

Asheville City Council February 23, 2021 Email Comments

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2/19/2021 6:14:00 PM

Text

I am writing with concerns about the school board appointment process. I understand the desire to narrow the field of applicants, but accepting essay responses from all 16 applicants seems like it would have been the right thing to do to narrow the field for interviews. Since that is not what the committee decided, at the very least, you should replace Steven Blount's spot with another applicant, as the committee unanimously voted to accept essay's from 8 applicants, and with his withdrawal, you now have seven.

I am hopeful you will chose to appoint two new members to the school board, and keep James Carter in place. There are many problems in our district, financial mismanagement, lack of transparency, very little stakeholder engagement, racial inequity, constant leadership turnover, over-inflated Central Office, neglected buildings, and more. Please make the decision to shake up the status quo and get some change makers on the Board of Education. Currently Mr. Carter is the one board member who consistently asks questions at meetings, seeks clarity, responds to stakeholders, and seems to truly be engaged in the process, I hope you will choose to keep him on board.

Stacy Claude
West Asheville 28806
Parent of two elementary students

2/21/2021 2:29:00 PM

Council members,

My name is Elizabeth Schell and I am a resident of the southside and a former downtown business owner (due to the pandemic my business is now online only until it is safe for in person shopping).

I am writing to you to please vote for a smaller map and more points. We need fewer hotels. I wholeheartedly agree with Councilperson Roney who wrote that "We can't say 'reparations' from one side of our mouths and approve ongoing harm from the other side -- gentrification, more low wages, and power to an industry fundamentally based on extraction of natural resources, labor, and our occupancy taxes."

For 10 years my business on Wall Street witnessed the increase of tourism and its impact on Asheville. I saw small businesses close and chains move in. I saw small businesses bought up by out of town investors. I saw workers struggling more and more as tourism increased. I saw residents of Asheville feel less and less welcome in their own downtown. I saw those without homes criminalized. I saw anyone who was not beneficial to the tourism machine, pushed to the margins -- including black and brown community members who were increasingly policed and felt even less safe and welcome moving around as downtown crept ever southward.

Tourism can be a healthy component of an economy, but when it (or any one industry) is the sole driver of the economy, people get hurt. Like many issues, the pandemic revealed much of what is broken in our systems. That hotel occupancy was at its highest ever last October is pretty frightening and a poignant reminder of how much power the hotel industry has over our town. And how in such small regard we seem to hold our people and communities -- their health, safety, and well-being. Please VOTE for a much smaller map and double the original points across the board. We can have tourism, but it needs to stop being at the expense of our communities and their economic health and well-being.

Thank you for listening,

Elizabeth Schell,
Asheville, NC

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2/22/2021 3:07:00 PM	<p>and vote for a smaller map and more points regarding hotel growth. Tourism cannot be Asheville's only driving force. For those of us that live here, downtown is almost becoming something to avoid rather than enjoy with the number of tourists that flock our streets. It's hard to find parking, they often don't respect our spaces and flaunt the pandemic safety precautions. We live here and pay taxes in order to be able to use and enjoy the whole of Asheville, not just our neighborhoods.</p> <p>Thank you, Susan S</p>
2/22/2021 10:11:00 PM	<p>City Administrators; Regarding the quarter cent tax proposal for the Transit System...I am strongly opposed to it !! I do however want to see the Transit system expanded and enhanced in Asheville...I just think we can and should use funds secured by taxes and fees already in place. Look within the entire revenue stream, there might be opportunities to carve out this expense from the existing revenue. If we cannot do that, then defer this project until the occupancy tax distribution has passed and we have seen the increase in revenue...in dollars !! We could also consider reducing an existing department or program budget.</p> <p>We need to be better stewards of the funds generated from all taxes and fees that are assessed by the City.</p> <p>Thank you, Reuben DeJernette</p>