



UNPACKING THE ISSUES: RECLAIMING 4.4 ACRES FOR THE WHOLE CITY

I've been hearing a lot about "the 4.4 acres" lately. What is this?

It's land on Hudson's waterfront that A Colarusso & Son claims it owns...except it doesn't. The land belongs to the City of Hudson and ought to be part of our waterfront park. While some current officials have questioned this in the past few months, the City's ownership of the property is clearly established in state law and has been verified several times now. It belongs to Hudson.

What's the back-story? Why is there a dispute?

In 1969, the City bought the acreage from Lone Star Cement, which predated St. Lawrence Cement/Holcim at the site, now owned by A Colarusso & Son. The City then used the parcel as a training ground for its firefighters. In 1981, City officials then sold the land to Holcim, but the deal was entirely illegal according to state law. The law, dating to the early 1900s, stipulates that municipalities cannot sell waterfront land they own without state-level approval—specifically, through an act passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor.

In Hudson's case, such an act was never written, passed or signed. As is clearly stated by New York State law, the sale in question is null and void.

Does that leave the matter in legal limbo?

Actually, not at all. According to legal experts who have looked closely at the matter, any such transaction without legislative approval is automatically void—it's as though it never happened. The same goes for any later transaction based on the original illegal sale, which therefore nullifies Holcim's sale of the land to A Colarusso & Son in 2011.

This clear violation of state law was uncovered in 2013 by Valley Alliance, a grassroots advocacy group and close ally of Our Hudson Waterfront. A title search confirmed the City's ownership, as did statements by the City's attorney and the Council president at that time.

For some reason, these confirmations of fact have escaped some present-day City officials. Pressed on the matter, the City's current mayor, Rick Rector, has authorized a new title search to reconfirm the previous one, declaring "this seems like a good time that this issue be finally resolved."

Frankly, in our opinion, this is redundant. We believe the City's ownership of the property has already been proven beyond doubt.

What happens if the City reconfirms its ownership of the land?

Two very important things. First, we get immediate legal access and the right to develop it as open space for Hudson's people to enjoy. This is critical, because outside of tiny Rick's Point, the City's residents have zero unrestricted access to their own waterfront. Second, it establishes public parkland on both sides of Colarusso's property. This makes a full SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review) even more critical—if that's possible.



It also means that, if Colarusso gains a conditional use permit to operate on the waterfront, conditions will become even more stringent on what the company can and cannot do.

Great. Now, who exactly are you and how do I get involved?

Our Hudson Waterfront is a grassroots group that believes the future of the Hudson Waterfront belongs to the City's people. Our waterfront is one of Hudson's greatest public and economic assets. It should be developed as an active, vibrant center for the enjoyment and opportunity for all Hudson residents.

There are many ways to get involved:

Learn more about the issues at
www.ourhudsonwaterfront.com

Come to meetings of the Hudson Planning Board and speak your mind. The Planning Board meets monthly, every second Tuesday. You can also leave your thoughts in writing at **www.cityofhudson.org** (click Departments, then Boards and Committees, then Planning Board).

Join us!
The more of us there are, the more we'll get done.
Reach us at **ourhudsonwaterfront@gmail.com**

Most importantly, get down to our amazing waterfront, enjoy the public space we have and spread the word!

