

Asheville City Council January 26, 2021 Email Comments

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| 1/25/2021 3:10:00 PM | <p>I've been watching the actions the city council has taken over the last few months with hopeful disbelief. Hopeful because you voted for reparations and racist monument removal. Disbelief because I never really believed it would get done. Now, you are proving me right. You did not defund the police department to an acceptable level. You have taken no action to remove the monument. You are not giving the COVID-19 relief you could. Reparations? I'll believe it when I see it... Do the right thing and start taking ACTION. So far you are only doing performative statements— which is nothing.</p> <p>Alessia Faverio</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p> |
| 1/25/2021 4:27:00 PM | <p>The majority has spoken. Vance Monument has had its time. Take it down and repurpose tht area for something more befitting of the nature and intent of the city. The SISTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY literally put that up. We all know why. To erect a persistent reminder of white dominance in the United States. Especially after what happened during the raid on the Capitol with white supremacists waving CONFEDERATE flags inside the Capitol calling for insurrection it makes even less sense to allow Confederate aligned monuments and power symbols to define our downtown. Take it down.</p> |
| 1/25/2021 4:29:00 PM | <p>Your racism is showing. Just take it down. Take down Vance monument and make good on your promises for reparations. Just do it.</p> |
| 1/25/2021 5:23:00 PM | <p>Hi, my name is Rachel and I have lived in Asheville for 17 years. I am ashamed by the inaction of the council surrounding racism, reparations and the removal of the vance monument. This is a cut and dry issue. Vance was an awful human being. He is a symbol of the violent racism that has existed in Asheville for hundreds of years. It is 2021. Can we please stop cutting corners with this? Now is the time. Take down Vance monument PERMANENTLY. NOW. It's that simple..just take it down and install more benches for the community. I really don't understand why this is so hard for you all... are you being pressured by the white supremacists in this city? Are you going to side with them to keep them happy? Or are you going to do the right thing and vote to remove this racist monument?</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Rachel</p> |

1/25/2021 5:28:00 PM

City Council Members,

I am again writing to implore you to remove Vance Monument. I am frustrated, along with many members of our community, at the stall from our city's leaders on this decision. This decision had already been made over the summer and a task force appointed... For what reason? For thousands of dollars to be spent on shrouding it? For the shroud to be removed so that tourists can enjoy a confederate landmark that has become synonymous with our city?

I see more and more that the "community" we live in is more for the tourists than the people who work and live here. Would Asheville not be Asheville without this landmark and hurt the influx of tourists so much that we are unwilling to remove it?

I am beginning to see that the monument is a symbol of White Supremacy that many of our citizens are not willing to part with. Renaming a monument that is a confederate symbol does not change the inherent damage done by it still existing. However, if we want to begin with reparations for the Black members of our community who deserve so much more, the least we can do is remove Vance Monument. *(I really hope that us paying reparations to our Black community wasn't just a catchy news headline during the George Floyd protests... But was it?)*

My dream is that we can set a standard for other cities in the south that are struggling with the same decision. We do not need racist symbols in our community. We need to embrace change and begin to be honest about the history of Asheville that includes all people, especially Black and Brown Ashevilleans who have contributed so much to the success of our city. I read recently that "Unity without justice is Toxic Positivity" and I hope that that resounds with you as much as it did with me.

Please do the "just" thing with the Vance Monument, instead of discussing ways to keep it up and "unify" our community. Removing it will unite us.

Thank you for your time,

Miranda Escalante
(West Asheville)

1/25/2021 5:34:00 PM

It is long past time to remove this disgraceful tribute to slavery. You covered it and said you would work on removal. Then you uncovered it and let it sit. I don't care how much it costs to remove it. Just do it! It is an insult to all Black Citizens of our city.

I have lived Asheville since 1985. I am ashamed to say that I didn't know the full story of Zebulon Vance until recently. Thanks to the Black Lives Matter protestors I, and almost everyone in Asheville, are aware of Vance's slave owning history. Let's stop honoring this evil history and show some respect to the people who have been cruelly wronged for centuries.

Amie Paul

Sent from my iPad

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| 1/25/2021 5:41:00 PM | <p>Removing the monument to a slaveholder and defender of Jim Crow laws isn't sufficient, but it is necessary. Please vote to remove Vance Monument. Then go further and SERIOUSLY invest in the Black community. That will be a start.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Graham Paul 22 Hampstead Rd. Asheville NC 28804</p> <p>828-225-9003 (home) 828-337-3915 (cell)</p> |
| 1/25/2021 6:16:00 PM | <p>Good afternoon,</p> <p>As a resident of Asheville, nurse, and running coach, I am embarrassed by the Vance Monument. It does not represent our values as a city.</p> <p>Monuments are built to represent the current values of a place, not the past. Just because we formerly venerated a racist slave-owner does not mean that we still should. Please, for the sake of our community, take it down.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>Tony Aston</p> |
| 1/25/2021 6:20:00 PM | <p>Dear Councilmembers,</p> <p>Vance Monument: You agreed to take it down. Let the people know you are listening and acting in the best interest for social and racial justice. We will keep pushing you until you follow through on your promise.</p> <p>Also we did not forget when you signed the Climate Emergency Resolution. Back up your words with actions, or we will take action.</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>Sawyer</p> |

1/25/2021 6:43:00 PM

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing on to encourage the City Council to make good on their pledge to remove Vance Memorial. It has come to my attention that progress in this effort has either been delayed or rescinded, and I am disappointed with either. Excited to see how you'll move forward in restoring Asheville as a progressive beacon of racial justice!

Best regards,
Mary Catherine Scott
30 Robinhood Road
28804

Sent from my iPhone

1/25/2021 6:45:00 PM

Asheville City Council and City Manager Campbell,

This has got to stop. We are 10 months into a deadly global pandemic that has spread unmitigated, like wildfire, throughout this country. A pandemic that hits the most disenfranchised and marginalized in our community the hardest. You are hiding behind the walls of quarantine while mutual aid alone is out in the streets trying to clean up the mess of COVID-19, supporting those most affected by your negligence, providing resources to those left with nothing in the wake of local and federal government inaction.

We have shown up in every government process since May because you tell us you "care about the community voice", we have been tear gassed and shot at in the streets by your police department. We have watched you drag your feet with the Vance Monument removal - wasting thousands of our dollars that have wrapped it in nothing but false promises. We have watched you slash the reparations promise and continue to further inflict violence on black and brown members of this community. This has got to stop.* Enough is enough.*

Your precious tourism is killing your people. Every day that goes by where you allow this city to stay open to tourists puts us at deadly risk - a choice where you are weighing profit against the safety and lives of the people who live in this city. *And you keep choosing that our lives are worth less than that profit.* This cannot continue.

This is a formal request for your immediate compliance to the demands of Black AVL - remove Vance, pay the reparations, defund APD, and shut tourism down. Reallocate your "rainy day" funds to community support and COVID relief and stop relying on mutual aid to take care of your citizens - *this is your job, this is your responsibility.* This is what you are elected to do. If you cannot fulfill your job requirements, then please resign so someone more suited can take your place. It is not that hard.

- Kat Sinn

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| 1/25/2021 6:51:00 PM | <p>My name is Davis Jett and I have lived in Asheville, NC since August 2013.</p> <p>The Vance Monument must be taken down ASAP. It is unconscionable to me that we are still displaying a monument to a white supremacist, regardless of Zebulon's work for the State of North Carolina, in the year 2021.</p> <p>The City wanted to make headlines about Black reparations, only to walk those back almost instantly. Please keep your word and take down this racist phallus. Our City will be revered for centuries to come if we remove this obelisk.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Davis Jett</p> |
| 1/25/2021 7:27:00 PM | <p>Hello,</p> <p>I'd like to voice my concern that our actions are not in alignment with our words as a city. I would like to add my voice to the pool of concern surrounding the fact that Vance Monument is still standing. Please let it be known that a large portion of the Asheville population would feel safer, move valued and more welcome if this was not the case. Please have integrity with your promise to remove the monument and take action ASAP.</p> <p>Thanks, Erin</p> |
| 1/25/2021 7:53:00 PM | <p>Esteemed City Council members,</p> <p>Our city capitalizes on the notion that Asheville is a special place in the South, a pocket of folks who believe in fairness and equality. We say as a city that we support open dialogue and promote kindness to our fellow citizens. Yet we are historically one of the most segregated and redlined cities in the South. In the center of Downtown at the top of the hill lies an enormous monument to Zebulon Vance: celebrated white supremacist, Confederate officer and owner of enslaved people.</p> <p>I am a person of color who moved here at the age of 6 and can personally attest to Asheville's disguised racism. This town must begin looking forward and behaving accordingly. There is no such thing as Unity Tower or Freedom Plaza while this monument exists. It is a confederate flag. Pathetic, as is the behavior of those who fight to keep it in our city. The public has spoken. The task force has voted. Allow it to remain and you will be remembered for all the wrong reasons.</p> <p>Regards,</p> <p>Daniel Jeffries</p> <p>-- Daniel Jeffries dejeffries@gmail.com</p> |

1/25/2021 8:43:00 PM

Dear City Council,

I am very sorry to say that in regards to the commitments to remove the Vance Monument & provide Reparations, the City Council has met my expectations...That is to say that no real action has been taken further supported by the *paltry* 3% APD budget reduction in September that was more an insult than any real progress.

At this point it seems you are hoping that by dragging the process out as long as possible, apathy will set in and white supremacy will out. I can assure you that will not succeed. We will not forget and the Vance Monument will not only be a symbol of the oppression of our BIPOC communities, but a constant reminder that the Asheville City Council reneges on its promises and does not have the well being of its citizens in mind.

***Take down the Vance Monument. ***

Do better or resign. We're not going away.

Sincerely,
Simone Whale

1/25/2021 9:24:00 PM

City Council Members,

I am contacting you because even after the task force voted to tear down the Vance Monument, there seems to be doubt about this happening.

This monument to racism absolutely must be removed. It is tarnished with racism and no amount of renaming or repurposing will alter that fact. Tear down this symbol of the oppression of black people. No other course of action is acceptable.

Sincerely,

Hillary Bussio
West Asheville

1/25/2021 10:31:00 PM

Council, Mayor, and other civil servants ,

The council voted to take Vance down. The task-force voted to take it down.

Debra Campbell, Esther Manheimer, it is your job to listen to your citizens and act accordingly to their wants and needs. Both of which stipulate: TAKE DOWN VANCE MONUMENT!!!!

JUST FUCKING DO IT!!

- Colin Miller

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| 1/25/2021 11:53:00 PM | <p>City Council,</p> <p>I am an Asheville Citizen who is still very interested in seeing the Vance Monument removed as requested by Black Asheville Demands. The shrouding was simply not enough.</p> <p>--</p> <p>Andrea Dellinger, MA, CCC-SLP Phone: 704-929-6114</p> <p>CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is intended for the use of the individual(s) to whom it was addressed and may contain information that is privileged, confidential, and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail and are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies of the original message and contact the sender by reply e-mail.</p> |
| 1/26/2021 1:04:00 AM | <p>It is absurd that the Vance monument has yet to be removed. This is a shame. This is a disgrace to the Asheville community and the "progressive" from you all work so poorly to maintain. This is truly embarrassing at this point. I'm so ashamed and disappointed to have this city council. AND IT IS TRULY EMBARRASSING THAT YOU ALLOWED FOR A \$28000 DOLLAR SHROUD TO BLOW AWAY. All of that tax payer money that could've gone to preventing the deaths of Asheville's homeless population. People are dying. There are people dying in the cold right now. And you all allowed for money to be allocated to a shroud instead of helping the community. Take the monument down. Stop the games. Stop changing dates to obfuscate things. And please use a consistent email address. Your tactics are immature. Take the monument down.</p> |
| 1/26/2021 1:29:00 AM | <p>I'm writing to encourage the City Council to follow the recommendation of the Vance Memorial Task Force to remove the memorial. Please do not delay or rescind this recommendation. Please act swiftly & decisively so there's no mistaking we stand together as a unified community working toward greater racial justice.</p> <p>Jan Wencil Kenilworth Resident</p> |

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| 1/26/2021 2:14:00 AM | <p>Since May, the community has made it very clear that we would like Asheville City Council to DO THEIR JOB and be a voice for the people, listen to what their community needs. Unfortunately the Asheville City Council hasn't done that for a very long time.</p> <p>I am emailing to demand the removal of the racist Vance monument, reparations for the Black and Brown community of Asheville, and to Defund our racist police department. The people have been asking politely for a very long time. Now we are demanding. If you do not follow through on the task force's ask, you will be forced to resign. We are not asking, we are demanding.</p> |
| 1/26/2021 2:15:00 AM | <p>Since May, the community has made it very clear that we would like Asheville City Council to DO THEIR JOB and be a voice for the people, listen to what their community needs. Unfortunately the Asheville City Council hasn't done that for a very long time.</p> <p>I am emailing to demand the removal of the racist Vance monument, reparations for the Black and Brown community of Asheville, and to Defund our racist police department. The people have been asking politely for a very long time. Now we are demanding. If you do not follow through on the task force's ask, you will be forced to resign. We are not asking, we are demanding.</p> |
| 1/26/2021 2:37:00 AM | <p>The only input I have is to take the monument down.</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p> |

1/26/2021 4:50:00 AM

Dear Asheville City Council and City Manager Campbell,

Reparations, removal of vance, COVID relief, and defunding APD while investing into Black and Brown communities are not on the agenda, again.

Why is this? Make it make sense.

It has come to my attention that the city council might actually refuse to remove the racist vance monument. I'm writing to demand that this monument be removed like the people of Asheville were promised it would be. By you! That is what the majority of people in Asheville want and that is what your vance monument Task Force recommended as well.

The task force made crystal clear recommendations on how to execute this removal so, at this point, any council member, city manager, and mayor who plan to turn back on the promises made to take down vance should be fired or resign.

Since last May, we have shown up consistently using every government process you told us to use because you said you care about community voices. We have shown up in the streets, we have been tear-gassed and shot at by your police department, and have waited for reparations while you keep creating more task forces. The shroud used to cover the monument was blown off by the wind, so it is more than an insult to injury to even entertain the fact of leaving the racist phallic symbol up, let alone say outright "It may not come down".

Refusing to make good on your promises of reparations is simply no acceptable.

You said you were listening, but you are not.

Your refusal to defund APD and invest in Black and Brown communities or to pay reparations is insult and violence alone. Your refusal to halt the tourism industry is an injury costing thousands of citizens their health and lives.

We know that Deborah Campbell told business owners earlier this month that the vance monument "might not be removed" and Mayor Manheimer said "good question" when asked if she would make good on this promise of removal.

Black AVL Demands are not toys to be tossed around and compared alongside the wants of a few elite in Asheville.

We don't have time for your cowardice. While you make another task force and take vacations, we are dying. Black and Brown people are dying. Remove vance now and follow through. Be a council of integrity.

The more this issue is delayed and gaslit in front of us the more and more trust we lose in you.

Please do the right thing, don't say it. Just demonstrate it to us.

Sincerely,

Mari Echevarria

Concerned citizen

Student support specialist/social worker

Social Justice advocate

1/26/2021 12:24:00 PM

My name is Renee Squires a long term resident of Asheville.

I'm not sure how to raise this issue of concern so I am submitting this email to be read and responded by the city council.

Of recent the homeless issue has grown in our city and should be addressed by the council as it affects 1) safety of the homeless, safety of our citizens and our local economy.

My 20 year old daughter worked in a restaurant downtown. One of her host responsibilities was to stop the homeless from entering the restaurant and bothering the patrons. A job she was not really trained to perform. She also had to park a distance from the restaurant and walk at night to her car. Many times she was harassed by homeless men. Needless to say she no longer works at that restaurant and the owner will continue to struggle to hire new employees and continue to lose business because the patron are being harassed by the homeless.

I myself have had many homeless persons ask for my leftovers when leaving downtown restaurant. They beg for money and make our citizens feel unsafe. They are getting more aggressive. Just last week a man stabbed in the leg trying to help a homeless person. On top of that my neighborhood had several cars broken into and all they stole were pocket knives and money.

The homeless need our help. I was approached by a homeless woman in the parking lot of Target on Tunnel Road who said she had just gotten out of an abusive relationship and all she needed was a tent. This is the middle of winter and she needs more than a tent.

I can not imagine the crime in these tent cities. We should be helping the homeless get off the street and out of the tent cities. They should not be allowed to panhandle at traffic light or sleep on the streets or in the woods especially in this cold weather.

I'm not a expert and I'm don't have the answers but the City Council is responsible to address the safety of our citizens and that includes the homeless. We need to aggressive address the issue before we are labeled as a town where people no longer want to safely enjoy.

I'd like to hear a plan to help get the homeless off the streets and help they desperately need.

Sent from my iPhone

1/26/2021 1:23:00 PM

Dear Asheville City Council and City Manager Campbell,
Writing you this morning is not what I want to be doing with my precious time to sleep. I work three jobs here in Asheville in order to afford my rent. I've been living here for 5 years now and have never been able to have just one job. However, I am willing to lose an hour of sleep to make the very important demand that you tear down Vance monument like the task force has been promised.

I am really at a loss for words at City Manager Campbell's statement that the Vance Monument "might not be removed" after everything we've done to tell you that this is an important symbolic move for Asheville to show support for our Black and Brown communities and admonish white supremacy. By not removing this Confederate symbol you are telling our city and everyone who comes to visit that we turn a blind eye to white supremacy and that we refuse to take simple actions that reject white supremacy moving forward in history. Many other cities are choosing to take actions similar to this, why is it so difficult for Asheville City Council to make this choice? Furthermore, I am furious that you used my hard earned tax dollars to cover the monument in order to appease the task force. It sickens me to know that my money has been used to extend this conversation so long that it has lost its momentum. Does it really take this long to decide whether Asheville City Council supports or rejects white supremacy? Every minute we continue to have this conversation costs us money. I work so hard to just make ends meet and end up paying thousands in taxes every year. For God's sake, please use my taxes in a way that helps all of us who are out here grinding for Asheville feel a little empowerment.

I demand you tear Vance Monument down immediately and further I demand that Asheville City Council make a more concerted effort to reject white supremacy and boost our BIPOC communities in every decision going into the future (including the way the police force is funded). The bottom line is this: we will not stop fighting for this and other social justice agendas. We are organized now and have an increasingly louder voice in the community. We will use that voice to help vote out those city council members who show that they are not willing to help us admonish white supremacy in Asheville. We will only fight harder and harder for this. This is the voice of the people, listen and take action or we will find someone else who will. Tear down Vance Monument now.

Karli Schwartz Salem Ave, 28804 210-316-3397

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

1/26/2021 1:45:00 PM

Take down the Vance Monument. Listen to the voices of the future, not those in love with their misguided history.

Please please please let the people finally feel heard, take it down.

Teacher, community member, concerned citizen,

Emerick Van Osdal