

Asheville City Council December 8, 2020 Email Comments

TimeStamp	SenderName	Text
12/5/2020 2:47:00 PM	Kimberly Wunder	<p>I am a 20 year old server downtown. If I continue paying for parking the way that I have been I will be paying an average of \$200 monthly. I cannot afford this especially when I need to pay for school and my apartment. Please open parking lots that are free for employees! Especially in the Vance Monument area. Please consider this and get back to me.</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>

12/6/2020 11:59:00 PM	Anita Rose	<p>I am writing to City Council members to urge you not to dismantle the Vance monument in downtown Asheville. The money that has already been spent on shrouding and scaffolding is, in my opinion, money wasted. Those resources could, and should, have gone to encourage real change – for example, minority business loans or aid to resource-impooverished students and schools. Please do not spend any more money on what is at best, a well-intentioned, performative act of allyship and at worst, an empty gesture that changes nothing except our opinion of ourselves. Rather, rename the memorial and direct that cash to economic programs and education.</p> <p>While I fully appreciate the significance of symbols, I also know that a thing is just a thing. We give it meaning. By all means, rename the Vance memorial; let us make this symbol mean something different. Then, let us honor that renaming by directing resources into the community. We can educate ourselves about the real history of racism and slavery in North Carolina, and work to make a better Asheville.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>Anita Rose</p> <p>63 Dogwood Grove</p> <p>Asheville, NC 28805</p>
12/7/2020 1:12:00 PM	Nikki Gensert	<p>Good Morning,</p> <p>I am writing regarding items L and M on the consent agenda for tomorrow's meeting. Both items relate to grant funds from the DOJ for the Asheville Police Department. Given the council's expressed willingness to divest and reinvest police funds I would ask that you please push back on these items.</p> <p>The funds from item L would be used to buy new rifles for the police, and the funds from item M would be used to buy bulletproof vests. To the average person, that sounds like the Asheville Police Department is gearing up to fight against people rather than working with the community. I ask that you, our elected council representatives, take the time to question why the police department needs those items, what they generally use those weapons for, and what they intend to use them for in the future. Even if these items don't cost anything from the city's budget, I still think it is important to have a conversation about how our police force is equipped.</p> <p>I generally support the Asheville Police Department, but I do think that if the council is serious about rethinking the system of policing in our city then it is important to take the time to ask if these purchases are necessary and if they reflect the role that the police should have in our city.</p> <p>Thank you, Nikki Gensert</p>
12/7/2020 3:38:00 PM	Zella Roberts	<p>To Whom it May Concern,</p> <p>My name is Zella Roberts and I'm a senior social work student and NC voter. I'm reaching out to express my disappointment with the city council's inconsistency with issues of police brutality in Asheville. After overwhelming community support of the defund APD movement, the institutional respiratory should not be to expand the police budget by a total of \$328,604. This increase in funding will perpetuate the militarization of APD, and allow them to do even more harm to low income communities of color.</p> <p>Best, Zella</p>

12/7/2020 7:17:00 PM		<p>AshevilleCityCouncilDec82020@PublicInput.com AshevilleCityCouncilDec82020@PublicInput.com Asheville City Council Dec. Public Comment [Vance Monument] I am writing to comment on the Vance Monument</p> <p>Kirk D. Lyons Black Mountain, NC Email: kdl@slrc-csa.org:</p> <p>Removing the Vance Monument by fiat of the County or City is an act of Tyranny. The Vance Monument is the people's art, the art of ALL the people of Asheville, Buncombe County and not the bauble of transitory elected bodies. To remove or alter the people's art without their express permission violates your oath of office and the NC Monument Protection Act. My understanding is that the question of ownership of the monument is still an open question. AND in 2015 when the Vance Monument was restored and re-dedicated the Mountain Express opined that the Vance Monument was a "monument to TOLERANCE!!" Vance was a friend to the Jewish community in North Carolina, when Jews in America did not enjoy the tolerance many take for granted today. So tell me, what happened to change this in 5 years? Please leave the Monument alone - and let the PEOPLE decide the monument's fate, if necessary, by (an advisory) referendum. And if your aim is to erase "monuments to white supremacy" in Asheville, you would need to bulldoze every pre-1964 building in downtown, including City Hall! ANTIFA and BLM may want Asheville to look like the future urban landscape of a "Terminator" Movie, but the rest of us DON'T! It is silly to judge historical figures by so called "enlightened" modern standards. The Vance is an iconic and beautiful example of the people's Art and should remain!</p>
12/7/2020 8:00:00 PM	Walter L Adams	<p>Cease kowtowing to BLM and ANTIFA (and their minions) and leave the Vance monument alone! I'm sure Asheville has more important things to concern its citizens. Walter L Adams Jr.Jones County NC</p>
12/7/2020 8:14:00 PM	tennis1943@gmail.com	<p>Sirs:Please put a stop to all this crazy cancel culture sickness in Asheville and vote to not remove the Vance Monument or change it in any way.Are we to become another tyrannical and fallen civilization in a few years because we fail to remember our past?This would be just another step on the path to destruction which our nation seems to want to follow now.Signed Carlyle Woodard,Princeton,NC</p>
12/7/2020 8:18:00 PM	joeysears1011	<p>Removing the Vance Monument by fiat of the County or City is an act of Tyranny. The Vance Monument is the people's art, the art of ALL the people of Asheville, Buncombe County and not the bauble of transitory elected bodies. To remove or alter the people's art without their express permission violates your oath of office and the NC Monument Protection Act. My understanding is that the question of ownership of the monument is still an open question. AND in 2015 when the Vance Monument was restored and re-dedicated the Mountain Express opined that the Vance Monument was a "monument to TOLERANCE!!" Vance was a friend to the Jewish community in North Carolina, when Jews in America did not enjoy the tolerance many take for granted today. So tell me, what happened to change this in 5 years? Please leave the Monument alone - and let the PEOPLE decide the monument's fate, if necessary, by (an advisory) referendum. And if your aim is to erase "monuments to white supremacy" in Asheville, you would need to bulldoze every pre-1964 building in downtown, including City Hall! ANTIFA and BLM may want Asheville to look like the future urban landscape of a "Terminator" Movie, but the rest of us DON'T! It is silly to judge historical figures by so called "enlightened" modern standards. The Vance is an iconic and beautiful example of the people's Art and should remainSent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone</p>
12/7/2020 8:22:00 PM	Bob Johnjov	<p>I urge you to keep the Vance Monument in Place. When I go to Asheville the Vance monument is one reason I go. It takes me back to a point in History of one of NC finest governors.. I have taught my children History by the base of it..Please do not remove it</p> <p>John Pippin Fremont, NC 27830.</p>

12/7/2020 8:29:00 PM	Rowdy Ferguson	<p>*Removing the Vance Monument by fiat of the County or City is an act of Tyranny. The Vance Monument is the people's art, the art of ALL the people of Asheville, Buncombe County and not the bauble of transitory elected bodies. To remove or alter the people's art without their express permission violates your oath of office and the NC Monument Protection Act. My understanding is that the question of ownership of the monument is still an open question. AND in 2015 when the Vance Monument was restored and re-dedicated the Mountain Express opined that the Vance Monument was a "monument to TOLERANCE!!" Vance was a friend to the Jewish community in North Carolina, when Jews in America did not enjoy the tolerance many take for granted today. So tell me, what happened to change this in 5 years?</p> <p>Please leave the Monument alone - and let the PEOPLE decide the monument's fate, if necessary, by (an advisory) referendum. And if your aim is to erase "monuments to white supremacy" in Asheville, you would need to bulldoze every pre-1964 building in downtown, including City Hall! ANTIFA and BLM may want Asheville to look like the future urban landscape of a "Terminator" Movie, but the rest of us DON'T! It is silly to judge historical figures by so called "enlightened" modern standards.*</p> <p>*The Vance is an iconic and beautiful example of the people's Art and should remain!*</p> <p>Rowdy Ferguson</p>
12/7/2020 10:33:00 PM	David Barber	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I'm not asking you to save this monument. Your narrow minds won't let you. Further more you as well as all the other bleeding heart no back bone Liberals make me sick. So do your worst. We'll as always stand by and take it up the ass. I offer no apology for this email. As I feel it is right and just. Kinda like how you people rationalize what you do. I'd wish you all a Merry Christmas but you probably don't believe in our Lord and Savior either.</p> <p>To Blazes With You All David R. Wayne Barber</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>
12/7/2020 11:20:00 PM	Myka	<p>World renown architect Richard Sharp Smith, who was the supervising architect for the Biltmore House, was commissioned to design and construct the Vance monument. It was erected in 1897 and rededicated to Zebulon Vance, former NC Governor, in 1938. We, the undersigned, are committed to preserving historical monuments, markers, art, records, and relics that are part of America's past. We oppose the decision of Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Board of Commissioners to remove historical monuments from Asheville and Buncombe County, NC. Buncombe County and Asheville's elected officials formed a task force to gather community feedback re: Vance Monument. However, in order to qualify to be on the task force, each individual had to acknowledge that the Vance monument caused harm and should be removed or re-purposed into something new. This criteria unfairly and unjustly prevented those who wanted to keep the monument from being eligible to serve on the monument task force. We believe historical monuments on public property are the property of the people, not city council and not the board of commissioners, and should be preserved. The Vance monument is a unique and elegant piece of art, crafted by a prominent architect in the form of an Egyptian obelisk. It should not be removed or repurposed.</p> <p>Supported by petitions attached</p>
12/8/2020 12:02:00 AM	Karen Vickers	<p>Take the plaque off, scaffold down and call it a wrap. Those who remember that it once had a name attached will also recognize that we don't tolerate the racism anymore. Or at least, that we're trying to rise above that. Karen Vickers</p>

12/8/2020 12:18:00 AM	John Flora	<p>Removing the Vance Monument by fiat of the County or City is an act of Tyranny. The Vance Monument is the people's art, the art of ALL the people of Asheville, Buncombe County and not the bauble of transitory elected bodies. To remove or alter the people's art without their express permission violates your oath of office and the NC Monument Protection Act. My understanding is that the question of ownership of the monument is still an open question. AND in 2015 when the Vance Monument was restored and re-dedicated the Mountain Express opined that the Vance Monument was a "monument to TOLERANCE!!" Vance was a friend to the Jewish community in North Carolina, when Jews in America did not enjoy the tolerance many take for granted today. So tell me, what happened to change this in 5 years? Please leave the Monument alone - and let the PEOPLE decide the monument's fate, if necessary, by (an advisory) referendum. And if your aim is to erase "monuments to white supremacy" in Asheville, you would need to bulldoze every pre-1964 building in downtown, including City Hall! ANTIFA and BLM may want Asheville to look like the future urban landscape of a "Terminator" Movie, but the rest of us DON'T! It is silly to judge historical figures by so called "enlightened" modern standards.</p> <p>The Vance is an iconic and beautiful example of the people's Art and should remain!</p> <p>Have a Dixie day!!!</p> <p>John</p>
12/8/2020 12:27:00 AM	Lanier, David	<p>I am writing to comment on the Vance monument.</p> <p>Board members,</p> <p>I am writing to express opposition to defacing or removing the Vance monument. This Marxist attempt to erase America from history is not something we should identify with.</p> <p>Sincerely yours,</p> <p>David Lanier Wake Forest</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>
12/8/2020 12:37:00 AM	Steve & Donna Poteat	<p>If we erase our history, we will become a third world country. If we fail to know what has come before us, we have no way to know where our future will lead us. Giving in to Marxists, anarchists, and ignorant people is a sure way to a dismal future. Please allow the Vance Monument to remain in place.</p> <p>Steve Poteat</p>

12/8/2020 1:22:00 AM	Lindsay Miller	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I'm an Asheville citizen and I'm writing to comment on New Business Agenda Item A - the loaning of \$1.2 million from the City's Housing Trust Fund for the construction of 12 condominiums in West Asheville, which would be offered for sale at 80% of the AMI.</p> <p>I take issue with this proposal for two reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This project has no reparations implications but will result in a substantial depletion of the Housing Trust Fund. I believe that reparations funding should not be delayed and as such major outlays of City capital must be re-evaluated. The City's commitment to funding reparations should be a top priority. 2. This \$1.2 million dollars going towards homes for people making 80% of the AMI will not even adequately address the need for deeply affordable housing in the city. <p>I ask that you reject this proposal.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Lindsay Miller</p>
12/8/2020 1:27:00 AM	Sivanne Mass Lieber	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>I am writing to address the item about Business Inclusion for tomorrow's meeting. The commitment to equity in City contracts that is articulated in Resolution C is an admirable step in the right direction. However, inviting Black-owned businesses to compete for city contracts is not enough. In the case of Resolution I, no Black or Brown-owned businesses applied, and it's worth asking the City what resources they are making available to the Office of Business Inclusion to aid them in their outreach processes for soliciting bids. In the case of Resolution V, a Black-owned business did apply but did not receive the contract. Because of historical inequities in our community, larger white-owned businesses are often more well-established and thus able to out-bid smaller Black-owned companies, as was the case here. How is the City planning to remedy this?</p> <p>I also want to understand why the city is planning on signing a 5-year contract with a Taser services company?? And Regarding Resolution K: It's our understanding that the Office of Equity and Inclusion is no longer involved with business pertaining to the APD. Given that, what provisions will the City make to ensure that equity considerations are taken into account in selecting the trainers for the proposed de-escalation training? Noting that over \$2 million is being allocated to APD through this consent agenda, the majority is going to firearms, tasers, bulletproof vests, and bodycams. Less than 10% of that amount is going into things like a de-escalation training and mental health services for officers. This is alarming to me.</p> <p>I hope that a better decision will be made that will be for the good of ALL citizens of Asheville as well as keeping to the commitments that have been made in the past.</p> <p>Thank you, Sivanne Lieber</p> <p>--</p> <p>*Sivanne Mass Lieber* Parenthood Coach & Consultant Guiding parents to raise creative, resilient children</p> <p>[image: Joyous Parent Logo.png] www.thejoyousparent.com sivanne@thejoyousparent.com <sivanne@thejoyousparent.com> 845-304-5103</p> <p>*Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail</p>

12/8/2020 1:52:00 AM	Margot Ammidown	<p>To the Asheville City Council - I hope you will take the recommendation of the Vance monument committee and remove the Vance Monument from Pack Square. If it remains there it will always be a source of contention. Also, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has recently changed their position on Confederate monuments, recognizing them as vestiges of white supremacy. They now say local communities should decide their fate, because they recognize them as propaganda, not history. Please remove the Vance Monument and let's have a new monument to Truth and Reconciliation or something like that.</p> <p>Thanks, Margot Ammidown</p>
12/8/2020 2:07:00 AM	Nicole Lee	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>For the purpose of healing the black community of the toxic and chronic stress the police department worldwide has poured upon the black community, I suggest all funding goes towards going psychological therapeutic sessions to deal with the mental & emotional status of police officers who hate. Nothing will ever change if we don't deal with the mentality of officers. Hate is in their DNA, generational curses are embedded in the subconscious mind from childhood. Racism is a public health issue and hate within the police department should be a mental disorder.</p>
12/8/2020 2:36:00 AM	Ryan Anderson	<p>For the December 8, 2020 meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please continue with the Vance Task Force recommendation and take down Vance monument 2) the City's public comment process is both inequitable, unreasonable, and needs significant reform. Allow adequate time for public comment moving forward. <p>Sincerely, Ryan Anderson East Asheville</p>
12/8/2020 2:37:00 AM	Chris Chardos	<p>City Council,</p> <p>I am disappointed that there is no documentation on what your recommendation will be (related to your vote 11-1 to remove Vance Monument), and therefore no way for us to formulate a response; and the fact that this item was added to the agenda at the last minute, which will severely undercut the public's opportunity to weigh in.</p> <p>Kindly Christopher Chardos</p>
12/8/2020 2:38:00 AM	chadk	<p>Hi, my name is Chad and I live in Asheville's Oakley neighborhood.</p> <p>I am asking that you follow the task force recommendation and tear down the Vance Monument. I believe this is in faith with the majority of Asheville, and personally I think it's the right thing to do.</p> <p>I'm also upset that you abruptly added this to the agenda, since this gives people less than 24 hours to sign up for public comment. You need to change this system to remove the pre-sign up requirement. We should be able to hear your discussion and then call in and comment if desired.</p> <p>Thanks, Chad Kletschka -- Chad - via mobile</p>

12/8/2020 2:50:00 AM

marissa arbitblit

Honor Black Asheville: REMOVE

~Too long, didn't read? What message would "repurposing" or "rededicating" send? Show Black community members you mean what you say. TEAR IT DOWN

To the majority of (read: white) tourists who pass through downtown on any given weekend without prior knowledge of WNC, Vance monument will likely only ever be a silhouette in a bustling landscape. They may never even be aware of the name Vance, let alone the history of the man, or the space the monument occupies.

The case seems similar for a number of mainly white residents I've heard comments from throughout this Public Input process and since the idea of re/moving Confederate monuments has emerged in the mainstream (read: white) zeitgeist. Though some who are local have more knowledge of history and context, the takeaway is clear: the landmark obelisk downtown holds pleasant memories of youthful nostalgia for MANY white people in this area. For them, this feeling outweighs the tremendous pain the very same site has caused for generations of Black citizens. This group of people cannot imagine their personal rose-tinted view of the past being deemed less important than the collective suffering and trauma of Black Asheville. It even seems impossible for some to hold that their personal experience may have differed from peers' of a different race, and that these experiences can both exist and be valid.

How can we possibly come to an agreement when we begin so far apart?

There are facts on which we agree: Zebulon Vance was an enslaver of human beings. We no longer wish to glorify people who owned other people like livestock. Unlike earlier statues placed mainly in cemeteries, monuments like Vance were not built as any kind of memorial to those lost in war. The history of Jim Crow era monuments has been thoroughly researched so we know with certainty those who built Confederate monuments intended them to overtly "teach values to people" and promote "glorification of the cause of the Civil War. That's why they put them in the city squares. That's why they put them in front of state buildings." -Prof. Mark Elliott, UNCG <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-u-s-got-so-many-confederate-monuments>

More directly, "Most of the people who were involved in erecting the monuments were not necessarily erecting a monument to the past. But were rather, erecting them toward a white supremacist future." - Assoc. Prof. Jane Dailey, University of Chicago <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/20/544266880/confederate-statues-were-built-to-further-a-white-supremacist-future>

We must hold these truths in common, or we would not be holding these discussions today. Now, wherever one finds themselves along this spectrum of views regarding Vance (be it a positive collection of memories meeting with loved ones downtown using the structure as a landmark, or benign- just another old stone standing among the throngs of people, to massively painful and traumatic every single time one must pass by, feeling the pain of knowing these stones celebrate a man and a culture that for so long bought and sold ancestors who looked just like the face in the mirror), we must all ask ourselves the same question.

As we seek to answer "Remove or Repurpose?", to whom do we owe an answer? And to whom do we want the answer to speak?

Black Asheville and WNC are LONG overdue an answer. We know the intention each of these stones was placed with. Each of these stones has meaning; a meaning that continues to harm Black people and POC in this community every day.

If the city carves into the stones, paints them, "adds context" or removes all traces of the name Vance and rededicates the existing obelisk, these stones still sit as intended.

You will have given your answer, and it will speak volumes.

Repurposing or rededicating simply allows the literal and symbolic foundation of this Jim Crow monument to continue. It sends a clear message to the entire community that white comfort is paramount; that those in charge will grant us small changes if we fuss enough, but in the end, the bedrock of supremacy stands.

For Asheville's progressive words to match our actions, the only option is to TEAR. IT. DOWN. Stone by stone, the weight of its history and meaning fully recognized so that we may move toward reconciliation.

Marissa, North Asheville

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Sent from my iPhone

12/8/2020 2:51:00 AM	hanna zalesky	<p>Hello all,</p> <p>I'm writing with comment on a few items on the agenda for Tuesday's meeting.</p> <p>- business inclusion ~~ resolutions I & V : in the context of resolution C that was passed in October toward the end of improving inclusion of Black / brown- owned businesses in contract with the City, it seemed hopeful that these contracts would have gone differently. I wonder if you could discuss why these two contracts did go to white-owned businesses, & how business inclusion could be improved further, in a way that might provide tangible support to those businesses that resolution C was meant to bring forward in soliciting bids & in accepting them. the way that this played out seems to illustrate the disconnect between symbolic efforts & the actual change that those efforts imagine.</p> <p>- police funding ~~ resolutions G, K, L, M & U consider commitments regarding APD for which the future of APD is central. These resolutions seem counter to Council's commitment to 're - imagining ' our police force; if the role of the police force is to be substantially shifted, & other means will be included in public safety, then committing to long-term contracts for bodycams / tasers & utilization of federal grant money for additional firearms seems unnecessary. The grant could also cover educational needs, or mental health services : why should it be used for firearm purchase instead of the things the Council earlier expressed support for growing & integrating into standards of public safety?</p> <p>- new business agenda item A ~~ thank you for prioritizing affordable housing -- could these funds be used more efficiently to meet an area of greater need?</p> <p>- new business C ~~ I'd like to ask that you vote on the issue of removal of the Vance monument at the next possible time. it seems this has been put off meeting to meeting, & action would provide a certain closure to the issue that would allow us to continue to move forward in our work toward reducing the harm of racial injustice.</p> <p>thank you so much for your work.</p> <p>best,</p> <p>Hanna Zalesky Asheville / 28806</p>
12/8/2020 2:53:00 AM	Miles Mesk	<p>Hello, my contact info is through my email address mcmesk99@yahoo.com or phone number (954) 849-9009</p>
12/8/2020 3:03:00 AM	rachael bliss	<p>As a nonviolent person, I can't support my city using \$48,000 and more on rifles used to kill our citizens, mostly people who are black and brown. Meanwhile the Buncombe County Sheriff's office will use their grant funds for forensics. That's an awful lot of rifles for a city our size. It's like we're getting ready for the big hunt. That's what we use rifles for where we come from. And just before that we have an item</p> <p>Sent from my iPad</p>

12/8/2020 3:07:00 AM	Melody LeBaron	<p>Dear Asheville city council,</p> <p>Here's my citizen input for the items on the agenda tomorrow night:</p> <p>Regarding Resolution G: Does it make sense for the City to lock into a 5-year contract for body cam and taser services if the size of the police force will hopefully decrease during that time?</p> <p>Regarding Resolution K: What provisions will the City make to ensure that equity considerations are taken into account in selecting the trainers for the proposed de-escalation training? I recommend whoever is hired have received training and certification from Dr. Resma Menakem or another somatic-trained, trauma-informed professional.</p> <p>Regarding Resolution L: APD plans to use the funds from this grant to acquire firearms. WHAT OTHER WAYS CAN THIS MONEY BE USED that will increase trust between the APD and the communities of color that they serve? What was the process for determining that APD would use these funds for rifles, while Buncombe County Sheriff's department is using the funds for Networking and forensic supplies?</p> <p>Regarding Resolution M: What process did the City use (or will they use) in identifying bulletproof vest providers? Was the City's new Business Inclusion policy referenced, to insure that Black and Brown-owned manufacturers were included?</p> <p>Regarding Resolution U: Increasing funding for mental health services to Fire and Police employees seems like an important step in the right direction. I recommend whoever is hired have received training and certification from Dr. Resma Menakem or another somatic-trained, trauma-informed professional.</p> <p>Overall: Noting that over \$2 million is being allocated to APD through this consent agenda, the majority is going to firearms, tasers, bulletproof vests, and bodycams. Less than 10% of that amount is going into things like a de-escalation training and mental health services for officers. This allocation is misaligned with Asheville's values and needs and the reparations resolution. WE NEED TO PRIORITIZE TRAINING THAT WILL INCREASE TRUST AND RESPECT BETWEEN APD AND THE COMMUNITIES OF COLOR THEY SERVE.</p> <p>Blessings, Melody LeBaron 407-716-6874 www.transformingspace.com ~ Transforming Space + Self + Loss ~ author of Transforming Death: Creating Sacred Space for the Dying</p>
12/8/2020 3:12:00 AM	Melody LeBaron	<p>Dear Asheville City Council,</p> <p>My input on New Business Agenda Item A – City loaning money for condo construction in West Asheville:</p> <p>This housing development represents a substantial loan and depletion of the Housing Trust Fund to a project with no reparations implications. Sorry, what??? Reparations funding cannot be postponed into the indefinite future. This kind of outlay of City capital need to be re-evaluated in light of City Council's commitment to reparations.</p> <p>This \$1.2 million dollars going towards homes for people making 80% of the AMI does NOT address the need for deeply affordable housing.</p> <p>So, NO. The city should NOT loan this money for condo construction in West Asheville as planned.</p> <p>Blessings, Melody LeBaron 407-716-6874 www.transformingspace.com ~ Transforming Space + Self + Loss ~ author of Transforming Death: Creating Sacred Space for the Dying</p>

12/8/2020 3:12:00 AM	Pamela Culp	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I want to express some opinions about the agenda as a white, life long North Carolinian and decades long Ashevilleian:</p> <p>Resolution C: Thank you for your directive toward equity in City contracts. Is the city also planning to address or factor in the historical inequities in our community that often place Black owned businesses at a financial disadvantage in the bidding process? How will this be factored in?</p> <p>Resolution K: It is my understanding that the Office of Equity and Inclusion is not currently involved with APD business. How then does the City plan to guarantee equity considerations in selecting the trainers for future proposed de-escalation training?</p> <p>Resolution U: I am pleased to see increased funding for mental health services to APD and AFD employees. I hope to see an increase percentage of the budget continuing in the future on both de-escalation training and mental health.</p> <p>New Business:</p> <p>West Avl Condo Development: I question whether this addresses the greater need for deeply affordable housing. With so many stresses amidst the virus and economy, is it not better to hold funding for more crucial projects affecting those most in need?</p> <p>Vance Monument: I support the Vance Monument Task Force decision for removal. I defer to Black community input as regards any changes. Not knowing exactly what is being proposed at tomorrow's Council Meeting, there is not time for me or many in our community to consider whatever the proposal is and respond. I hope there will be time in the future for community comments before any possible changes are made.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, consideration and service to the citizens of Asheville.</p> <p>Sincerely, Pamela Culp</p>
12/8/2020 3:15:00 AM	Michael Carlebach	<p>The obelisk commemorates the career of Asheville native Zebulon Vance, especially his role as governor in leading North Carolina out of the Union and fighting for the Confederate army in its dreadful attempt to protect chattel slavery in the South. . That decision, certainly the most important of his life, is not worthy of commemoration and deserves no lasting monument in the middle of our multicultural city. A monument to him is a monument to an ugly philosophy and now sends an unobvious message of approval of his nefarious actions to tear the United States asunder in order to maintain the institution of slavery. I suggest removal of the obelisk from its central place of honor. Vance was wrong, the Confederacy lost, and its time we move on.</p> <p>Michael Carlebach</p>
12/8/2020 4:04:00 AM	Julia Dorn	<p>Good evening members of City Council,</p> <p>I would like to submit public comment on *New Business C. Vance Monument Task Force Recommendation*.</p> <p>My name is Julia Dorn, I am a resident of North Asheville. *I would like to express my support for the removal of the Vance Monument.* I supported the removal as soon as it was made clear to me that many Black residents, and other residents, of Asheville, are deeply uncomfortable with the continued presence of this monument to white supremacy and the Confederacy in the center of our city. Many community members have demanded that the monument be removed for years, but I am glad that the Vance Monument Task Force voted 11-1 in support of the removal of the monument. This Task Force appears to have worked very hard to imagine other options, and now almost unanimously agrees that the monument should be removed. I want to thank the members of the Task Force who voted in favor. I urge City Council members to vote in support of the removal of the Vance Monument.</p> <p>Sincerely, Julia Dorn</p>

12/8/2020 5:06:00 AM	Roberta Sinal	<p>Roberta Sinal<https://www.facebook.com/groups/222232707954356/user/1035846765/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZXdleZbzi_9b943c_JgdbfiPE7H13VGM4c0ABU386VHS6ZPe7DJvSCoa6wgSp9PEfyfrl8_AMEkGillCj816_7YlgjNRIk7JbCFQlc0vh6Fy7JosCzbUbkJPBxjUcf7pbHQ-O3DXBdBekRoCy1-Vce7nDyQZ_1nV2SQY2uJ_Y7bEBA07Dfv4NciovGP8EHMIs&__tn__=R%5d-R></p> <p>Repurpose the monument to honor a different POC each year, based on a broad range of accomplishments: civic, business, musician, busker, artist, NGO, restaurant, athlete, volunteer, whatever, etc.!! Diversify the awards to represent the breadth of talent in our community. Lots of room for plaques and other artistic touches! Make it a Living Wall of Fame~</p> <p>Sent from Mail<https://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=550986> for Windows 10</p>
12/8/2020 5:24:00 AM	Carol Marty	<p>I am happy to see three new members of the Council are bringing additional feminine energy to the work of the Council.</p> <p>I hope and expect this work to be led with compassion and to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - additional work on equity and inclusion, and racial and social justice, - fulfilling the promises already made of funding/providing reparations in the form of financial support for programs for uplifting the African American/Black community - the removal of the Vance monument as recommended by the task force—which already included public input - taking care of our homeless community - defunding the police and stopping excessive use of force - providing funding of social and mental health programs to lesson the need for police intervention - de-militarization of the police - more attention to resident needs such as affordable housing and less in bringing tourists and hotels to the city. We have too many of both of those. It is ruining the city and our surrounding natural environment. <p>I fully support this new council taking bold action to take care of its citizens who have voted for you and clearly have an expectation of supporting oppressed and marginalized peoples.</p> <p>Thank you, Carol Marty 215 Summit Street, Asheville</p>

12/8/2020 12:43:00 PM	Roslyn Clapp	<p>Pertaining to new business agenda item A, I am concerned about loaning 1.2 million dollars to the construction of a West Asheville condo. While this loan will help the condos be sold at 80% of the Area Median Income, I am not confident that this kind of loan will truly support the housing needs of our community. Our community needs deeply affordable housing. Our community needs reparations for people who have not been able to build equity through housing. I don't believe that this loan will help achieve these goals and the long term goals of equity in our community.</p> <p>Thank you for taking my concerns into account as you make your decision to improve Asheville for everyone.</p> <p>--</p> <p>*Roslyn Clapp* *(She, her, hers)*</p> <p>*Third Grade Classroom Teacher* *Francine Delany New School for Children* *119 Brevard Rd.* *Asheville, NC 28806* *(828) 236-9441 ext 224*</p> <p>*FDNSC Social Justice Statement:**Francine Delany New School for Children is an inclusive community that is committed to promoting social justice and preserving the inherent worth and human dignity of every person.* *As individuals and as a school we will:* *Practice fairness and equality for people of every race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic status, religious belief, political view and other identities.* *Analyze multiple perspectives on historical and contemporary issues.**Build a community of critical thinkers who are active in the world. We are committed to ongoing learning, raising awareness, and fostering dialogue around issues of social justice.*</p> <p>Confidentiality Notification: This message and its attachments may contain confidential and/or legally-sensitive information intended for the sole use of the addressee(s). Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution of the information contained in this message and its attachments is prohibited. If you have received this message or any of its attachments in error, please destroy all originals and copies of the same and notify the sender immediately.</p>
12/8/2020 12:58:00 PM	Frances Barnett	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I am a concerned citizen of Asheville and a future voter. It has come out that there is a proposed increase in the Asheville Police Departments funds instead of a decrease. This brings up some issues. Police involvement tends to escalate situations to a life threatening point. Part of that is because they are given unrestricted access to weapons of destruction instead of trained to respond with a community centric approach and to avoid unnecessary damage and unrest. We cannot trust that increasing the Police Department Budget will decrease the violence against People of Color in our city. Instead of funding the police, use the money to work towards promised reparations and funnel it back into the community. Especially, BIPOC members of our community and those being hit hardest by this pandemic. Defund AVLPD by 50%. Support your community. Thank you!</p>
12/8/2020 1:06:00 PM	Woody Thompson	<p>Dear Asheville City Council,</p> <p>I am writing to express my support for the Vance Monument Task Force recommendation to remove the Vance Monument . I received information this was an agenda item today, but did not see it in new business. When will this be an agenda item?</p> <p>Additionally, I am concerned about police items on the budget, particularly the proposal to accept a grant for rifles - and the justification for this is based on the council goal of a "connected and engaged community ". My understanding is that the council was studying ways to reallocate police resources. I also find it offensive to suggest that the police having new rifles promotes a connected and engaged community.</p> <p>Woody Thompson 13 North St, Asheville, NC 28801</p>

12/8/2020 1:28:00 PM	Bonnie Schell	<p>Cities have a duty to be faithful to fairness and justice but also to stewardship of their resources in behalf of citizens. I think that the Vance Monument (under a new name) should be re-purposed. Most people who used and use the tall obelisk to give directions did not even know who Zebulon Vance was. The 4 plaques on the base should be moved to the Vance homeplace. Another metal sign can be affixed that says "this land belonged to the Eastern Band of the Cherokee and may have been used for ceremonial or burial purposes. In ____ a monument to Vance was erected, Gov of NC between ____ and a slave holder."</p> <p>We don't know how much it will cost to take the monument down, while preserving the time capsule in its base. That money would be better spent putting up signage in Pack Square that it was the site of Slave Auctions and preparing to bring the commemoration of four slaves who were lynched from Bryan Stevenson's Alabama memorial to Asheville.</p> <p>If you take down the monument, in three generations, no one will even think of/know who Gov Vance was and you will not be making any statement at all to future generations.</p> <p>Bonnie Schell 115 Oakland Rd Asheville, NC 28801 (828) 575-2549.</p> <p>-- https://bonnieschellauthor.com/</p> <p>"The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it." --Flannery O'Connor</p>
12/8/2020 1:30:00 PM	Mirra Price	
12/8/2020 1:36:00 PM	Renee Mazurek	<p>It is my sincerest hope that you've added the Vance monument discussion to the agenda for discussion and comment because you are going to vote, as the county has, to remove it. The Vance Monument Task force was very clear in their recommendation. And, I support their decision. Thank you,</p> <p>~Renée</p> <p>*Ren***e Mazurek *(she/her/hers)</p> <p>Urban Waters Learning Network</p> <p>www.urbanwaterslearningnetwork.org</p> <p>828.989.6612 reneemaz@gmail.com</p>
12/8/2020 1:38:00 PM	Faith Cook	<p>I am writing with excitement at now having three female City Council Members. And am asking for a public commitment to funding reparations for Black residents of Asheville. I also request that the Council outline how you will allocate funding, and if money can be re-directed from Tourism to making reparations.</p> <p>Thank you so much.</p> <p>Faith Cook</p> <p>◆Give people what they need: food, medicine, clean air, pure water, trees and grass, pleasant homes to live in, some hours of work, more hours of leisure. Don't ask who deserves it. Every human being deserves it.◆</p> <p>Howard Zinn</p>

12/8/2020 1:46:00 PM	The Gleason Team	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am shocked that the consent agenda includes a budgetary increase of \$328,604 to the police budget.</p> <p>After all that talk about reimagining policing. After the drama of the budget deadlines. And with not a single item to strengthen or support marginalized people our neighbors in crisis. No: your answer is more guns and body armor, a larger support staff, and large private donations to improve officer morale.</p> <p>Even earmarking pro-police donations as seemingly palatable reforms like de-escalation and "other trainings" is gross. We have seen in other municipalities that "reform" funding allows an expanded police budget and moving around of funds within the police budget. We see this shell game.</p> <p>We just had an election won by a candidate running on a defund police position. We saw a candidate lose activist support. Watch out how you act in your first meeting. Do you want memes with the pictures of the first all woman city council with the \$328,604 number across the internet?</p> <p>Strike all police strengthening items from the consent agenda</p>
12/8/2020 1:46:00 PM	Bonnie Schell	<p>In addition to the donation received, I would like to see city spend more on de-escalation training. Provision of mental health services to police and firemen is also more important than any upgrades or purchase of additional firearms. Police used to shoot to stop (in the leg) but now they shoot to kill (in heart or head multiple times). Peace Officers need to examine the old prejudices that black men and people with mental health challenges are violent and uncontrollable. This requires professional facilitators and the dedication of the APD to positive change.</p> <p>I think Asheville APD needs to proceed with partnering with Homeward Bound on a new program to change how we police.</p> <p>Bonnie Schell 115 Oazskland Rd Asheville, NC 28801 (828) 575-2549</p> <p>-- https://bonnieschellauthor.com/</p> <p>"The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it." --Flannery O'Connor</p>
12/8/2020 1:51:00 PM	Thomas Belmore	<p>I sent the following email from my work email. It should have come from me and does not reflect the views of my employer</p> <p>Hello,</p> <p>I am shocked that the consent agenda includes a budgetary increase of \$328,604 to the police budget.</p> <p>After all that talk about reimagining policing. After the drama of the budget deadlines. And with not a single item to strengthen or support marginalized people our neighbors in crisis. No: your answer is more guns and body armor, a larger support staff, and large private donations to improve officer morale.</p> <p>Even earmarking pro-police donations as seemingly palatable reforms like de-escalation and "other trainings" is gross. We have seen in other municipalities that "reform" funding allows an expanded police budget and moving around of funds within the police budget. We see this shell game.</p> <p>We just had an election won by a candidate running on a defund police position. We saw a candidate lose activist support. Watch out how you act in your first meeting. Do you want memes with the pictures of the first all woman city council with the \$328,604 number across the internet?</p> <p>Strike all police strengthening items from the consent agenda</p>

12/8/2020 1:54:00 PM	Lynne Meacham	<p>Dear Councilpeople, Much gratitude to the outgoing council members and a hearty welcome to the new ones. You all are heroes.</p> <p>For the Dec. 8 meeting, I have a few comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vance Memorial. I'd like to see you commit to taking it down. The committee tasked with studying the issue voted to do that. Buncombe County commission voted to remove it too. Let's see Asheville council keep up the momentum to remove this monument that reminds so many of our citizens of a time when their ancestors were enslaved and white people were perfectly fine with that. It's a painful reminder of white supremacy. 2. Business inclusion. In Oak Ridge, TN, where I used to live, minority contractors and majority contractors teamed up to bid on contracts. Points were awarded for minority inclusion. I wish Asheville could devise a similar partnering approach to contracts so that smaller minority contractors can participate in the business opportunities. They would gain experience and make the important business connections. This is a type of reparations. 3. Reimagining policing. Funding mental health services for officers is a great idea. Thanks to the private donor funding training in tactical de-escalation techniques. <p>Again, thank you for your service to our community!</p> <p>Sincerely, Lynne Meacham 10 Eagles Nest Ln. Asheville NC 28806</p>
12/8/2020 1:58:00 PM	Shannon Payne	<p>After the way APD responded to the protests this summer, I find it extremely irresponsible to increase their budget for buying SWAT gear and rifles. Please listen to your community and act in such a way that favors the well being of all of your community. I strongly recommend reading this article https://time.com/5854986/police-reform-defund-unarmed-guns/ <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/countries-where-police-do-not-carry-guns.html> and researching other countries where the police do not carry guns. It's literally a fact that officers who don't carry guns inflict less harm on people. I'm not saying that has to be the immediate answer, but increasing the weaponry seems to go against a large portion of the community's wishes.</p> <p>Best, Shannon Payne</p>
12/8/2020 2:00:00 PM	Lauren	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>I, like many others have read the proposed Asheville Police Department budget increase with great anger and disappointment. After all of the passionate, heartfelt pleas as to how we can do better as a city when it comes to public safety seems to have fallen on deaf ears. At the protests this summer we were beaten, pepper sprayed, and shot with bullets that yes, despite their name CAN actually kill people. Yet, you vote to increase the APD budget for them to get more and better weapons/armour...and for what? Against water bottles ? They are already armed to the teeth as if they were military. This community is sick of hearing you lie to them over and over. We can't even get the vance monument COVERED UP let alone taken down. I have zero faith in this city's government and You've made it very clear you care NOTHING about the people who live in asheville, just the people who visit.</p> <p>This action is disgusting, and I hope the voices you hear tonight, and the words you hopefully read in these emails resonate and keep you up at night.</p>
12/8/2020 2:01:00 PM	P Roger Ehrlich	<p>Veterans For Peace Respectfully request emergency passage.</p>