From: Jonathan Wainscott <jonwainscott@gmail.com>
Sent: 6/9/2019 12:58:33 PM
To: Esther Manheimer <esthermanheimer@avlcouncil.com>
Cc:
Subject: Hi, sorry this is longish
Attachments: District One.docx

Hi Esther,
I want to say thanks for making yourself more visible to the public and broaching the subject of the realities around the district elections conundrum.Â I have to say Iâ€™m disappointed with Keith, Sheneika, and Brianâ€™s opinion piece in the Citizen-Times. While using the false narrative of racial gerrymandering (which the public also has been duped into believing) they went on to call the legislature thieves (water law suit) and otherwise stomp their feet and cross their arms screaming back at Mama Raleigh in a Mother-May-I state. Now Iâ€™m all for giving the middle finger to the legislature and authority in general, but I can tell you that doesnâ€™t work out so well.

So how do you turn around and face the vast number or voters that declined to shift our elections to districts? You canâ€™t punt much longer, but for now, since the only hope for a change in the shape of the new districts (that will exist anyway) is the â€œracial gerrymanderingâ€ grievance. Considering how you described the relative strength of the whole case, Iâ€™d say the racial gerrymandering angle is even weaker by its own right. Iâ€™ve attached the information I have compiled from voter registration and turnout data for 2015 and 2017 for your convenience, though I suspect you are already fully aware of the numbers. In addition to what the approximate data show, since gerrymandering is all about exactly where lines are drawn and the NCGA drew up the most generous map they could without actually gerrymandering to favor the African-American vote. Any map that we make that is more favorable to the black vote will itself be gerrymandering, then that will get shot down by Raleigh. The small section of precinct 8.3 Â that was carved out with surgical precision (in the current map) it the most white part of that precint and it is going into District 4 which is already more white than the City at-large. The amount of power that is â€œtaken awayâ€ from the black voters will be minimal. By contrast, the two remaining black neighborhoods in District 5 will have a greater impact of concentrating the black vote in that district. Of course exactly how many black voters have fallen off the roster since 2017 and how many more white voters added to the roster has yet to be seen. That of course will only highlight the gentrification thatâ€™s occurring.

If you want a whole lot of people off your back for not taking action against this action of racist bullying, show the data that proves it isnâ€™t happening. You arenâ€™t turning your back, you are taking a step back after a year and half of some very disturbing racial flare-ups and a reexamination of our cityâ€™s history. As we work to preserve the memory of a once vibrant African-American community maybe itâ€™s time to consider if these dwindling neighborhoods would have been better served with a single-representative system that helped other minority commuites gain access to the gateway of governance in the Civil Rights Movement of the 60â€™s. Perhaps Asheville failed our black citizens back then, as we continued to allow red-lining of our residential neighborhoods. (This part is nice because it offers youÂ some cost-free contrition as those things happened in the past). As we create our new history, we need to make sure we dispense with those things that have failed us and not be part of mistakes that future generations will be have to look back and wish for different decisions.

So, while we wait for the data, this whole thing stays in limbo. That makes people uneasy. I thinks itâ€™s better to lay this thing to rest as far before the next elections as possible. Itâ€™s only going to be a distraction. More importantly, Iâ€™d like to see someone stand up for Terry VanDuyn. She did you guys a solid, especially Julie, by moving the election years. Terry VanDuyn is not a racist bully and there are many others that are being painted with the same broad brush.Â I think you should remember that she was the Minority Whip and Julie will be done no favors by standing with anti-Raleigh rhetoric. Sheâ€™s also got nothing to lose in terms of City Council consituents (overlap notwithstanding) since sheâ€™s not going to be on Council again.

I know the district thinggie meets the most resistance in North Asheville, but Gwen isnâ€™t up for re-election until 2022. If she wants the seat after 9 years and she was the one wanted by that neck of the woods in the first place, her spot is safe with little capital damage.

Vijay will also be around until 2022 so this will be blown over by then, districts are more popular in his district, and heâ€™s there because the people up north put him there as a preemptive measure to keep Raleigh away. So he couldnâ€™t so that but no one could and he was the guy they wanted so heâ€™s going to be safe.

Brian and Keith are both safe running in District 2. I can help by running against them. Itâ€™s helped everyone Iâ€™ve run against.Â They can flip a coin to see who runs for the at-large seat.

Sheneika is safe if she can continue to get the same support she has had and understand that losing the black votes from the rest of the city is better than taking on all the white votes that come with the at-large system.

I donâ€™t see the last three changing their minds. Oh, and Iâ€™m never going to run for office again either (I know that brings you tons of relief). Iâ€™m not prepping for a campaign like Kim. Really.

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Jonathan Wainscott

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