville.** The meeting is open to the public, and **doors will open at 5:00 p.m.** for seating and preview of site renderings.

“Through meetings with the Basilica, the Asheville Design Center and City representatives, we are prepared to develop a property that will enhance the neighborhood and complement the Basilica, which is such an important historic landmark for our city,” explained **John McKibbon**, Chairman of McKibbon Hotel Group. McKibbon will lead the 30-minute presentation, and will ask for public comment at the meeting’s conclusion.

In addition to the presentation of new site renderings, the meeting will include:

✍ McKibbon Company History, Previous Urban Projects and Company Involvement in Asheville Community – John McKibbon, Chairman

✍ Overview of the Haywood Project – Architects Buck Lindsay and Chad Roberson, Lindsay Pope Brayfield Clifford and Associates

✍ Precautions That Will Be Taken to Protect Surrounding Buildings During Construction – Jill Heimburg, PE, AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, Asheville, NC

#### About McKibbon Hotel Group, Inc./McKibbon Hotel Management, Inc.

McKibbon Hotel Group, Inc., based in Gainesville, Georgia, is a privately owned enterprise that has grown into an award-winning premier real estate developer and owner of nationally franchised hotel brands for Marriott, Hilton, Starwood and Hyatt hotels. McKibbon is proud to be a recognized leader for over 87 years in the hospitality industry, and McKibbon Hotel Management, Inc., based in Tampa, Florida, currently operates over 65 mid and upscale brands in 8 states throughout the Southeast. The company has a rich history and culture that promotes a family oriented environment, while holding true to its core values of honesty, integrity and loyalty. For more information, visit [www.mckibbon.com](http://www.mckibbon.com).

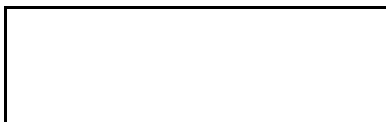


Paula MacDonald | Director of Communications

McKibbon Hotel Management, Inc.

5315 Avion Park Drive, Suite 120 | Tampa, Florida 33607

p: [813.472.7390](tel:813.472.7390) | f: [813.241.2389](tel:813.241.2389) | c: [813.545.1009](tel:813.545.1009) | [www.mckibbon.com](http://www.mckibbon.com) | [www.facebook.com/mckibbonhotels](https://www.facebook.com/mckibbonhotels)



11 North Market Street, Asheville, NC 28801 | [828-258-2991](tel:828.258.2991) | FAX [828-255-0255](tel:828.255.0255)

422 South Main Street, Hendersonville, NC 28792 | [828-697-6196](tel:828.697.6196) | FAX [828-693-3999](tel:828.693.3999)

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## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Tom Downing <TDowning@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Tom Downing  
**Sent:** Monday, July 30, 2012 5:15 PM  
**To:** councilgroup  
**Subject:** Letter to Mayor and Council from Basilica Requesting Consideration at Aug 14 Agenda -- Requests Dismissal of McKibbon RFP and Designation of Basilica and Diocese as a Partner with City to Develop Haywood Street Property  
**Attachments:** Very Rev. Wilbur Thomas -- Basilica of St. Lawrence -- Requesting Dismissal of McKibbon RFP and Designation of Basilica and Diocese as a Partner -- 7-27-12.pdf

Mayor Bellamy and Council members,

Please see the attached letter, which was received in the Mayor's Office this afternoon.

Thanks,

**Tom Downing**  
Administrative Assistant  
City Manager's Office  
828-259-5604

70 Court Plaza  
PO Box 7148  
Asheville, North Carolina 28802  
[TDowning@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:TDowning@ashevillenc.gov)



*Think Green! Please do not print this e-mail unless necessary*

*The Asheville Way: Continuous Improvement, Integrity, Diversity, Safety and Welfare, and Excellent Service*

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Maggie Lauterer <mplauterer@aol.com> on behalf of Maggie Lauterer  
**Sent:** Monday, July 30, 2012 12:00 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** concern about the civic center area

Good servants of the city of Asheville,

Since the early 1980's when I moved to Asheville, I thought that the best use of that ugly parking space across the street from St. Lawrence and the civic center would be a park - so many people come to the civic center, and to have a space of green would speak volumes about our city's sense of presence in the mountains and their nature.

Now I hear that the cathedral is suffering fragility in its dome - and that pretty much speaks volumes about the need for a park.

Thank you for considering that need for future plans.

Sincerely,

Maggie Lauterer

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Helen Toms <helenet@charter.net> on behalf of Helen Toms  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 15, 2012 8:45 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** Native In Favor of Basilica Purchase and Green-Space

Dear Asheville City Council,

As a native of Asheville and current resident I'd like to weigh in on the Haywood St. property across from St. Lawrence. I believe that the Basilica should be given the contract for purchase for several reasons; First, I am concerned for the safety of the Basilica, a local and national treasure. Also, having a smaller building and some green space would be best for the city's economy. Other cities we compete with such as Greenville SC, Wilmington and Knoxville have designated historical districts and beautiful parks and green spaces. In order to compete we must strive to do the same. A small park-like setting would serve all the citizens all seasons instead of a few tourists coming only part of the year. In this case the long range interests of the city are better served with open space and a multi-use smaller building rather than another high rise hotel. Let's remember past near-misses when we saved the South Lexington Avenue area and City County Plaza from developers and a high-rise hotel. Please listen to the citizens you serve.

Sincerely,

Helen Toms  
11 Parkview Dr.  
Asheville, NC 28805

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Peter Brezny <pb@purplecat.net> on behalf of Peter Brezny  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 05, 2012 2:43 PM  
**To:** 'City Council'  
**Subject:** Development near the cathedral

Dear City council,

I've written to you about this before, but I believe the importance of making the city owned property across from St. Lawrence Cathedral to be of great enough importance to ask for your time again.

I have heard back from some of you and I've been told that the city doesn't have the resources to maintain another park.

Although this may be true, I find it a poor excuse. Somehow we had enough revenue to spend Five million dollars for the basement rights to the property on Biltmore Avenue, which had a tax value of less than \$1million.

Now the city is left with that debt for another 25 years. Perhaps you can get Pat Whalen to mow the grass across from the Basilica for you. In all seriousness though, I'd ask that poor financial decision making not be used as an excuse for appropriate development of public space and historic preservation.

People don't come to Asheville to see new hotels with designs that belong in Miami. We have a historic city center, which has survived almost in spite of devastating planning decisions and near misses (remember the plan to turn all of Lexington Avenue into a mall?)...Imagine how different (dead) North Lexington would be today had that plan gone through.

I ask that in your consideration of options for the city owned land across from the Basilica, you look forward and 'think preservation' first. Our small city is losing its charm with every national chain store and eyesore hotel that's pops up in the city limits. Green space across from the Asheville Civic Center has been a long absent need in that area of town--a place where the public can congregate and comfortably relax under trees after a concert or event.

It's a beautiful, underserved location in town that you have the power to really do something wonderful with.

If nothing else, think how you would like to be remembered for your service on council? Do you want to be another Mayor Charles Wallmart, or even a Scott (staples) Shuford... The McKibbin 5?

Think Preservation.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Peter Brezny





## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Gordon Smith <gordonsmith@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Gordon Smith  
**Sent:** Friday, June 29, 2012 8:13 AM  
**To:** Cathy Early  
**Cc:** City Council;PARC  
**Subject:** Re: St Lawrence Green

Ms. Early,

I appreciate you writing in. There has been a lot of misinformation going around, and I'm glad for the opportunity to clarify the situation and my stance on it. It's been great to have so much interest and enthusiasm for seeing a good use and good design.

The short wrap-up in this: Nothing has been decided. McKibbon and the Basilica are in talks with the Asheville Design Center. There are several options available.

McKibbon hotel group was awarded rights to this property following a Request For Proposals (RFP) process, in which they were the sole applicant. The process was open to all bidders. I favored allowing that RFP to expire, but Council voted to extend it in 2010. The agreement is not complete in that there has not been a development agreement written and signed. This means that, even if Council decided to allow McKibbon to go ahead, there would be specific requirements for any building on the site.

The Basilica has made several offers, but there are, as of now, very few specifics attached to their offers. The Basilica and McKibbon representatives are working with the Asheville Design Center to determine what design might best preserve the integrity of the treasured Basilica and open up some public space on the site. I am looking forward to learning more about the outcome of these discussions.

As to a park, the city is not in a position to make that kind of ongoing investment. Having just taken on maintenance responsibilities for Pack Square Park, the city is stretched to the limit. While we're optimistic about seeing the end of this recession, we must be responsible with our expenditures. Parks are wonderful, but they have a cost and don't generate revenue.

A fourth option is to reissue the Request for Proposals in an effort to have a use for the site that respects the integrity of the Basilica, provides for some public space, and complements all of the surrounding properties. This is direction I'm leaning right now. This process would again be open to any entity that wanted to make a proposal. Council would determine the specific requirements for proposals.

I hope this is helpful information, and thank you again for the opportunity,

Gordon Smith

On Thu, Jun 28, 2012 at 3:53 PM, Cathy Early <[cearly@plumdogfinancial.com](mailto:cearly@plumdogfinancial.com)> wrote:

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:** Mike Walker <walkmex@yahoo.com> on behalf of Mike Walker  
**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

---

**From:** Vicki Nichols <[vnichols1@earthlink.net](mailto:vnichols1@earthlink.net)> on behalf of Vicki Nichols  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 28, 2012 6:59 PM  
**To:** 'City Council'  
**Subject:** Basilica Park

Asheville City Council -

I simply cannot understand how the City of Asheville can even entertain the idea of a high rise or even low-rise hotel on the site in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence!!

Do you not understand what a treasure that building is? It is an architectural gem that attracts the interest of religious persons and non-religious persons. I take all visitors to Asheville to the Basilica as part of an architectural tour of Asheville, and always feel I have to apologize for its unsightly setting. It is just a beautiful building inside and out, and currently sits in a nightmare of a bad intersection and an ugly parking lot and abandoned building.

A park on that property across from the Basilica would not only improve the tourist experience of visiting the building, but it would add much needed green space in the downtown area. While the Pack Place and City Hall park area is nice, it is not really close to the heart of Downtown, where there is a desperate need for more green space. A park in front of the Basilica would be the perfect solution.

I am not a city limits resident, but I work Downtown, I dine, shop and enjoy entertainment Downtown very often. So the quality of the Downtown experience means a lot to me. I can guarantee that any elected official who votes for putting up an unsightly and definitely un-needed hotel or other commercial enterprise on the site in front on the Basilica will never receive and support (financial or otherwise) from me for any future election for any office.

Thank you for your considered attention to this matter.

Vicki Nichols  
17 Auburndale Drive  
Asheville, NC 28806  
828-665-8908  
[Vnichols1@earthlink.net](mailto:Vnichols1@earthlink.net)

## Ben Fulmer

---

**From:** Cathy Early <cearly@plumdogfinancial.com> on behalf of Cathy Early  
**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**

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



**Ben Fulmer**

---

**From:** Shinesign@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 28, 2012 1:50 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** MccKibbon

I do not support the proposal to have a Georgia hotel chain in front of the St Lawrence Basilica.

This would make a wonderful Green Space that supports residents as well as those visitng the city.

Shiner Antiorio

Peace isn't an experience free of challenges, free of rough and smooth, it's an experience that's expansive enough to include all that arises without feeling threatened.

~Pema Chodron~

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Susan Kokora <susankokora@charter.net> on behalf of Susan Kokora  
**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 do 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:** 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:** Jon <anderson2118@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Jon  
**Sent:** Monday, June 25, 2012 10:11 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;info@ashevilleparc.org  
**Subject:** Too late for the green St. Lawrence Basilica?

Dear City Council -

The landmark of EVERY small town in Europe is a duomo and a plaza. Wouldn't that be the coolest thing for our great city? I'm not certain a strict green space is what we need, as we all know it will be more certain to attract homeless versus commerce.

Please work with the hotel group or the Basilica to create the best environment for this beautiful landmark in our city. To hide it or hurt it would be a crime.

Jon Anderson  
Asheville, NC

Sent from my iPad

**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:** Cunningham, Patricia <pcunningham@brchs.com> on behalf of Cunningham, Patricia  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 21, 2012 12:38 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** email subject

Please designate the area surrounding St. Lawrence Basilica as a green area and protected from development

**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:** Pfbeyer@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 21, 2012 10:45 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;ashevilleparc@gmail.com  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence Park

Asheville needs more green space and not more hotels!!!!!! Do not destroy what has made Asheville a beautiful town.

Resident for 14 years.  
Patsy Beyer



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Lin Brown <linbrown5@yahoo.com> on behalf of Lin Brown  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 20, 2012 12:10 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;ashevilleparc@gmail.com  
**Subject:** A park not a hotel across from St. Lawrence church

Dear Council Members,

My husband and I spend a lot of our time and communications promoting Asheville here and when we are away. Friends even joke we should be with the Chamber of Commerce.

I have a firm conviction that we need to do everything we can to make the tourist experience outstanding and thereby support all the entrepreneurs (restaurants, galleries, shops, etc.) in the downtown. What would preserve and enhance the area around the Civic Center is not another hotel, but rather a park. A green space that shows off the gem of architecture, St. Lawrence Cathedral, is what is needed not another hotel. In that area there are already the Renaissance, the Sheraton, and the Indigo. Additionally, until we see the effect of the now-being-built hotel on Biltmore Avenue, I don't think the City should rush into permitting another hotel.

As the editorial in the AC-T said today, Asheville is the driving sales tax generator of the county. And the downtown is the place that tourists want to be. Let's do all we can to maintain and enhance that downtown, not destroy it piece by piece. The space across from St. Lawrence is the one remaining space in the downtown where a park could be built. Let's go for it!!

From a very committed booster of Asheville, Lin Brown

Lin Brown  
439 Vanderbilt Road  
Asheville, N.C. 28803  
828-274-0828  
linbrown5@yahoo.com  
Alternative email= brown@wfu.edu

**Ben Fulmer**

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**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:** jasmin gentling <jgentling@charter.net> on behalf of jasmin gentling  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 10:36 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;PARC  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence basilica

As a city taxpayer i implore you to not allow a hotel in front of the church.. it is a national treasure and we need to ensure its place in the downtown aesthetics.. if we destroy what we have we will be destroying it for future generations..

please please vote for a green space..

Jasmin Gentling

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Jack Clement <jackclem@aol.com> on behalf of Jack Clement  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 5:14 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** St. Lawrence vs. McKibbon

Dear City Council Members,

While I think the St. Lawrence proposal of a green space and mixed use development is preferable to a street front, high rise hotel, I think either would be an improvement over the current vacant eyesore. More importantly, I do not think it is City Council's prerogative to decide what is built where beyond zoning requirements. The land should go to the highest bidder. In the meantime, put the parking spaces to good use by opening them to the public.

Jack Clement

**Ben Fulmer**

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**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.

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

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**From:** Karen Poehlein <karlein@charter.net> on behalf of Karen Poehlein  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2012 2:36 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;info@ashevilleparc.org  
**Subject:** Haywood Street property

Dear Council Members,

Asheville is an extremely fortunate city with regard to the architecture of its buildings. At this time there is a great debate going on about the sale of the land on Haywood Street that is across from the Vanderbilt Apartments and faces the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Close to the back of the property are the Grove Arcade and the Battery Park Apartment buildings. It is an extremely rich architectural area within our downtown. Both the Grove Arcade and the Battery Park Apartment building were built by Edwin Grove in an area of city that could already claim one of our greatest architectural treasures - The Basilica of St. Lawrence. The very fact that Rafael Guastavino was able to create the unsupported dome within the Basilica makes that structure one we should do all we can as citizens of this city to focus on the structure as a great architectural wonder. As an individual working in retail in Asheville, I recommend this area to our visitors when they ask what they should do and what can be seen in Asheville. And how much more beautiful that area would be with a green park for our visitors and residents to relax in when they are in that part of downtown. The park would also provide a space for people to gather for events at the civic center and Thomas Wolfe Auditorium.

We already have hotels in the area with the Haywood Park and the Indigo. When Ivey's Department Store was remodeled and became the Haywood Park Hotel the exterior of the building was not altered extensively which has permitted it to retain the ambiance of downtown. As I drive down Biltmore Avenue past the construction of the multi-use hotel being built by the McKibbin Hotel Group, it strikes me that the building does not support the architecture of downtown Asheville. To have another structure built by them in another part of town will not be an enhancement to our city. Another structure by them reminds me of the Grove Park Inn and the two wings it has added to the hotel. Many of the postcards of the hotel have airbrushed out the new wings so that it appears as the hotel did upon its completion in 1913. Is that what will happen to the area around the Basilica, the Vanderbilt and Battery Park Apartments and the Grove Arcade? That the potential postcards may need airbrushing to retain the appearance of the area as it was in 2012 by eliminating new construction is an realistic option.

As City Council Members you have the authority to determine the future use of that piece of property. Since the McKibbin Hotel Group has proposed a use for the property, you do have a responsibility to them to hear them out again. But that does not mean you are committed to accepting their proposal. Please consider the uniqueness of our city in the ambience it presents

to its city residents, county residents, and visitors. We are a special city in part because of that uniqueness. We have more hotel rooms that we can fill. We have no green space in the area of town being discussed. A green space would be enjoyed by all residents and visitors in that part of town. The Diocese of Charlotte has committed itself to adding shops to the area which will add to our tax base.

The roads in that area at this time are narrow and often congested. What will a potential hotel do to driving patterns in the area?

In my 57 years as a resident of Asheville, I've seen many changes in our city. Some have architecturally enhanced the beauty of this special city surrounded by mountains while other have not. The green space around the Court House has been beautifully done and is a great addition to our city. This area needs similar attention as a green space. It is my hope that the change I will see here will be the sale of the property to the Diocese of Charlotte in support of our efforts to enhance the beauty of our city while retaining and enhancing its treasures.

Sincerely,  
Karen Poehlein  
June 6, 2012



## 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:** 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:** 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

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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**

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**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

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**From:** Martin Barnes <mabarnes@charter.net> on behalf of Martin Barnes  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 10:01 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;' + PARC + '  
**Subject:** Basillica Green

Dear Asheville City Council Members,

I would like to voice my opinion about the proposed development of the lot across from the St. Lawrence Basillica and the Asheville Civic Center. Having lived in Asheville now for 27 years I've seen lots of changes to downtown; the center of our city has gone from a virtual ghost town to a vibrant center for business, residents and tourists. While I see this change as beneficial to all, I don't see the proposed hotel on this site being a benefit to our town. The Basillica is a treasure of history and architecture that should be protected and spotlighted. I see a public plaza accomplishing just that. Please don't allow a hotel and parking deck to be developed on this lot.

Thanks, Martin Barnes PLS

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Demos Builders <demosbuilders@gmail.com> on behalf of Demos Builders  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 31, 2012 5:30 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;+PARC+  
**Subject:** No hotel! St Lawrence Green!!!

Hotel Indigos's right down the street for crying out loud! Please move for a green space!

Jim Demos  
Demos Builders, Inc.  
828.777.2395  
[www.demosbuilders.com](http://www.demosbuilders.com)

Let us build your green home.

Sent from my iPhone

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Susan & Dean Presson <4pressons@gmail.com> on behalf of Susan & Dean Presson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 30, 2012 10:00 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;+PARC+  
**Subject:** greenspace in front of St. Lawrence

Please don't let the area in front of St. Lawrence be turned into a hotel. I understand that the taxes would be good income for Asheville, but I think the need for plenty of green space vs. development is more important to our mountain city.

susan presson



**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:** 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:** AshevilleAnnie@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 29, 2012 5:59 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** building

Dear Asheville City Council Members,

A year or so ago there were two articles in the Asheville Citizen-Times that caught my attention and the irony of them. One article featured a photo of a large Roman Catholic church in Charlotte that is now surrounded by tall buildings. It wasn't a pretty sight. The other article was about McKibbon's plan to build across from Asheville's historical St. Lawrence Basilica.

I said to a friend, "Well, I guess Asheville will have the same look as Charlotte."

As was noted in the Citizen-Times last week: there are too many unfilled hotels in Asheville. Not only do we not need another hotel, we don't need one at the proposed site to dwarf the St. Lawrence Basilica.

Yes, you want to bring in a money-maker. If the "Tripp's" property is available to buy, McKibbon could buy/build there.

***\*\*\*Think green...a green respite with trees, flowers, park benches...a green oasis where tourists can rest and gather energy to shop some more.***

***\*\*\*Think of the air that will be blocked by McKibbon's tall building. The beauty of an open green space out matches a city building any day, in my opinion.***

***When I visit a city, one of the memories that stays with me is its green spaces, the shaded areas to "people watch," to rest during a day of walking, to hear the birds sing.***

Asheville is known as a happenin' town. Let it also be known for its loveliness. Nothing says *welcome, I'm glad you're here* than a place to rest and reflect on the wonderful time they have in Asheville and decide to come back and tell their friends about.

Please, City Council Members, make Asheville beautiful for us who live here and for guests who visit.

You'll always be able to get money for Asheville, but will you ever have another choice space like the one across from the Basilica for a park?

If that space is gone for buildings, it's gone for good.

***PLEASE PRESERVE THAT AREA FOR A PARK.***

*Sincerely,  
Leigh Ann Condie  
9 Maplewood Rd.  
Asheville, NC 28804*

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Sybil Riddle <sybilriddle@beverly-hanks.com> on behalf of Sybil Riddle  
**Sent:** Monday, April 16, 2012 9:13 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** proposed St Lawrence Plaza

Dear Council Members,  
Please vote for the proposed St Lawrence Plaza. Thank you.

Kind regards,

Sybil Riddle **ABR, E-PRO, RCC, ECO, NAR GREEN**  
**Broker, REALTOR®**



828.230.9116 Mobile  
828.255.8994 Fax  
[sybilriddle@beverly-hanks.com](mailto:sybilriddle@beverly-hanks.com)  
[www.RealEstateAshevilleHomes.com](http://www.RealEstateAshevilleHomes.com)

300 Executive Park  
Asheville, NC 28801  
[www.beverly-hanks.com](http://www.beverly-hanks.com)

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## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** David Johnson <djohnson12@mac.com> on behalf of David Johnson  
**Sent:** Friday, March 09, 2012 2:14 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov;spowers@ashevillenc.gov;gjackson@ashevillenc.gov;scole@ashevillenc.gov  
**Subject:** St Lawrence Basilica area redevelopment

To the Asheville City Council and City Officials:

I understand that the Asheville City Council will take up on March 20 the issue of how to develop the city-owned site facing the historic St. Lawrence Basilica. Asheville has an unusual opportunity to foster an urban design consistent with the great urban architectural heritage this city features which attracts visitors from near and far. I recently authored an op-ed piece for the Asheville Citizen-Times which outlines the importance of getting this right and what features of development ought to be considered. This was published in the on-line edition of the AC-T so you may not have seen it. I attach it below for your consideration.

With a majority of our citizenry, I reject the notion that a tall hotel is appropriate for the site. However, I do not necessarily endorse simply turning the site over to the Archdiocese for development. Stringent city design controls and design review are called for. Some cities in such a case would utilize form-based zoning to achieve good massing and use results. Another approach would be to conduct a national competition for the site and the area around it. Such a competition would demonstrate that Asheville is the international center of the Guastavino Heritage. The reuse of this area is not a mere real estate operation, but a challenge in producing an attractive and economically viable urban design. For example, it may be desirable to redo the street pattern around the site, perhaps closing Page Street in front of the Basilica.

I urge the Council to accept the proposal of the Archdiocese, but with the proviso that development approval be predicated on a design review by appropriate city agencies to ensure the best possible outcome for all stakeholders and citizens.

Sincerely,

David A. Johnson, PhD., FAiCP

David Johnson is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, Professor Emeritus of Planning at the University of Tennessee, and a founding Board Member of the Asheville Design Center. He has resided in the Asheville area for twelve years. He was the planner on the team that designed Nashville's State Capitol Bicentennial Mall, which was named by the American Planning Association in 2011 as one of America's outstanding public spaces.

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## Rafael Guastavino and the Asheville Basilica opportunity

Written by  
**David Johnson**

•  
He was called the greatest American architect you never heard of. A Spanish immigrant, he brought from his native Catalonia a unique tile vaulting system that was subsequently used in more than 1,000 major buildings in the US. His name was Rafael Guastavino. His “Cohesive Construction” technique proved extremely popular in the early 20th century. He worked on 233 projects in Manhattan alone. These included Grand Central Station, Grant’s Tomb, the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, Carnegie Hall, and Temple Emanu-El. He also worked on the Great Hall at Ellis Island through which millions of immigrants came to America.

Guastavino is no longer a forgotten genius. Enthusiasm for his works has been growing world-wide over the last decade. He has been rediscovered in his native Catalonia, Spain, where a major exhibit on his works was recently presented. In New York, he has also been rediscovered. “Guastavino’s” is an extraordinarily popular restaurant in Manhattan built ten years ago into a beautiful space vaulted in Guastavino domes under the Queensboro Bridge. Guastavino scholars in the United States are now planning a major traveling exhibition titled “Guastavino Vaulting: Palaces for the People.” And an interactive exhibit on Guastavino’s work is set to open at the Boston Public Library in September 2012.

Guastavino is well-represented in Asheville, where he lived on-and-off from 1894-1908. He originally came here to work on elements of the Biltmore House including terraces, and the swimming pool. Guastavino built a home for himself in Black Mountain, called “Rhododendron”. While not much remains of the structure, it has some residual significance as an historic site and is a US National Historic Landmark. The Basilica is one of the most important of Guastavino’s 1,000 buildings. It was designed in collaboration with the well-known Asheville architect, Richard Sharp Smith. St. Lawrence is also where Rafael Guastavino is interred, making it a particularly important pilgrimage site for international “Guastavinistas”, as they are called. The parishioners of St. Lawrence are well-aware of the landmark treasure they worship in and are committed to ensuring its preservation and the sensitive development of the adjacent area.

Ashevillians are also rediscovering Guastavino as evidenced by the large turnout this month for a lecture given to a packed house at UNCA by John Ochsendorf, MIT engineering and history professor, and a leading researcher on the Guastavino legacy. Prof. Ochsendorf emphasized the international importance of the Guastavino presence in Asheville. Many in the audience were there because they were concerned about the prospects for future development of the site across from St. Lawrence.

So what guidelines should be put in place for the development of this critical part of downtown? Here is my list:

- Protect the “forecourt” and surroundings of the Basilica.
- Do not overbuild on the site. A building higher than six stories would damage the setting of the basilica and be out of scale with the surrounding urban fabric.
- The area design should be complementary to the surrounding setting and in harmony with the architectural features of the Basilica.
- The design should minimize surface parking.

- It should reflect natural pedestrian paths and movements through the area.
- It should carefully deal with and limit through traffic in the area.
- The design should include mixed uses: restaurants, offices, retail shops, and limited housing.
- More hotel rooms are not needed at this point. The Asheville area has an ample supply now and for the next decade.
- Views of landmarks and the mountains from the site, and to the site, should be respected.
- Shading in summer and sun capture in winter should be considered in the design.
- The open area should be an urban plaza, not a totally green park.
- Preserve a sense of enclosure. Successful urban places have a feeling of containment.
- Reflect the spirit, genius, and legacy of Rafael Guastavino.

Whoever gets the nod to develop the site should be kept to the highest design standards by the city. The city should not base its approval of a design simply on maximizing tax rateables from the site. There is a larger economic context to consider: tourism. Tourism is one of Asheville's strongest economic sectors. The opportunity to attract visitors from around the world to Rafael Guastavino's masterpiece can be realized only through careful planning of the site and sensitive design of its components. One can imagine a European style piazza in an open area in front of the Basilica ("Guastavino Place"?). A small museum to house exhibits on Guastavino? An arcade in the Italian style built into the surrounding structures adjacent to the piazza? A cappuccino on the square?

Get it right, Asheville, and it will be an adornment for years to come. Get it wrong and you will be remembered for missing a great opportunity and fouling the nest. Most of all, decisions about development should not be made on the basis of cronyism or political benefactions. The quality of the final result is what counts. Asheville is a smart, attractive place, and the rest of the country now knows it. And they are watching. Indeed, given the emerging global prestige of our Rafael Guastavino, the whole world is watching.

#### Postscript:

I urge you to view MIT Professor John Ochensdorf's recent UNCA lecture on the importance of Rafael Guastavino as an architect and builder in the early part of the 20th Century. This is available on-line at:

<http://tlt.unca.edu/video/productions/guastavino-vaulting-barcelona-black-mountain>



## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Mayor Terry Bellamy <terrybellamy@avlcouncil.com> on behalf of Mayor Terry Bellamy  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2012 6:17 PM  
**To:** Joel Burgess  
**Subject:** Fwd: Letter: Haywood Street across from the Basilica  
**Attachments:** Albert\_Sneed.pdf

Yes

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Phil Kleisler" <[PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov)>  
**Date:** February 7, 2012 10:03:42 AM EST  
**To:** "councilgroup" <[AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Gary Jackson" <[GJackson@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:GJackson@ashevillenc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Letter: Haywood Street across from the Basilica

Mayor and City Council Members,

Gary asked that I forward the attached letter to you regarding the Haywood Street property across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Please let us know if you have any questions.

### Philip Kleisler

Business Services Manager  
City Manager's Office  
City Of Asheville  
828-232-4541  
[PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov)

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**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** racheltanksley@gmail.com on behalf of Rachel Russell  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2012 11:03 AM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Basilica of St. Lawrence

To Whom it May Concern:

It has come to my attention the the McKibben Group is interested in purchasing several city owned pieces of property around the Basilica of St. Lawrence in order to construct a high rise hotel. While a tourist destination such as Asheville does need lodging options, this location is less than ideal for yet another high rise hotel. There are already five hotels within one mile of the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Adding yet another hotel to the downtown landscape is completely un-necessary, especially a high rise building. The church itself has offered to purchase the property in order to avoid this construction, which is preferable to the alternative, but perhaps is not the best use of the space. The best use of the space would be to create a public green space for all to enjoy. Green spaces in urban areas have numerous positive impacts not only on the environment, but on the residents, and visitors, themselves. A green space planted with native trees, shrubs and plants will contribute to the health of our beautiful city in the following ways:

- Reduce heat build-up from the paved surfaces. In a study published by the University of Washington, tests in a mall parking lot in Huntsville, Ala. showed a 31 degree difference between shaded and unshaded areas.
- Reduce nitrate leaching from the soil into the water supply and reduce surface water runoff, keeping phosphorus and other pollutants out of our waterways
- Remove smoke, dust and other pollutants from the air. One tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually, equaling 11,000 miles of car emissions.

These are just a few of the environmental impacts an urban green space would have on the city of Asheville. Studies have also documented the impacts of urban green spaces on the health of the residents as well. A study published by the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research found the greater amounts of green space within one kilometer -- or 0.6 miles -- of people's homes was related to small reductions in the risks of health problems like heart disease, diabetes, chronic neck and back pain, asthma and migraine. The strongest connection was seen with depression and anxiety. Among people who lived in areas with 90 percent green space just over 2 percent had been diagnosed with depression, compared with just over 3 percent of those living in areas with 10 percent green space.

These are just a few of the reasons the city of Asheville should consider using this opportunity to create an urban green space for its residents. An urban green space will provide innumerable positive impacts for the people who live here, as well as the ones who visit, while another hotel will not.

Sincerely,

Rachel D. Russell

919/259-4275

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Chris Johansen <johansen@main.nc.us> on behalf of Chris Johansen  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2012 6:15 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Disposition of front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence

Friends, I am informed that there are three proposals for the land:

1. A high-rise hotel. Cities lose their local character quickly when the corporate giants come to town. We already will have the new sign for the U.S. Cellular Center; we already have a high-rise hotel build nearby, another under construction, and another in planning--enough is enough;
2. The Church's set-back building, with a plaza; or
3. A city park. As the economy improves and development resumes, more and more green space will be lost. Smart cities put in green space as they grow. Do not repeat the mistake the county has made with city-county plaza.

I strongly favor option three. I can live with option two. Please do not choose option one. Please remember that I vote my conscience assiduously in every election.

Best regards,

--

Chris Johansen {johansen at main dot nc dot us}  
33 Haywood Street  
828.280.2122

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Jennifer Woodward <jenwoodward@gmail.com> on behalf of Jennifer Woodward  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2012 3:12 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; AshevillePARC@gmail.com  
**Subject:** stop Hi-Rise Hotel development from blocking St. Lawrence Basilica

As a citizen of Asheville and someone wholly invested in the unique landmarks that make our downtown special, I urge you to stop any plans for a hi-rise hotel across from the St. Lawrence Basilica. A city park/green space would be the most welcome solution as our city is seriously lacking in that area (especially on that side of downtown), but allowing the church to purchase would also be a welcome solution. The Basilica is one of our city's most treasured landmarks and should be protected!

Best regards,

Jennifer Woodward

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Mary Lou Sartoris <marylousartoris@charter.net> on behalf of Mary Lou Sartoris  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 08, 2012 2:02 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com  
**Subject:** Preservation of Land near Basilica of St. Lawrence

Dear City Council of Asheville and the Citizen-Times--

Please, please, please preserve the beauty of Asheville's national treasure, The Basilica of St. Lawrence. A city park would be a gift to the residents of this community and all its tourists for years to come. It would exhibit pride of our legislators in our natural world and stand for Asheville's commitment to going green. Make the right decision!!!

Respectfully,  
Mary Lou Sartoris

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Catherine Riley <catherineriley@bellsouth.net> on behalf of Catherine Riley  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 07, 2012 2:32 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com  
**Subject:** Basilica of St. Lawrence

To: Asheville NC Council  
Re: Our need for a Park in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence

It has recently come to my attention that a developer wants to buy the land in front of the Basilica of St. Lawrence in downtown Asheville. In my opinion any commercial development would greatly detract from downtown Asheville's unique character, architecture, and beauty. Asheville is indeed special in that it does NOT have huge new buildings everywhere, blocking views and making it unable to walk around and enjoy the very special feeling that we all love. Asheville desperately needs green space downtown. Asheville NEEDS a park in front of the gorgeous Basilica of St. Lawrence. Everyone would benefit from it for generations to come. Please BLOCK commercial development!  
Catherine Riley

Catherine Riley  
[catherineriley@bellsouth.net](mailto:catherineriley@bellsouth.net)

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Judy Easley <jeasley08@gmail.com> on behalf of Judy Easley  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 07, 2012 1:52 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com  
**Subject:** Property across from the Basilica

Downtown Asheville is a beautiful place and St. Lawrence Basilica is not only beautiful but a very historically significant building. In addition, there is no green space in the downtown area. Pritchard Park and the Plaza are nice, however, not as inviting as a nice green park. I would much rather see a park across from the Church than another hotel. Why don't we wait and see if the three new hotels in Asheville even make it before adding another. Isn't that part of our downfall in the economy now....building too much, too fast!! If we cannot have a park, let's let the church, who has been diligent in preservation, buy the property.

*Judy Easley*

*Downtown resident*



**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Phil Kleisler <PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Phil Kleisler  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 07, 2012 10:04 AM  
**To:** councilgroup  
**Cc:** Gary Jackson  
**Subject:** Letter: Haywood Street across from the Basilica  
**Attachments:** Albert\_Sneed.pdf

Mayor and City Council Members,

Gary asked that I forward the attached letter to you regarding the Haywood Street property across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence. Please let us know if you have any questions.

**Philip Kleisler**

Business Services Manager  
City Manager's Office  
City Of Asheville  
828-232-4541  
[PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov)

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## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Thehallerz <thehallerz@aol.com> on behalf of Thehallerz  
**Sent:** Monday, February 06, 2012 10:20 PM  
**To:** AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov; letters@citizen-times.com  
**Subject:** The Basilica of St. Lawrence

If three options exist for the property the city is considering selling to the McKibbon Group for development why not let St. Lawrence buy it?? I, like many others, would prefer to have a green area rather than a mass of concrete and asphalt. The Basilica is a historic structure and needs to be preserved and protected. Any major construction, like that being proposed, is risky. No one can guarantee that something negative wouldn't happen to the structure so why take the chance that it won't? Hopefully ALL aspects will be considered and properly evaluated before a decision is reached. And likewise, those making it won't allow the economics to be the sole and dominate criteria.

A. Haller  
1 View Street  
Asheville

## Ben Fulmer

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**From:** Phil Kleisler <PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov> on behalf of Phil Kleisler  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 25, 2012 9:04 AM  
**To:** mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com  
**Subject:** FW: Richard Kessler Intent  
**Attachments:** Mayor Terry Bellamy and City Council Asheville.1.24.12.pdf; Save the Basilica Preservation.pdf; Basilica Vision 1 page.pdf

Mayor,

Mr. Mores ask that we forward these documents to you. Just let me know if I can do anything for you on this.

## Philip Kleisler

Business Services Manager  
City Manager's Office  
City Of Asheville  
828-232-4541  
[PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:PKleisler@ashevillenc.gov)

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**From:** Natalie Bailey  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 24, 2012 3:36 PM  
**To:** Tom Downing; Phil Kleisler  
**Cc:** 'M Mores'  
**Subject:** FW: Richard Kessler Intent

Phil and Tom,

I am forwarding you these documents at the request of Mr. Mores who would like these documents forwarded to Mayor Bellamy. --Natalie

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**From:** M Mores [<mailto:Basilica2012@charter.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 24, 2012 3:31 PM  
**To:** Natalie Bailey  
**Subject:** FW: Richard Kessler Intent

Ms. Bailey, Can you please confirm that the Mayor has received this important correspondence.  
Matt Mores

Cc. Fr. Wilbur Thomas, Pastor of the Basilica of St. Lawrence.

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**From:** M Mores [<mailto:Basilica2012@charter.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 24, 2012 12:44 PM  
**To:** 'mayorbellamy@avlcouncil.com'  
**Subject:** FW: Richard Kessler Intent

Possible duplicate email delivery address. Please forward accordingly.

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RE: Attached three documents:

- 1) Kessler Collection Group
- 2) Basilica preservation campaign
- 3) Vision Parameters- Basilica to Developers

Dear Mayor Bellamy,

Please see the attached letter from the Kessler Group that developed the Bohemian Hotel in the Biltmore Village. This group approached the Basilica to hopefully work with the Basilica to develop this site with the vision of the open plaza and historical designs. This is one of many developers who have already approached the Basilica to develop this site with our vision. You should have two other letters on file that came from the Indigo owners and Southern Hospitality delivered to Esther Manheimer. This should make the City comfortable to know that there are groups that want to come through the Basilica to develop this site and that we are in position to work with the City to negotiate proper terms and timelines for a development on this site.

I believe the Kessler Group is one group with a proven record of blending their construction with the history in the Biltmore Village, in Savannah, GA, Canyon Ranch, CO, and other historical areas of our country.

I believe the City has a great opportunity to see a Landmark Development built on this site that will be a destination attraction "Sense of Place" to visit in Asheville

as comparable to other historical attractions like the Biltmore Estate and Grove Park Inn. We hope the City will consider having the Basilica as the steward of this site and run the RFQ process and developers coming through the Basilica to deliver this Landmark Development. The MIT professor of Architect, John Ochsendorf has agreed to help on the project with a Guastavino tiles fountain design to honor the Basilica history. Many other similar groups will surface to make this a great project if given time to develop.

The attached preservation campaign document also coincides with why it is important the City consider the Basilica for setting the parameter's or development control on this site. We need the time to complete our construction to secure the integrity of a 103 year old free standing dome.

I believe state statute **160A-266 (b) Cities and Towns**, allows the City to negotiate this site direct with the Basilica for its future historical significance.

I know the City Council personnel will all start having different opinions on what should be developed here, with rumors now of convention center, etc.

It is hard to be in their position and not look at this real estate as their own to develop. That is a slippery slope to go down. We would be going all the way back to 1999 and having no respect given to the history that surrounds this site. This is not a site for high-rise, zero lot line, above parking deck hotel development. The Civic Center construction was probably a mistake to place in this corridor, let's not add to this mistake. This site is positioned best for a more compatible development to the National Register District in scale and design. The City hopefully will be more in line to allowing this development to be a significant historical site area for Asheville that will fulfill the vision also spelled out by the Goody Clancy Group and Master Plan. It is the City's opportunity to implement this Master Plan vision.

We are confident that we can deliver any comparable value and terms required by the City on this site once we move to a purchase and sale agreement as spelled out in the Letter of Intent from the Bishop.

With Hopeful Regards, that the Basilica will be the City's best partner on this future development and everyone will finally come to the decision that this is the right thing to do. We opened the door for a clean and fresh start for something great to be developed here.

Matt Mores

Basilica of St. Lawrence, Consultant of Real Estate.

828.255.6109

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**From:** Donna Currier [<mailto:Donna.Currier@kesslercollection.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 24, 2012 9:43 AM  
**To:** MMLLC  
**Subject:** Richard Kessler

Hello Matt,

Richards letter which I have attached for you. Please forward to Mayor Terry Bellamy.

Thank you.

Donna

*Donna Currier*

Executive Assistant to Richard Kessler  
Corporate Office Manager  
The Kessler Collection  
Phone (407) 996-9969  
Fax: (407) 996-9998  
[donna.currier@kesslercollection.com](mailto:donna.currier@kesslercollection.com)



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Thank you.

**Ben Fulmer**

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**From:** Anne Smith <annefitzsmith@gmail.com> on behalf of Anne Smith  
**Sent:** Friday, January 20, 2012 4:31 PM  
**To:** Ashe. Gov. City Council  
**Subject:** City Property. Please scroll down to see image and text. Thank you so much!



Here's a developer's rendering of a proposal for the Clty-owned property across from the Basilica of St. Lawrence (diagonally across from the Civic Center). He is proposing a set-back of 200-225 feet from the street. The green object is the roof of the Basilica of St. Lawrence and the tall black-looking building is Battery Park Apartments. He is proposing having a plaza (with a fountain and benches) out toward the street and a building of approximately 125,000 square-feet, set back from the street by 200-225 feet. He is also proposing underground parking.

The alternative proposal (being considered right now) is a 7 story hotel of rustic design that will be built at the street edge. The alternative will overshadow and crowd out our very beautiful architectural gem. The basilica is a great tourist attraction and one of the most interesting and beautiful of Asheville's downtown. It was built by Rafael Guastavino, who was the tile master at the Biltmore Estate.

Anne Fitzgerald Smith  
P O Box 8966  
Asheville NC 28814  
home (828) 254-6791  
cell (828) 545-5452