From: Jonathan Wainscott <jonwainscott@gmail.com>
Sent: 6/19/2019 5:57:05 PM
To: Julie Mayfield
Cc:
Subject: Re: white southern towns

Julie,
Thanks again for the continued dialog. I hope you will keep listening. I am trying to do a better job being less combative and approach Council with well-reasoned perspectives that I offer as help. I agree that just because something works in one place, doesn't mean it will work somewhere else. As an aside, I used to live right around the corner from the flatiron building in Chicago and I can easily explain why that building isn't a hotel, but I'll save that for the next hearing on the flatiron building here in Asheville.

One thing that does work regardless of location is math. Not trying to be (too) snarking, and my little jab in your direction the other night at the Council meeting regarding your math skills is coming from a person who inherited his father's lack of math skills. My dad was horrible at math. But he did (does) have a PhD in political science and his specialty was Southern Politics and he also taught courses on political statistics. My mother was (is) great at math and great at teaching math. She eventually got her PhD in math curriculum. I've been sharing my hobby of de-bunking this racial gerrymandering myth with them, asking questions, making sure what I'm saying is solid. White privilege indeed with two academics as parents. Anyway, I've been asking Dr. and Dr. Wainscott about things and the other day I asked my mother what grade level the calulation of percentages is generally taught. Sixth grade. That's as complicated as gerrymandering math gets.

District elections do not guarantee a better outcome for anyone, because a guaranteed election is no election at all. The whole point of drawing districts is to increase the chances of minority inclusion. That math doesn't change over time or space. That's why the NAACPLDF is still fighting to get at-large elections eliminated from cities large enough to have them. Now, you point to the recent success of people of color and broader representation of all physical locations in Asheville as some kind of proof that the at-large system "works" for minorities here. You can't point to one or two elections and declare that this will always work to the same outcome. Look at the makeup of Council upon the 2013 election. Not only did we have an all-white Council, four out of 7 members (Esther included) lived in what is now District 3 and 3 of them lived in the same precinct. That can not happen with a district system. That's what needs to be changed and that's exactly where the resistance is coming from, as voter data shows that North Asheville is most in favor of keeping the system the way it always has been. Just because Vijay won from South Asheville this one time doesn't mean it will happen again, but with district elections it does and Asheville will be represented by people from all over the town always and never again will Council look like that of 2013-15.

Please please look at Wilson, NC. Yes, it's a lot different than Asheville. It only has 50,000 people and the ratio of blacks to whites is almost dead even. Now, Just because a town has as many blacks as whites doesn't mean that white people can't control the election. Wilson has 7 single member districts, which seems like a lot for a small town. My guess (until I talk to some Council members from Wilson), is that they would likely have no Africa-Americans on Council, despite having slightly more people in the general population than whites, if they had at-large elections. As it is, they have 3 black people on the council. This is where the knee-jerk reaction in the Asheville conversation will say "See, they actually have more black people than white people in the population, but only 3 out of 7 members on Council. Districts are therefore not fair", but the reality is that an at-large election would likely prevent ANY black people on that Council. With only 12% pf Asheville's population being black, the odds for black representation here is 4 times worse than Wilson.

Anyway, thanks again for listening. Gotta feed the cubs.
Glad that you are not in disagreement with the NAACPLDF's views on at-large elections.

On Wed, Jun 19, 2019 at 3:08 PM Julie Mayfield <juliemayfield@avlcouncil.com> wrote:

> I don’t. I just don’t know that it makes a difference in Asheville. Our at large system has elected several candidates of color so the current system clearly isn’t discriminatory either in intent or effect. And it’s not clear how districts would change that - I can see districts in Asheville hurting or helping. Generally, districts are probably better but that doesn’t mean they are better everywhere.
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> Julie
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> Sent from my iPhone
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> On Jun 19, 2019, at 10:38 AM, Jonathan Wainscott <jonwainscott@gmail.com> wrote:
>
>> OK, stand behind the Will of the People. Sorry you disagree with the NAACPLDF’s stance on at-large elections and the Civil Rights

movement.

On Wed, Jun 19, 2019 at 10:24 AM Julie Mayfield <juliemayfield@avlcouncil.com> wrote:

Just a reminder, the district bill passed long before terry decided to vacate her seat and even longer before I decided to run. My position on districts bears no relation to my senate run - I haven't changed my position one iota. The NCGA shouldn't have done it, our voters don't want it, and we should at least try to respect the wishes of our constituents. I'm not convinced a lawsuit will get us what we want, and I don't think gerrymandering is a strong claim, but that doesn't mean we stand down.

Julie

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 19, 2019, at 10:03 AM, Jonathan Wainscott <jonwainscott@gmail.com> wrote:

I hope you can appreciate how it looks to people outside Asheville, like the good folk at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, when the see a predominately white town in the south (as in 80% white and 12% black) holding a referendum that would legitimize its racist practices because "The Will of the People" trumps the force of higher authority. Wasn't that the same argument made when the South told the federal government to bugger off and secede from the Union? Topeka, Kansas and Little Rock, Arkansas also claimed The Will of the People.

After all the hoopla that Sheneika and Keith created, and you stood by not refuting, you can't just turn away from the claim of "racial gerrymandering" like it never happened once the data shows otherwise. Ya'll bear some responsibility on pushing this falsehood by letting ride hoping it would carry the day.

Gwen, per our private conversation back when I was running for Mayor, you are acutely aware of voter data because you told me the reason Republicans can't make it onto council is because they don't vote. I can't wait to compare voter turnout by Republicans to black voters. Obviously racial gerrymandering is a myth when you see how much support our black candidates have received from white voters.

Julie, it is clear that you will be the next Senator. You don't strike anyone as a risk-taker and it's hard to imagine that you would give up a sure bet to be re-elected to Council for a far greater challenge to be on the super-racist NC Senate unless you knew that seat was yours to be had, and you have benefited greatly from the election year change that was provide by the uncompromising NCGA at the request of the Mayor, because you don't have to abandon your seat on Council in the middle of your term (***coughcoughKeithYoungcough***). since you won't be running for Council, you don't have to worry about how Council voter will respond (overlap with voting for Senator notwithstanding) and you have plenty of time to smooth over the backlash since that election is still a year and half away.

I have contacted the NAACPLDF to review what is going on in Asheville and they aren't gonna buy your falsehoods, they've seen this type of excuse making in plenty of white southern towns. It's obvious there is no real racial attack at the hands of the NCGA concerning this particular issue because if this really was an egregious racial attack on our town, Keith and Sheneika, or anyone on Council, should have called in the cavalry at the NAACPLDF, but no one ever did.

Remember, this is a Mother-May-I state and when mama aint happy aint nobody happy and y'all can pitch a fit, but tomorrow you still have to wake up in mama's house and if you don't do what mama say, mama gone make ya'll pick your own switch. Dig?

Please don't drag this city into an embarrassing law suit and continue this tit-for-tat nonsense. Please. though I have to say, I'd love to be a testifying witness in a lawsuit except for I've really had my fill of sitting on the inside of courtrooms. Chuckle as you may about Crazypants Wainscott, but a lawsuit is a different forum than Asheville, David Blade, and the cartoonists at the Xpress. Ask a lawyer, if you know any, how unpredictable and ugly court can be.

If you do have any evidence of racial gerrymandering, as the Buncombe County Board of elections has informed me that you (The City) has the data in hand but you are delaying signing off on it. If you have the data, and you know racial gerrymandering is not happening, and you don't do anything to dispel Keith and Sheineika's claim, you could be setting yourself up for a class-action claim of slander by the NCGA. Sound outlandish? Well, not considering how much Raleigh hates Asheville and how ya'll are begging for a fight. I'm sure the NCGA will be happy to oblige.

In the meantime, you can pitch your case to keep Asheville's antiquated at-large system to the NAACPLDF by contacting Leah Aden at laden@naacpldf.org. She's already looking into all this.

Have a good'n. See you on July 2.

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