

Asheville City Council February 9 2021 Email Comments

Time Stamp	Text
2/5/2021 5:58:00 PM	<p>(If the City Council Members will not see this information, please let me know what I need to do to communicate it to them before 2/9. Thank you.)</p> <p>To the Asheville City Council -</p> <p>I have been a local resident for 17 years and owned my home in Oakley since 2006. My home assessment in 2017 was \$194k. This latest assessment is \$298K. I realize home values have increased significantly, however a 50% increase in 5 years seems excessive and significantly more than others in my area. This would mean my tax bill will increase approximately \$1000 this year.</p> <p>In addition, as you are all aware, many of us are struggling with decreased income due to the pandemic. I am a massage therapist and massage instructor and my income has gone down over 50% since the beginning of the pandemic in part because of State and City wide shutdowns and NC Massage Board regulations changes cutting my student base significantly through 2021.</p> <p>I am writing to request that you delay an increase in property taxes for 1-2 years or that you lower the Asheville City and Buncombe County tax rates to soften the blow until we get through this pandemic and people are back to work again.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration in this matter.</p> <p>Sincerely, Melissa D. Cope, LMBT NC #4552 23 Ashwood Drive Asheville, NC 28803 828.450.4555</p> <p>Sent from Mail<https://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=550986> for Windows 10</p>
2/6/2021 3:07:00 PM	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am writing to oppose an aspect of the point system for building new hotels in urban areas (CBD, Biltmore Village, RAD). Specifically the gross over allocation of points to parking. How can the amount of points given to the storage of cars be so much higher than neighborhood improvements, public art, and other community benefits. This just perpetuates the conversion of the urban areas into parking garages when these areas could be built as affordable housing, public open space, or more urban and walkable uses. Providing more car storage for the urban areas is the wrong way to go when wanting walkable areas, providing more mode choice, and confronting climate change.</p>

2/8/2021 12:43:00 PM

Good Morning,

I've been following the progress of these hotel regulations for a while, and I want to say that I have been impressed with the amount of thought and work that has gone into it. I love that the city council decided to remove the mall and River Ridge areas from the map, and I think it's great that hotels are required to get half of their points from "Group 2" on the public benefits table. I was very concerned that hotels would just build a green building and provide some public art and get passed so thank you for weighting those. I really think this would be a good way to limit and demand more from hotels that are built in the city.

There is one thing that I think needs more clarification, though. During the Planning and Zoning meeting a question came up about how the hotel map overlaps with the urban renewal map. It sounds like there are a few areas on Coxe Ave, Depot Street, and Asheland Ave where those maps overlap. I didn't feel that the city had a strong argument about why those areas should remain on the hotel zoning map. I would ask the city council to ask for more clarification on that and, maybe, consider removing those areas from the map if it seems like hotels could negatively affect those neighborhoods again.

I also wanted to express my support for the combined Design Review Board. I think it makes a lot more sense for our city to have one board that reviews all designs, although I do think it is important to work on creating and updating different design standards for different areas of town, like the riverfront and downtown.

Thanks again for your hard work on this, and I hope that it leads to better future development for Asheville.

Sincerely,
Nikki Gensert

2/8/2021 3:30:00 PM

Reviewing the documentation associated with this resolution, but admittedly not knowing the ins-and-outs of the bid resolution process, I ask the following questions:

- 1) Was the lowest bidder (Midwest Maintenance) that was ultimately excluded deemed "unresponsive" because they didn't reply back in time, or because they replied and indicated they were not interested in providing the missing electrical contractor information; thus no longer interested in winning the contract?
- 2) Was the lowest bidder (Midwest Maintenance) one of the only two bids received on by January 7th and from the initial RFP?

I ask these questions for several reasons:

1) The bids were formally opened on January 28th, 2021 (Thursday). Approximately one week (or less) was apparently granted for the four bidders to provide the missing electrical contractor information; the optics of this to me seems "rushed"; particularly with a pandemic in force and particularly since the RFP had to be re-advertised in January to attract further bidders.

2) The original lowest bidder, Midwest Maintenance, Inc was one of these "unresponsive" bidders; thus we were unable have the lowest cost provider do the work.

3) In a cursory comparison (internet only) of Midwest Maintenance, Inc and the contract awarded bidder, WXProofing, LLC, both business functions appear qualified based on the following:

. Midwest Maintenance has been in business since 1979 and done work in 14 states including North Carolina and Asheville. The company is family owned and seems to specialize primarily in scope of work required for the arena; restoration/updating of building exteriors.

. WxProofing has been in business since 2016 (when LLC formed) and has a broader array of services including as the name implies, major waterproofing efforts including foundations, etc.

A review and response to these questions is appreciated.

Mike Rains

Asheville

2/8/2021 3:56:00 PM	<p>Hello City Council Members,</p> <p>I understand that your proposed hotel development policy may be intended as a progressive, equitable policy. However, there are loopholes that can be used by developers and it does not address some systemic problems. Development of this kind needs to involve a rigorous examination of projects and community involvement in the evaluation process. Public comment and engagement in this process definitely should not be lessened much less completely removed. This proposed policy could continue this inequitable process of making public benefit programs fight against each other to scrape for money/resources. It does not go far enough to advance racial equity in our city, something that City Council has promised us all that you are committed to striving to achieve.</p> <p>Thank you, Emily</p> <p>--</p> <p>Emily Ogburn emilyogburn@gmail.com</p>
2/8/2021 4:00:00 PM	<p>Please have public hearings and Council approval so I can see accountability.</p> <p>Carol Cohen 28804</p>

2/8/2021 4:06:00 PM

Dear members of Asheville City Council,

I am writing in response to your proposed hotel development policy to be voted on at Feb. 9th City Council meeting. I am asking you to support the Racial Justice Coalition's recommendations, specifically:

- I ask that all new hotels must still go through a City Council approval process so the public may continue to have input and influence over Council's approvals of new hotels.

- If City Council plans to continue to use this benefits table, then developers should be asked to earn MANY more points overall than the table currently requires in order to make a real impact on racial equity.

- Add new categories to the public benefits table as advised by community outreach that primarily involves Black and Brown voices.

- If developers are incentivized to build "affordable housing" the criteria needs to be truly affordable and much less than 80% of market value. That price is still out of reach for the majority of our community. The formula for affordability should be based on average income earned and not median income earned, to truly reflect what could be affordable.

- continue the hotel ban. We do not need more hotels as they do not add to supporting our community or its infrastructure, it only depletes it.

Thank you, Jodi Ford

Jodi Ford 828-299-7470 email: jfbabula@yahoo.com

2/8/2021 4:11:00 PM

Asheville City Council Members,

As an 18-year constituent, tax payer, and community social work professional of Asheville City and Buncombe County, I'm writing to advocate for the City to rework the proposed hotel development policy so that it substantively reflects City Council's stated goal of making equity your number one priority. As it stands, it might seem that the City is requiring hotel developers to ensure that their hotel projects have benefits for (and offset the negative impacts to) our communities. Yet, on closer review, it becomes evident that these requirements don't do enough to advance racial equity, something the City has committed to, both as a goal to be achieved by 2036 and also in your July 2020 commitment to reparations for our Black communities. Despite an attempt to address community needs, the proposed policy instead runs a high risk of continuing the oppressive practices of pitting public benefit programs in Asheville against one another. What's more, it threatens to remove public input and accountability from the process of approving hotel development. There is no reason this policy can't be reworked so that it includes public accountability and ensures real community benefits.

This policy is not acceptable in its current form. The City can do better than making political gestures that don't amount to systems-level change. The policy proposes a new process involving a brand new committee to review proposed hotels along aesthetic grounds, yet there is no mention of the Office of Equity and Inclusion. So what comes across loud and clear is that it's critical that hotels look good; what impact they have on equity seems far less important under the current point system. The way the benefits table currently reads, it makes the inclusion of reparations a less desirable and easily ignored option for developers, and there's a significant need to add new categories to this public benefits table as advised by community outreach that primarily involves Black and Brown voices.

When it comes to affordable housing, the lack of an equity lens is again readily apparent. Developers can earn a large number of points if they agree to build for-sale units that are 80% of market value. If you look at the cost of such units (the table suggests \$240K) and the median income/wealth of Asheville's Black population, it's abundantly clear that this "affordable" housing won't change the homeowner racial gap one bit. One bright spot in the table as currently designed is that it would incentivize contributions to the Business Inclusion Office. This office does important work, and deserves significant support. However, the other community benefits that specifically address equity issues have insufficient incentives – the likely result is that developers will earn their points elsewhere, making equity in the community largely a false promise. If City Council plans to continue to use this benefits table, then developers should be asked to earn MANY more points overall than the table currently requires in order to make a real impact on racial equity.

There are many important needs in the community. However, the City declared that equity was its number one goal in its 2036 community goals declaration. The City passed a Reparations resolution in 2020. Despite these commitments, this proposed policy gives reparations and other elements that would work for racial justice a very low priority. I urge you to take this opportunity to mandate that hotels designate reparations funds as a separate and mandatory requirement for all new building projects. This would be a significant step towards ensuring that the City's

2/8/2021 5:02:00 PM

Dear Council,

As you know and are working to address, there are many important needs in the community. I am delighted that the City declared that equity was its number one goal in its 2036 community goals declaration. The City passed a Reparations resolution in 2020. Despite these commitments, this proposed hotel policy gives reparations and other elements that would work for racial justice a very low priority.

Please, please take this opportunity to mandate that hotels *designate reparations funds as a separate and mandatory requirement* for all new building projects. This can be a beginning of reparations for decades of harm caused by urban renewal.

If the City is clearly committed to living up to its racial equity commitments, it should be insisting that hotel developers go through a *rigorous community accountability process* that evaluates their community impact and their proposal for addressing issues of equity and community benefit.

Thank you,
Sarah Norris
west Asheville

2/8/2021 7:04:00 PM

Council Members,

I beg you to NOT pass this new hotel policy but to instead, at this time, when we are still in the midst of a pandemic and determining how to truly become an equitable anti-racist city, please continue your former practice of evaluating hotel development deals at your public meetings. The policy being presented must be massively reworked to actually reflect your stated goals of making equity the number one priority for the next 20 years. Personally, as a southside resident of Asheville and small business owner, I think to even be considering building hotels at this time is pretty disgusting. Our present hotels shouldn't even be open while we are still in the midst of a global pandemic and far too few people have yet to be vaccinated, let alone their basic needs met as they face job loss, business closure, strained resources, etc. If you are seriously committed to living up to your racial equity commitments, you must insist that hotel developers go through a rigorous community accountability process that evaluates their proposed development's community impact. You should also require that they make concrete contributions toward addressing equity and community benefit. Thank you for listening.

Elizabeth Schell

Asheville resident

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Elizabeth Schell

elizabeth@lainschell.com

828-242-5555

"Hope is a crushed stalk

Between clenched fingers

Hope is a bird's wing

Broken by a stone.

Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty--

A word whispered with the wind,

A dream of forty acres and a mule,

A cabin of one's own and a moment to rest,

A name and place for one's children

and children's children at last...

Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty--

2/8/2021 7:06:00 PM	<p>Hi my name is Miles,</p> <p>The proposed guidelines for Hotel Development Standards are concerning. Asheville has become bloated with Hotels. As a result, our tourist industry is unsustainable for our community and environment. There has yet to be any real public benefits seen from the development of hotels. Their presence has liquidated our culture and communal spaces with over policed and trafficked places in downtown and surrounding areas. Promises made last year for reparations towards Black communities and the removal of the Vance Monument have yet to see any materialization outside of rumors and committees. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has only further emphasized our homelessness epidemic with gentrification strategies that have displaced and endangered communities in Asheville. Covid-19 has also strained industry workers and medical staff trying to live in Asheville with regards to the influx of tourism which has yet to see a significant decline during the pandemic.</p> <p>Invest in building economically sustainable systems and infrastructures for our most vulnerable community members. Create affordable housing to end homelessness in Asheville. Invest in Black businesses and leaders within the community. Hotels are making Asheville into an unlivable environment. Divest from future and current hotel developments – invest in community help and economic assistance.</p>
2/8/2021 7:10:00 PM	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>It is my understanding that the city will be meeting to discuss guidelines for new hotel development in asheville. I have been told that the new proposal would limit hotels with 35 rooms or more to areas outside of the Central Business District. I would ask that you extend that limitation to the River Arts District as well. Hotel development in the RAD should be allowed, but a tempered approach will be necessary if we wish to keep the character of the area.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration,</p> <p>Nick Dugan Asheville Resident</p>

2/8/2021 7:14:00 PM	<p>Hello/happy new year.</p> <p>I hope you and yours are safe and well.</p> <p>The proposed guidelines for Hotel Development Standards are concerning. Asheville has become bloated with Hotels. As a result, our tourist industry is unsustainable for our community and environment. There has yet to be any real public benefits seen from the development of hotels. Their presence has liquidated our culture and communal spaces with over policed and trafficked places in downtown and surrounding areas. Promises made last year for reparations towards Black communities and the removal of the Vance Monument have yet to see any materialization outside of rumors and committees. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has only further emphasized our homelessness epidemic with gentrification strategies that have displaced and endangered communities in Asheville. Covid-19 has also strained industry workers and medical staff trying to live in Asheville with regards to the influx of tourism which has yet to see a significant decline during the pandemic.</p> <p>Invest in building economically sustainable systems and infrastructures for our most vulnerable community members. Create affordable housing to end homelessness in Asheville. Invest in Black businesses and leaders within the community. Hotels are making Asheville into an unlivable environment. Divest from future and current hotel developments – invest in community help and economic assistance.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Tom Mesk 123 Friendly Lane Asheville, North Carolina 28806</p>
2/8/2021 7:49:00 PM	<p>As a 20 year resident of Asheville I can say that going downtown now is much less fun because of all the tourists. I hope that it doesn't get worse with even more hotels in the future!</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration.</p> <p>Lowell Smith</p>
2/8/2021 8:17:00 PM	<p>Hello Council Members,</p> <p>I do NOT support the change to the hotel moratorium.</p> <p>Thank you for your service on Cty Council.</p> <p>Jan Schochet 44 Fairway Rd Asheville, NC 28804</p> <p>--</p> <p>*Helping one animal may not change the world, but the world * *will certainly change for that one animal.*</p>

2/8/2021 8:50:00 PM	<p>I am a retiree living in Weaverville who connects to the Asheville community through church membership and as a patron of the business community. During our 8+ years here, we have watched explosive hotel development change the nature of the town.</p> <p>In addition, we have become more aware of the damage that the cumulative effect of development projects have had on communities of color. In particular, it is imperative that future developments help provide adequate resources toward reparations that actively support community development for those same communities.</p> <p>The proposed regulations for approval of hotel development projects deserve recognition for the way they try to address community needs. However, as proposed, they are inadequate. An optional checklist and point system are no substitute for nuanced evaluation and robust public input. Asheville is not short of hotel space. There is time to refine the regulations to ensure they truly meet the goal of approving projects that will enhance the life of the city.</p> <p>Please vote to delay enactment of new regulations so that meaningful community input can be incorporated.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Regards, Sarah White Weaverville, NC</p> <p>Sent from Sarah's iPad</p>
2/8/2021 9:20:00 PM	<p>I am against new hotel development, it is hard enough for locals to go downtown as it is, once the pandemic is over it will be even harder as all the tourists will return. That being said there should be a limit on the total number of rooms allowed in a hotel, just saying over 35 rooms does not limit the hotel size in any meaningful way. And as for downtown I don't see the need for any new hotels at all. It is already so congested with traffic, Biltmore avenue does not move at all during peak tourism times, what about making it user friendly for locals who have business downtown to attend to and has council considered making Asheville a pedestrian only walkable downtown.</p>
2/8/2021 10:09:00 PM	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>I am writing to urge the Council to continue its former practice of evaluating hotel development deals at its public meetings, until the proposed policy is substantively reworked to reflect City Council's stated goal of making equity the number one priority for the next 20 years. If the Council is seriously committed to living up to racial equity commitments, it must insist that hotel developers go through a rigorous community accountability process that evaluates their proposed development's community impact and requires that they make concrete contributions toward addressing equity and community benefit.</p> <p>*Woody* Eisenberg 60 North Market Street Asheville, NC 28801 woodyeisenberg@gmail.com https://www.woodyeisenbergphotos.com 973-534-0887</p>

2/8/2021 10:16:00 PM

Hi Debra, Hi City Council,

It was inevitable that a small number of Asheville residents, including a small number of total Asheville's African-Americans, would ask that the Vance Memorial would be moved elsewhere.

First, the ability to sway outcome here isn't over at all. Only a tiny number of Asheville residents knew the Vance Memorial Task Force comment period recently ended.

A new nameplate is needed for this obelisk. If that requires NCLEG changes, so be it. All the better. Just moving a giant obelisk around seems pointless.

I think there is another plaque about the confederacy involved. Moving those plaques to a museum warehouse does make sense.

What to rename this obelisk to is a question that rates a year of civic engagement. I say name it the Transformation and Peace Needle. The obelisk for the faithful points to God. For unbelievers it represents a higher level of ethical thinking and problem solving.

Creating a all weather kiosk that explains how the Vance Memorial was part of 'Lost Cause' rehabilitation of the confederacy sedition and the evil of slavery—and then what the people of Asheville say the obelisk means at the time this new message kiosk is activated and this obelisk renaming ceremony occurs—is a more meaningful moment then simply trying to artificially kick structural racism out of town.

I look forward to finding ways to see if others like this alternative to just making an obelisk go away.

Thank you and blessings,

Grant Millin, Strategy Innovator

StratGen: Solution Design Consulting and Strategic Innovation Services

TBA Nonprofit Developer

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URL: www.stratgen.org

NC Innovation and Opportunity Ecosystem: <https://ncioe.mn.co>

LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/grantmillin/>

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2/8/2021 10:17:00 PM

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2/8/2021 10:21:00 PM

Although the City's proposal for the new hotel policy includes incentives to incorporate public benefits such as reparations, affordable housing, etc., into new hotel projects, the incentives as now presented seem inconsistent, setting up a system in which public benefits compete with one another, rather than laying out mandatory requirements for benefits in each of the categories. All are needed for the Asheville community.

The proposal also sets out a new process for approval that bypasses City Council and thus public input or accountability.

Please rework this project to continue the practice of evaluating hotel development at public meetings, and to clarify the process to make clear the commitment to racial equity through a rigorous community accountability process for every proposed hotel development.

Thank you for your consideration,

Zoe Hoyle
Science Writer/Editor
Asheville, NC 28801
Cell: 828-230-9564

2/8/2021 10:42:00 PM	<p>Dear City Council,</p> <p>Do we really need more hotels? Between hotels, B&Bs, and airbnbs I can't imagine that we are anywhere close to capacity.</p> <p>Please consider keeping new hotels OUT of the areas in which those of us who live, work, and like to dine out. Please say NO to hotels in West Asheville Montford North Asheville</p> <p>Thank you for helping us keep at least some of what makes Asheville special special for those who live here. Please don't trash those areas by further increasing tourists with hotels.</p> <p>Warmly, Cheri</p> <p>Cheri Torres Lead Catalyst, Speaker, and Author Collaborative by Design</p> <p>w: 828-407-1831 m: 828-225-5088 a: Asheville, NC w: cheritorres.com <https://img.newoldstamp.com/r/89773/w> e: cheri@conversationsworthhaving.today <mailto:cheri@conversationsworthhaving.today> Order best selling Conversations Worth Having: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Fuel Productive and Meaningful Engagement <https://www.conversationsworthhaving.today/> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/cbtorres/></p> <p><https://img.newoldstamp.com/r/89773/facebook> <https://img.newoldstamp.com/r/89773/twitter> <https://img.newoldstamp.com/r/89773/linkedin> <https://img.newoldstamp.com/r/89773/instagram></p>
2/9/2021 12:23:00 AM	<p>Hello city council. I appreciate everyone on city council working hard for our city. Asheville has a lot of problems. The new hotel rules do not limit hotels. Why did the city even approve a moratorium on hotels if you won't limit them? Historic preservation does not seem to be a priority for the city. City staff recommend small hotels for downtown however developers can build mix use hotels a mix oh hotels and condos etc up to 115 rooms . Only after 115 rooms does it come to council. To preserve the historic downtown we need smaller development. Developers are ruining the character and culture of Asheville. Hotels.need.tl.be limited and more of a focus on historic preservation. Downtown is the worst place for more hotels. There is limited parking now. The city is being careless on development.</p>

2/9/2021 12:32:00 AM

Dear Council Members:

I'm an Asheville citizen and I'm writing to ask you to continue your former practice of evaluating hotel development deals at your public meetings, until the new hotel review policy is substantively reworked to reflect City Council's stated goal of making equity the number one priority for the next 20 years.

It appears the new process offers hotel developers a route to approval that bypasses City Council and therefore public input or accountability. Also, while I think the Public Benefits Table system makes a sincere attempt to address community needs, by and large the community benefits that specifically address equity issues have insufficient incentives – the likely result is that developers will earn their points elsewhere, making equity in the community largely a false promise.

I ask that you please rework this policy so that it substantively reflects City Council's stated goal of making equity your number one priority.

Thank you,

Lindsay Miller

2/9/2021 12:50:00 AM	<p>To the Asheville City Council Members,</p> <p>When will we ever reach the maximum for hotels being built in this city? I am all for tourism however tourism alone does not sustain a city. This city has depended on tourism for far too long and for the second time in roughly a decade the tourism industry went bust. First time with the recession and now for the second time with the pandemic and the citizens who work in tourism have been the ones who have suffered the most. Many work long hours for minimum wage and no health care or they work two or more jobs just to pay bills.</p> <p>You, as City Council Members, need to do more in attracting viable businesses to the city and stop building hotels and apartments that the working people in this city cannot even afford! This city is starting to create a huge divide between the haves and the have nots.</p> <p>It is becoming even more with so many new people coming in from other parts of the country and buying up and building houses in order to “live simply” yet with resources that people here cannot compete with no matter how hard they work.</p> <p>It is time to think of all the working class citizens. A goal this city might want to consider is improving the quality of life for the citizens who already live and work here from more affordable housing to a better comprehensive public transportation system. This council has not addressed these issues in ways that actually help the hard working people who serve the needs of these tourists. In addition, this city has yet to benefit from bringing in these tourists with hotel taxes!</p> <p>The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome. This could be the folly of Asheville if we don’t change the way we conduct business.</p> <p>Thank you, Gail Rhodes</p> <p>Sent from my iPad</p>
2/9/2021 1:20:00 AM	<p>Hello to our dear city representatives,</p> <p>Thank you for your time and thinking of the people that live and work in the city. We are all pretty sick of hotels being built on every possible corner and sometimes on wooded lots or cutting into steep slopes (Meadow road).</p> <p>There is a major conflict of interest on the planning commission in approving future hotels. Architects and developers seem a little cozy, and should not be the most important people, whom the process is made easier and streamlined for.</p> <p>The people of Asheville have been very clear that we have plenty of hotels and tourism should not be our sole economic focus.</p> <p>Please act on behalf of your constituents. Please do not act on behalf of developers and their fat pockets both in town and out of the area or even state. We long ago reached the tipping point and this won’t be the last pandemic. Let’s work to diversify and protect our mountain home. Enough with hotels already.</p> <p>Thank you! Diane Hillgrove</p>

2/9/2021 1:32:00 AM	<p>As a member of the asheville community since 2008, I've come to see hotels pop up over the years and I think it's fantastic. It helps our beautiful city thrive by providing much needed tourism dollars, especially now after asheville was hit so hard by the pandemic.</p> <p>Tourists rave about our city and I think the hotels have done a fantastic job of making downtown look better again. I do wish that they looked more cohesive in design though. The Arras did an amazing job with their esthetics both inside and out. I wish locals could see that hotels bring in jobs, tourists who bring in a lot of money to the area and they pay taxes which only helps us. How are people so against them? It's baffling to me, in order to grow as a city, you need money!</p> <p>Linzy Mills</p>
2/9/2021 1:35:00 AM	<p>The true residents of Asheville reject the new hotel development rules and condemn the blatant, persistent prioritization of tourist dollars over local lives.</p> <p>Our natural beauty, robust food and beverage community, and local arts are put on full display for the tourists. What's hidden is this city's abhorrent treatment of the unhoused community, including the destruction of their shelters in the midst of snow and blustering wind; what's hidden is the city's history of slavery, white supremacy, and degradation of the Black community, including empty promises, made by this city council, to provide reparations and protect the community from the violence from our racist police force by defunding APD.</p> <p>The real Asheville is sick and tired of the minimization and demolition of any race, culture, or group that makes the white tourists uncomfortable. Our demands are clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend the hotel moratorium - Stop houseless camp sweeps - Shut down all hotels for the rest of the pandemic - open rooms to the houseless - Defund APD and reroute funds for housing and real, quantifiable reparations - Provide local relief causing on the communities hit hardest by COVID-19 - Halt all evictions <p>Do your jobs, Blake Becker</p>

2/9/2021 1:47:00 AM

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to you to voice concern about the lack of fiscal management and poor academic results of the Asheville City Schools. I am writing to you about these concerns for two reasons:

The ACS BOE is appointed by the City Council, thereby making it immune to accountability from the stakeholders it is designed to serve.

The ACS BOE receives local funds from both Asheville City Council and the Buncombe County Commissioners. These local funds are made up of fines, forfeitures, and local tax revenue. Any deficit will have to be covered through local funding, ie. an increase in property and school taxes.

As a taxpayer and parent, I am concerned that our local school is not exhibiting fiscal responsibility with public funds. Both the latest financial audit and the comments by the current financial consultant at the latest BOE meeting, point to longstanding systemic mismanagement of public funds.

Rather than taking an aggressive stand to shore up a looming budget deficit, Dr. Freeman has offered that positions in the Central Office will be allowed to retire out, rather than immediately cut. He stated that the looming deficit was something that could be managed without offering any real solutions. However, in revising the latest ACS budget amendments, the school system just paid close to \$1 million dollars to have new turf installed on the athletic field at Asheville High without Board approval.

I have presented my concerns at public comment with the board and have offered my services as an experienced educator with school budgets. I hope that as you appoint the next board and fund the current school system, you will ask for concrete measures to assure effectiveness and fiscal responsibility from our local school board on behalf of all the taxpayers in Asheville.

Best,
Ted Duncan

Comments at Asheville City Schools BOE Meeting:

"I am concerned about the issues brought forth by the recent article in the Mountain Xpress and the nonchalant and dismissive nature in which BOE members reacted to the author's questions regarding a possible deficit for the school system by the end of the school year.

As a BOE member, one of your primary responsibilities is to ensure the financial welfare of the school system. I have reviewed recent BOE minutes and I do not see a systematic review of finances.

The school system is selling buildings and closing programs in order to make up budgetary shortfalls. There is discussion of ending supplements. I am concerned for the future of the district and its ability to attract and retain highly qualified teachers.

As a citizen of Asheville and a father of two ACS students, I am requesting the following:
An immediate audit of the duties and responsibilities of all CO positions and their positive impact on student achievement.

A plan to eliminate positions that are redundant and/or ineffective as related to student achievement.

An audit of all external instructional programming and professional development undertaken in the last five year's and its level of positive impact on student achievement.

A plan to eliminate all external programs and PD programs that are redundant and/or ineffective as related to student achievement.

2/9/2021 2:33:00 AM

1. The February 1st destruction of the downtown encampment

I am deeply deeply ashamed and horrified at the actions taken 1 week ago on the homes and bodies of our homeless friends. I know that you did not sleep outside last week. You didn't have to. You wouldn't want to. It feels as though you almost solely rely on local leaders and organizations to care for the homeless in Asheville.

It is trademark City of Asheville to pass the buck and avoid all of the blame. The "complaint" that came through the Asheville App is a ridiculous excuse for the act of violence that you allowed to happen. The sense of entitlement and lack of compassion is appalling. You stated the decision to remove the camp was based on safety concerns - I'd like to know whose safety you were concerned about because it was clearly not the "most vulnerable population" (your words) who were left in below freezing temps without their homes or belongings. Though you say that you did not lead the destruction efforts, did you try to stop it? We know now that none of the community partners were contacted, as you stated. What happened?

If there were as much effort put into housing these folks as there is to build another hotel, this wouldn't have happened. Let's consider the impacts that COVID has had on people who DO have housing, and access to food, clean dry clothing, heat, medical care, transportation. I've seen so much money poured into saving businesses, which I love, but where is the money for saving PEOPLE?

I would also love more transparency about the conversation that took place with NCDOT at the end of last week. I truly wish that whoever is at the top of this decision making would come out and say that they care more about tourism dollars than about the wellbeing of our community. Which isn't unrelated to point 2...

2. The Hotel Moratorium

I wish I knew how many hotel development surveys I've filled out for the City of Asheville in recent years. At this point, it seems like you are just waiting for a different answer from the community than the resounding NO MORE HOTELS. If you are truly interested in supporting this community and the people who live here, it is time to listen.

So I'll repeat one of my comments from the July survey: No more tree loss. No more ecosystem destruction. No more gentrification. No more loss of local and minority owned businesses. No more money in the pockets of wealthy (out of town) developers. We are ruining our chances of being climate and community resilient. There are SO many things we need for our community to be resilient: housing, employment that pays a living wage (which just rose again for Asheville), public transportation, healthcare, food security. How do more hotels solve these problems? (Did you know that the closest full-scale grocery store for the Southside/Erskine/Livingston community is 2.5 miles away?

<<https://www.google.com/maps/search/grocery/@35.5753093,-82.5653734,14z/data=!3m1!4b1>>
- Could we incentivize food access instead of hotels?)

There are literally 148 pages of comments from your citizens in the July survey: have you read them? Almost every comment is some version of "no more hotels". It's also INFURIATING that Asheville has been promoting tourism during almost a year of the pandemic. Hotels do not serve your community. Period. We should matter more.

2/9/2021 3:02:00 AM

?Attached is a letter to the Mayor and members of Asheville City Council in regards to my concerns with, and opposition to, the proposed changes to the two separate and independent design review committees of the AARRC and Asheville Downtown Commission which will be heard by them at tomorrow's Asheville City Council Meeting.

Thank you for distributing to the Council members.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Mathews

Jane G. Mathews, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C

President / Principal?

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jane@mathewsarchitecture.com<<mailto:jane@mathewsarchitecture.com>>

Good ideas...

Good designs...

Good people????

?

2/9/2021 4:04:00 AM

I have lived in Asheville for 20 years. In my time here, Asheville has become overrun with hotels. Tourists have almost completely taken over downtown, which used to be populated with locals going about their daily business. While the tourism economy has brought in tax dollars, it has been devastating for the culture of Asheville.

I have read through the proposals and the proposed amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance will only make matters worse, and should be REJECTED.

We are currently dealing with the effects of years of hotels being approved without Council review. Removing City Council's approval will prevent citizen participation in how they want their city to evolve. It is neither the responsibility, nor the right, of City of Asheville staff to approve hotels which will continue to drastically alter not only the physical landscape of our city, but its cultural and social aspects. Hotels built and owned by those who don't even live in Asheville have no right to avoid citizen review.

I urge all council members to REJECT these amendments and ensure that all proposed hotels continue to be presented to the full Council for review and for public input. Anyone voting YES on this measure should expect to face the wrath of all the voters who have consistently voted against the unchecked expansion of hotels in Asheville.

Sincerely,
Trevor Lohrbeer
Asheville citizen, property owner & business owner

2/9/2021 5:25:00 AM

Dear City Council Members,

I'm so disappointed and frustrated to still have to write this email.
More hotels are not going to solve Asheville's financial woes.

Additionally, what is the long term cost of a glut of businesses that are oversized users of our natural resources ? Our pristine water source is already being heavily tapped by local breweries- but at least that water is consumed.

Hotels waste incredible amounts of water- in daily laundry services, showers and toilets flushing for millions of visitors that stay here overnight.

That is fresh, pristine water being flushed away, wasted on long, luxurious showers and new sheets daily. The hot shower and laundry water requires energy from Duke or some other polluting source. How much coal ash resulted from all those showers?

Where is the win for Asheville in tapping our natural resources so abundantly? This also burdens the resources of our local waste water plant, the dump with guest garbage and our downtown with cars and pollution. These inflict financial and human costs.

Have you considered *suggesting *that any new hotels use: solar for water heating, low water use toilets and bathroom sinks and/or pushing for legislation for allowing the use of greywater- reusing mildly used water from hand sinks, laundry rinse cycles... to flush toilets ?
To add insult to injury I suspect hotels pay less for their water consumption and energy than the average AVL taxpayer.

At very least recommending that any new building be ultra - insulated so that energy use is reduced- for heating and cooling. The technology exists. At very least as Asheville is abused do something positive or energy neutral for the environment. I do understand that NC codes tie your hands in regards to many efforts you may desire to implement, but I have not heard any suggestions as to how we might be able to encourage the mitigation of the environmental impact of the hotels.

I am not against change or growth, but PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE do not continue to enable the interests of developers to be placed ahead of those of us that live here every day. Many of us are increasingly discouraged, disappointed and even disgusted by the lack of concrete steps to reclaim this town for those that are trying to continue to afford to live here.

The herculean efforts of the ACVB are certainly not working to make the town any better for us, only exacerbating the challenges we already face. The least of which is breaking new hotel occupancy records in a time of COVID 19. So much for caring about the community and public health.

Thank you for reading.

A. Hixson

2/9/2021 8:09:00 AM

Dear Asheville City Council,

My name is Justin and I am writing this in response to the proposal brought before council to change how hotels are to be further approved as well as the recent sweep of a homeless encampment on Lexington Ave. As an Asheville resident of over 5 years and a UNC Asheville graduate it disgusts me how this hotel rule change is going through given this city's disgusting track record catering to the tourism industry over its residents. Also the timing following the recent sweep of homeless encampment in the middle of winter in order to make tourists feel more "comfortable" is the kind of violent classism you would see out of a 19th Century debtor's prison, not a city that's supposed to be dedicated to basic decency or human rights. And of course this all ties into systemic white supremacy, police violence, and the long history of mistreatment of the black community via state sponsored crimes such as redlining and urban renewal. Given everything what I, and so many others, would like to see is this. That council reject these new hotel approval rules, an extension of the hotel moratorium, hotel rooms being opened and used to house our homeless population, a formal ban on all future homeless sweeps and the public officials who greenlit the Lexington Ave. sweep to lose their jobs, defunding the Asheville Police Department by 50% with a portion of that money to be used as *REAL* direct monetary reparations to Asheville's black community, and finally a moratorium on all evictions, rents, and mortgages at the municipal level. I've gone downtown only sparingly since the pandemic started but whenever I do, all I can think of is the injustice underlying it all and a formerly creative city that cares more about hotel revenue than stopping a viral pandemic. Maybe this letter will be ignored and honestly I think it will be. But maybe I can be surprised and proven wrong.

Respectfully,

Justin Reid

2/9/2021 10:40:00 AM	<p>Dear Council,</p> <p>I grew up in Asheville and have lived here nearly 30 years. I hope you will make choices that, instead of prioritizing the tourist industry and lining already wealthy pockets, uplift the local community and those in need.</p> <p>Please:</p> <p>VOTE NO ON THE NEW HOTEL RULES</p> <p>EXTEND HOTEL MORATORIUM</p> <p>STOP HOUSELESS CAMP SWEEPS</p> <p>SHUT DOWN ALL HOTELS FOR REST OF PANDEMIC - OPEN ROOMS TO HOUSELESS</p> <p>DEFUND APD AND USE FUNDS FOR HOUSING AND REAL REPARATIONS</p> <p>LOCAL RELIEF FOCUSING ON COMMUNITIES HARDEST HIT BY COVID</p> <p>HALT ALL EVICTIONS</p> <p>This is my hometown and your decisions directly affect my life and livelihood and that of my family, my friends, and our community.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>-Christin</p>
2/9/2021 11:19:00 AM	<p>Dear Council,</p> <p>Affordable housing is in desperate need for us in Asheville. Please consider those who are struggling to live here, especially those who have lived here for years or all their lives and now find it so challenging to stay here. We have enough hotels. Build places we can live!</p> <p>Roxanna Vess</p>

2/9/2021 12:03:00 PM

To the AVL City Council and Mayor.

What on earth are you doing?

I have lived in Asheville for 9 years. In the short time I've been here, Asheville has become overrun with hotels. When I first started flirting with Asheville over 15 years ago, I would visit on weekends and hang out with local friends downtown.

Remember when locals could still spend time downtown? I do. And this move to completely pandering to tourist money is pathetic.

Tourists have completely taken over downtown, which used to be populated with locals frequenting local business. While the tourism economy has brought in tax dollars, it has been devastating for the culture of Asheville.

And the culture is something we still have (though clinging to it by a thread) that other big cities have lost.

I have read through the proposals and the proposed amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance will only make matters worse, and should be REJECTED.

We are currently dealing with the effects of years of hotels being approved without Council review. Removing City Council's approval will prevent citizen participation in how they want their city to evolve. It is neither the responsibility, nor the right, of City of Asheville staff to approve hotels which will continue to drastically alter not only the physical landscape of our city, but its cultural and social aspects.

Hotels that are built and owned by those who don't even live in Asheville have no right to avoid citizen review. Why are we allowing people who don't live here to ruin this beautiful, quirky, unique city?

I urge all council members to REJECT these amendments and ensure that all proposed hotels continue to be presented to the full Council for review and for public input. Anyone voting YES on this measure should expect to face the wrath of all the voters who have consistently voted against the unchecked expansion of hotels in Asheville.

I vote and I push hard to get folks to the polls. I especially supported Kim Roney and talked to everyone who would listen about reasons to vote for her. I felt like she has lived here and sees and understands the culture, the very ingredient that makes Asheville ASHEVILLE.

Vote No and please help save our city.

Regards,
Ani Wingo

2/9/2021 1:26:00 PM	<p>-New hotels MUST be sustainably built, be energy efficient, "green", follow LEED practices and tip their hats to nature by helping maintain our urban canopy and places places for wildlife or pollinators if possible.-New hotels MUST have excellent systems for waste management, such as an efficient compost/recycling system.-New hotels MUST pay living wage.</p>
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2/9/2021 1:28:00 PM

Dear Council People,

There is much to say. I am incredibly disheartened by recent current events and the decisions (or avoidance of) made by and supported by you.

Maybe your conscience and the public uproar can predict what follows.

Destroying a homeless camp in the middle of winter during a pandemic on a brutally cold and windy night with no alternative for the folks you displaced. People, just like you and me, with their own stories of hardship and despair, who instead of having some semblance of a place to call home were forced to relocate without their meager belongings. There is NO justification for that.

If you don't have compassion for folks that are less fortunate, you have no place in public office. Don't be fooled by the social construct- if folks are struggling, we are all struggling.

Trying to enact new rules around approving the construction of new hotels, taking the decisions out of public view, (which to be honest, there is little about your decision making that seems dependent on the public's viewpoint as far as I can see from attending the virtual meetings). Do you truly believe that Asheville needs more hotels?

The people are speaking. Do you hear us?

We don't need hotels. We need to preserve our neighborhoods, create more affordable housing, provide access to health care, launch innovative small business initiatives. We need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, reframe our approach to development to one that can counteract the environmental crisis we are living through. Tourism dollars aren't supporting those initiatives. They never will.

Are you committed to the "historic move" that made national news? Do you remember that we passed a Reparations Resolution in July? Why isn't that on every meeting agenda? If you believe in Reparations, tell us how you are addressing it. Ask us for help. We want to support you in leveling up.

We need to take down the Vance monument. Let there be a void in the middle of the city, one that reflects the void that many folks feel because they are not represented. Commit to an equitable city. Isn't that where you want to live?

We need to lessen the impact of violence based Policing and instead put into place the alternative mental health and social support that can actually work to resolve our city's problems. Did you watch the Reimagining Public Safety Webinar hosted by our very own Racial Justice Coalition with Professor Alex Vitale? It was incredible and answered so many questions! The possibilities are exciting and you have a seat at the table. Use your role as an elected Public Official to make real change.

Imagine it. Living in a city that has a mental health team that shows up in crisis, a city where folks feel safe no matter the color of their skin or their ethnic background. A city that is united in the belief that every person has a gift to share and we encourage them to share it. Sincerely, I ask you to feel into that possibility.

This is all connected and I'm not sure how you can't see it. Business as usual will not get us out of our current trouble, the troubles that business as usual got us in. The way through is innovation, creating a new paradigm. We need radical change to fight homelessness, lack of jobs, poverty. We need creativity and relationship building, trust and compassion. Not another hotel, not avoiding those that seem different than us. Not more police violence.

Council people, you have an incredible opportunity to make ripples in the status quo, to take

2/9/2021 1:48:00 PM

Hotel expansion in Asheville is an important item to promote as tourism is one of the most important source of funds. People are going more and more to AbNB solutions.

Sent from my iPhone

2/9/2021 1:51:00 PM

Dear City Council Members,

I am a community member of Asheville and I have concerns about the new Hotel Development Policy, particularly regarding the overlay map, land seized during Urban Renewal, and the Community Benefit Table. I believe it is possible with the new policy that our city could actually continue to disadvantage and oppress community members despite the efforts I see to enact some important social justice elements into the process.

The first thing I would like to ask you all to consider is to *please continue to hear Hotel Proposals in City Council allowing public comment and input, indefinitely*. Having the voices of those who are most impacted by hotel development involved in the decision-making is an important element of minimizing the negative impact of hotel construction and existence in our communities.

The second thing I would like to ask you is to *involve the Office of Equity and Inclusion in this and ALL efforts being made by the City to advance racial equity*. I didn't see any mention of their involvement (or any substantial inclusion of the voices of people who are Black and Brown in our communities) in the decision-making for this policy. They should be deeply involved in crafting and navigating these decisions. [I understand the Office of Equity and Inclusion is working with limited resources at this time, so I'd also like to advocate that the City put more time/energy into strengthening that department and ensuring it has what it needs to do this type of work to ensure we make good decisions for our community members who are routinely disadvantaged by the City.]

The third thing I would like to ask you is to *ensure that lands seized during Urban Renewal are not used for hotel development* and be transparent about how you are doing that with the public. I have come to understand that this may be an element of this new hotel development policy, but I don't yet feel based on the information readily available to me that the City is doing enough to ensure that this land is returned to the people from whom it was taken, to make good on our commitments to them.

The fourth thing I would like to ask you is to *re-work the entire hotel development policy and process (with the OEI's help)*. I know that this has been in process for a long time, but part of the reason it's not quite there in terms of advancing racial equity is because it's missing important input/perspectives. Particularly, a revision of the Community Benefit Table is necessary to ensure that the options provided are more guaranteed to benefit racial equity in our communities, otherwise they just feel like lip service to the City's goals regarding racial equity and reparations. There are so many adjustments that could be made to this Table to better ensure that the hotel development is actually *beneficial *to our communities. Here are just a few:

- *Make contributions to a reparations fund a separate and mandatory element of hotel development proposals*. If you are serious about having this type of development in our city actually benefit our efforts toward racial equity, then that element of the proposal should not be optional and easily ignored. It might also mean we have hoteliers who are more socially conscious and who view things through an equity lens, which could maybe be good for our communities as well!
- *Substantially increase the points a hotel proposal must earn* in

2/9/2021 1:52:00 PM	
2/9/2021 1:56:00 PM	<p>City Council should require LEED certification for all hotel construction or renovation. This policy would be in keeping with Asheville's commitment to fighting climate change.</p> <p>Virginia Pett 6 Eagles Nest Lane Asheville, NC 28806</p>

2/9/2021 2:00:00 PM

Good Afternoon,

My name is Kevan Frazier, I am a downtown resident and downtown business owner.

I greatly appreciate the hard work by Council, Staff and the community to develop a thoughtful approach to hotel development within the city limits. Extremes of all or nothing are never successful and have led to failed development movements such as Urban Renewal. The effort here seems to be to find a balance.

Upon reviewing the documentation there are a few items I would ask Council to consider in its deliberations.

I am a strong believer that full-time residents are what make downtowns great. I am concerned that the laser-focus on the development of individual hotels, as currently framed, is not supporting a broader look at downtown development in regards to residential and commercial expansion. For example, the development ordinance changes and hotel overlay district, as presented, could allow west downtown to become a neighborhood of nothing but large hotels approved by staff with little or no further input from Council. The same could happen to the River Arts District. This is not intended as a criticism of staff but as a call for continued checks and balances to be sure that downtown is truly mixed use. There is still enough undeveloped and underdeveloped land downtown and in River Arts that a few key decisions by our leadership will have dramatic implications to the character of downtown for decades to come.

In regards to the importance of residents to downtown and River Arts, I would also ask that for members of the Asheville Design Review Committee that preference also be given to residents of downtown and River Arts as well as to persons with disabilities, transit users, and seniors.

I would also ask for further review of the residential sections of the ordinance changes. For these to be ordinance changes related to hotel development, there is a significant amount of language change about residential development such as in sections Q and S. It is unclear if these changes could inadvertently limit much needed market and below-market residential development. Housing will never be affordable without more inventory. With residential development being so important, it seems like these ordinance issues should be addressed separately and not added to the hotel ordinances.