From: Jonathan Wainscott <jonwainscott@gmail.com>
Sent: 12/12/2018 10:35:49 AM
To: keithyoung@avlcouncil.com
Cc:
Subject: Thank you...

Hey Mr. Young, Keith,

I think that was the first time someone on Council has ever said "Thank you Mr. Wainscott", though that makes sense as most of the time I am scolding the Council and that never yields much appreciation from the scolded. I'm trying to take a different approach, just like I'd like to see Council do things differently.

I wanted to reach out and say, "Hey, what I'm about to say at the meeting is a pass to you. Please catch it. I'm trying to help", but giving Council a heads-up just hasn't been part of my game.

I have a feeling Council knows that district elections are coming to Asheville, but ya'll are painted into a corner with the disingenuous referendum that was held last year. There was almost no public discourse about the issue, except for the questions asked during candidates' forums in the past. The front-runners and subsequent winners have offered all manner of excuses as to why we should keep the status quo electoral structure in place. The City is too small. Nope. The City is rather homogeneous with little difference from one area to the next (Cecil Bothwell and...Nope). There hasn't been a strong expression from the voters to change the system (typical of the positions of the disenfranchised and disengaged to be unheard). No one has come before Council to talk about District Elections (Julie Mayfield and nope due to at least me bringing this to the public via Informal Discussions and Comments). Racial gerrymandering is simply not the case as the data clearly shows and I'd love to sit down with you to review what I have been compiling and analyzing for months. I'm I guy who was made to do his homework thoroughly by my parents, both of whom were educators. My father was a political science professor at Clemson University and he specialized in Southern politics and taught courses on political statistical analysis, so I feel pretty confident with my amateur work on this issue.The referendum has been neutered by showing that the new districts strengthen the African-American vote in 2 districts, so we can't really say, "Hey, our voters said they don't want to make the change to benefit black voters" because that looks bad and the voters had no way of knowing what the effect on African-American voters would be since no data was presented to the public before the referendum.

Yes, there is a chance that a law suit would be won by the City on the slimmest of technicalities, but that will only invigorate the NCGA to come back and try to force this on Asheville, and next time they can make the case that racism is so entrenched in Asheville that the legislature needs to take action. After all, Asheville has the largest achievement gap between minorities and white kids in school performance. The Staff is so racist that it requires an Equity and Inclusion Manager to make sure everything is in line, the Chamber of Commerce and the BCTDA is almost exclusively white and no one is talking about that except me. I would have liked to see Asheville leading the way on District Elections rather than the State forcing it on us, but like I said a few weeks ago, the people of Little Rock, Arkansas and Topeka, Kansas also thought their schools were a matter of local concern in the 1950's, but that wasn't a legit reason to keep segregation alive.

I'm getting the sense that Council is looking for a way to walk back their stance on this. I know that may be hard, but I think I can help. First, new data for 2019 voter registration won't be available until March, so you guys can punt the issue down the road based on that. "We're waiting for the most current data to be released so we can use the best available information to help guide our decision." Plus, "We have a new City Manager who brings new perspectives and wisdom to the table, and this is truly a time of change in Asheville". For you and Ms. Smith, it is my belief that Joel Burgess approached you with this bogus claim of racial gerrymandering, and back in the Summer of 2018, tensions surrounding issues of race in Asheville were very high. In that moment of high emotional charge, you and Ms. Smith reacted to Joel's "report" by running with it before taking a hard look at the data. No one likes to feel as though he or she has been played, but I think Joel got his attention-grabbing headline at your expense and that's not fair. Unfortunately, at that time, the new law was just that...a law passed unanimously by the NC Senate and declaring that law an act of racism was essentially calling the entire NC Senate racists. That's heavier than making a claim that a proposed bill is the working of a few racists legislators. As we need to gain some level of cooperation between Asheville and "Raleigh" calling the entire Senate racists isn't going to help. Again, I think this misstatement can be lain at the feet of journalists trying to take advantage of the highly emotional environment at the time. "Upon further review of the data, the call on the field has been overturned. First Down!".

As you said last night, the current make up of Council is an anomaly. Perhaps the Council that directly proceeded you was too. That's the one that had 4 people from the now District 3 (North) occupying a seat on Council. Marc, Esther, and Cecil all live in the same precinct, with Gwen just down the road. You said that you have clawed your (the black community) way back from "political extinction", however, the structure that allowed for the 2014 and 2015 Council still exists and that is something that does need to become extinct.

If the offer still stands to meet sometime, I'd really appreciate being able to share what I have found in the voter data from 2015 and 2017 and hopefully this part of the never-ending cat-and-mouse game between Asheville and the State can be laid to rest.

Thanks again for listening, and also for speaking.

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