

Asheville City Council March 23, 2021 Email Comments

TimeStamp	Text
3/20/2021 3:19:00 PM	<p>To the Mayor and Council Members: I hope the council will vote to take the Vance Monument down. Simply renaming it will always make it a bone of contention in Asheville. We need a new monument there, something that represents and inspires the modern city of Asheville. The only thing that can replace an old story is a new one!</p> <p>Thanks you for having the courage to move ahead on this.</p> <p>Margot Ammidown</p>
3/20/2021 8:04:00 PM	<p>Dear Mayor and City Council Members,</p> <p>The Vance Monument is an ongoing source of harm to Black community members and needs to be removed as soon as possible. I urge you to follow the recommendations of the Vance Monument Task Force and so many people in our community who have spoken for its removal. Vote to remove the monument.</p> <p>Sincerely, Judy Morris (Native and lifelong resident of Asheville) 1403 Abbey Circle Asheville, NC 28805</p>
3/21/2021 11:36:00 PM	<p>As you know, racism was declared a public health and safety crisis in our region last year. The Vance Monument is an ongoing source of harm to Black community members, and it must be removed as soon as possible. I urge you to take this necessary step, following the recommendations of the task force and so many people in our local Black communities.</p> <p>-- *KMN* *She / her* *828-772-0762*</p>
3/21/2021 11:45:00 PM	<p>Hello members of the Asheville City Council--</p> <p>I am strongly in favor of removing the entire Vance Memorial and starting completely over with a new and artistic memorial structure, something that expresses Asheville's forward looking, progressive, inclusive, and healing spirit. I would, for example, very much prefer a memorial that celebrates, for example, the Cherokee people, who have been here for thousands of years and who continue to define this place.</p> <p>--Kelley Griffith 10 Eagles Nest Lane, Asheville NC 28806 336-509-4469 sunfinewood@gmail.com</p>

3/21/2021 11:58:00 PM

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to address my concern about the lack of transparency on the council's part, regarding a few issues affecting the Asheville community.

About the Vance Monument: As you know, racism was declared a public health and safety crisis in our region last year. The Vance Monument is an ongoing source of harm to Black community members, and it must be removed as soon as possible. I urge you to take this necessary step, following the recommendations of the task force and so many people in our local Black communities.

About spending the \$1.6 million profit from urban renewal land: I stand with Vice Mayor Smith, and urge City Council to explore the important question she raised in her recent WLOS interview: "What was lost [during urban renewal]? A sense of ownership, a sense of belonging, a sense of place. And I'm not sure that that will be restored through the renovation of Deaverview." I also wonder, with Vice Mayor Smith, if the \$1.6 million would be better invested in mortgage down payment assistance or other permanent housing options rather than renovating Deaverview. I encourage Council to join with Vice Mayor Smith to explore all the available options for spending these Urban Renewal profits in ways that are truly reparative to this city's Black communities.

I would also like you all to keep your promise to this city by prioritizing the racial injustice that has been done to people of color in our community, in the past and as it continues to this day.

We have all had enough of the sweeping under the rug and the hiding behind of the past. Today is a new day, and we need to make Asheville take pride in doing the right thing, instead of putting greed, tourism and money first.

And please, I hope it goes without saying, we have ENOUGH hotels....lets try and put the citizens of Asheville first, for once.

Denise Carbonell

<https://www.instagram.com/carboncommentary/>

<https://www.instagram.com/metalandthread/>

<p>3/22/2021 12:57:00 PM</p>	<p>City Council, My name is Meghan Coltrane, I have lived in Buncombe county since 2008, attended college and graduate school here and now own a small business in health care.</p> <p>As you know, racism was declared a public health and safety crisis in our region last year. The Vance Monument is an ongoing source of harm to Black community members, and it must be removed as soon as possible. I urge you to take this necessary step, following the recommendations of the task force and so many people in our local Black communities.</p> <p>I stand with Vice Mayor Smith, and urge City Council to explore the important question she raised in her recent WLOS interview: “What was lost [during urban renewal]? A sense of ownership, a sense of belonging, a sense of place. And I’m not sure that that will be restored through the renovation of Deaverview.” I also wonder, with Vice Mayor Smith, if the \$1.6 million would be better invested in mortgage down payment assistance or other permanent housing options rather than renovating Deaverview. I encourage Council to join with Vice Mayor Smith to explore all the available options for spending these Urban Renewal profits in ways that are truly reparative to this city’s Black communities.</p> <p>Thank you, Meghan Coltrane</p>
<p>3/22/2021 7:07:00 PM</p>	
<p>3/22/2021 9:03:00 PM</p>	<p>Yes! High time! Show the community that you meant what you said and remove this symbol of a shameful past in Asheville's history...onward toward a brighter future!</p> <p>thank you, Debby Genz. 350 sunset Dr, Asheville, NC 28804</p>
<p>3/22/2021 9:13:00 PM</p>	<p>I share Vice Mayor's Smith's concerns about spending this money on upgrades to the Deaverview housing project, as I don't feel that will fundamentally change the inequities and basic apartheid that exists in our community. But I also understand the time constraints that require the money be spent immediately. I do hope that at your upcoming retreat, you begin some bold reimagining about how we can begin to make reparations to the Black community for all the many past injustices that have left them in such a position of inequality and struggle, with access to housing and home ownership being a prime example of the need.</p> <p>Thanks, Debby Genz 350 sunset Dr, Asheville, NC 28804</p>

3/22/2021 9:28:00 PM	<p>Unfinished Business D-2:</p> <p>I urge you to ask yourselves who in the community is this monument serving and lifting up? Who in this community is this monument harming? And how significant is the harm versus the potential good? How do the people we choose to remember and immortalize reflect our community's values?</p> <p>The Vance Monument is an ongoing source of harm to Black community members, and it must be removed as soon as possible. I urge you to take this necessary step, following the recommendations of the task force and so many people in our local Black communities.</p>
3/22/2021 9:32:00 PM	<p>Public Hearing B:</p> <p>I stand with Vice Mayor Smith, and urge City Council to explore the important question she raised in her recent WLOS interview: "What was lost [during urban renewal]? A sense of ownership, a sense of belonging, a sense of place. And I'm not sure that that will be restored through the renovation of Deaverview." I also wonder, with Vice Mayor Smith, if the \$1.6 million would be better invested in mortgage down payment assistance or other permanent housing options rather than renovating Deaverview. I encourage Council to join with Vice Mayor Smith to explore all the available options for spending these Urban Renewal profits in ways that are truly reparative to this city's Black communities.</p>
3/22/2021 9:52:00 PM	<p>I am Eruch Adams, an Asheville City resident since about 2002.</p> <p>I support Councilwoman Sandra Kilgore's idea of repurposing the Vance Monument rather than destroying it.</p> <p>To be honest, I never knew who Vance was nor that he was a civil war person. I'm glad to not praise or honor those who fought to preserve slavery in our town center. But I think of an obelisk as an ancient symbol and that nothing inherent to its shape or design seems racist or problematic to me.</p> <p>Also, rededicating physical spaces is something that happens throughout history. I also think the money it would take to tear down the obelisk and to rebuild something else could be put to better use, perhaps for the African American community directly.</p> <p>Thanks you for listening,</p> <p>Eruch Adams</p>

3/22/2021 11:27:00 PM	<p>Public comments for City Council March 23:</p> <p>Re: Vance Monument: The Vance Monument is an ongoing source of harm to Black community members, and it must be removed as soon as possible. I urge you to take this necessary step, following the recommendations of the task force and so many people in our local Black communities.</p> <p>Re: Deaverview: I stand with Vice Mayor Smith, and urge City Council to explore the important question she raised in her recent WLOS interview: "What was lost [during urban renewal]? A sense of ownership, a sense of belonging, a sense of place. And I'm not sure that that will be restored through the renovation of Deaverview." I also wonder, with Vice Mayor Smith, if the \$1.6 million would be better invested in mortgage down payment assistance or other permanent housing options rather than renovating Deaverview. I encourage Council to join with Vice Mayor Smith to explore all the available options for spending these Urban Renewal profits in ways that are truly reparative to this city's Black communities.</p> --
3/23/2021 12:48:00 AM	<p>Long past time that this monument to a man who represented a system of oppression is removed.</p> <p>Sent from my iPhone</p>

3/23/2021 1:10:00 AM

This excellent Obelisk which of itself in no manner represents racism, but on the contrary is an ancient and honorable symbol, and in the present tense of Asheville, is known as the rallying point of free speech in this city, should be redeemed and rededicated! It should be redeemed by re-facing it with language that leaves no doubt of the sorrow and horror done to some people who were forced into an irredeemable slavery, despite their birthright of liberty. This obelisk can be rededicated to the purpose of finding the one and only true race of mankind, which is the Human Race.

What we fail discussing in trying to measure the sorrow and horror of our African-American history is the nearly simultaneous sorrow and horror of our Native American history. Removal of this monument as an honor to our African-American citizens fails to honor another Nation. Failure to recognize Native Americans who lived upon and heartily loved this very same land on which we reside is an unworthy omission. Native Americans were sent into retreat from what is now Buncombe County, and retracted more and more as European-Americans came into this area. Eventually the Trail of Tears became a smear of history. But, think of this, some few thousand evaded and persisted in WNC! Shouldn't we offer solace, apology, the heartfelt welcome of their survival, and a place added for them on this new Obelisk to the Human Race? Such is our history.

I see those four sides to the rededicated Asheville Obelisk! Westward we look to the Cherokees and all their antecedents who kept this gracious land well. The Eastward side looks to the sunrise of mankind which now forevermore only sees the Human Race. North and South is dedicated to every good man, woman and child- white and black- who loved, did good works, and acted in highest humanity while building this city and country that we hope shines for many generations.

Erase Vance. Not to erase history, but to replace his moment on earth with greater moments of the many profound stories of achievement that transpired during the daily work of humankind during that age.

I think perhaps Asheville should seek out a poet, a white man who will tell the story of black slavery, telling it on the Obelisk. Perhaps Asheville can find a black man, a poet who can tell the story of white enslavers and later oppressors of wondrous black people. Perhaps Asheville can engage the national Poet Laureate of the USA, Joy Harjo of the Muskogee Nation (Creek Indians, one of the removed Nations), asking her encapsulate the story of the Cherokee, and their ancestors, while imagining the future of the Human Race.

This choice of the City Council tonight should engage Asheville's bold vision for making reparations to our African-American Citizens. Tie these two things together! Be historic! Renounce racism in word and deed. Make the Obelisk the keystone to reparations. Bring citizenry to the Obelisk time and time again in announcing and rallying us together as we engage the post-pandemic recovery for a new age. Celebrate removing racism. Celebrate the Human Race, while uniting arm in arm for life, liberty, and the truest pursuit of happiness.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

3/23/2021 1:40:00 AM	<p>Hello City Council members--</p> <p>I am writing you to explore all the options for using the \$1.6 million gained by selling the property at 172 and 174 S. Charlotte Street to White Labs. You seem committed to using that money for Dearfield, but there may be better ways to honor the City's stated commitment to make reparations to African Americans who were displaced by urban renewal. It would be fully appropriate to include leaders in the Asheville Black community in making that decision.</p> <p>Kelley Griffith 10 Eagles Nest Lane, Asheville 28806 336-509-4469 sunfinewood@gmail.com</p>
3/23/2021 1:54:00 AM	<p>Hi my name is Doug Frick I live in the city limits in West Asheville, I'm a freshman in high school and I'm working on my Ciizenship in the Community merit badge for scouts. I'm also a young black man and I've been interested in the Vance Monument decision. I feel that the Vance Monument should be removed because it would always be a reminder of a time when the black community was treated in such a dehumanizing way in my city.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
3/23/2021 2:18:00 AM	<p>I object to the removal of the Vance Monument.</p> <p>There have been several creative ideas on how to repurposed it that will cost a lot less abd be more educational.</p> <p>I grew up in Asheville. To me the monument was just a place to meet on town. I had no idea it was a monument to a slave owner. I didn't even know folks around here had slaves,</p> <p>Now I know. If the monument is removed, future generations will never have that "now I know" moment.</p> <p>"Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it".</p> <p>At any rate, the fate of the monument should be placed on a ballot and voted on by every single citizen of Buncombe County....not by a few easily-swayed, short-sighted committees.</p> <p>I feel that my sweet little mountain town has been hijacked.</p> <p>My native friends, both Black and White, feel the same.</p>

3/23/2021 3:00:00 AM	<p>Hello again, I see there's yet another public input wow.</p> <p>Take the money you would have given to police and use it to pay for the removal of vance monument. They've been quitting bc there is no need for them.</p> <p>do not hire more cops. do not hire more cops. do not give our money to more cops. USE OUR MONEY TO TAKE DOWN VANCE. with the left over, FUND reparations and relief to the disenfranchised community in town.</p> <p>Jesus christ, please do something worthwhile for once and listen to the community and then quit yer job.</p> <p>- William Drew</p>
3/23/2021 4:02:00 AM	<p>To those this concerns, and in whose hands the fate now rests;</p> <p>As a white ally, I encourage you to vote to immediately remove the giant reminder of slaveholding Asheville that stands prominently in our midst.</p> <p>I will not presume to add further comment on what might be put "in its place." But I will ask that you vote to remove the obelisk as soon as possible.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Hilary Chiz</p>
3/23/2021 5:51:00 AM	<p>The new budget should *not* be put towards hiring more police for the Asheville Police Department. Their jobs are no longer needed, and their salaries should be put towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The removal of the Vance Monument•Reparations•Relief for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or homelessness <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Affordable housing <p>Thank you for your time.</p>