

Sasha Mitchell, Chair
African American Heritage Commission
of Asheville & Buncombe County

November 7, 2016

Chairman David Gantt
Commissioner Holly Jones
Commissioner Ellen Frost
Buncombe County Commissioners
200 College Street, Suite 326
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Chairman Gantt, Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Frost,

As I mentioned in your meeting last week, I know I speak for many people when I thank those of you on the County Commission who were instrumental in bringing our Heritage commission into being.

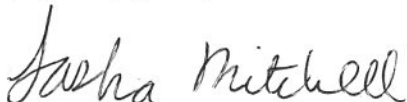
One of the goals of our commission is to place historic markers to recognize and interpret places important in African American history. We have had great interest and offers of support from many people in the community who would like to see a monument to our history downtown. We are also in various stages of working in partnership with several local community groups as they continue to recognize the history of their neighborhoods with trails, markers and booklets.

A site of particular importance is Pack Square Park, where just a few yards south of the Vance Monument, African Americans were sold in bondage on the steps of the courthouse that once stood there. The obelisk honoring former governor Zebulon B. Vance is the city's most prominent marker. The placement of any monument to local African American history that would be situated in the shadow of a monument to a noted white supremacist brings with it a need for great sensitivity. The fact that the area is already crowded with several monuments to the Confederacy, in addition to a monument recognizing the road's historic use as a livestock trail, presents further difficulties.

I'm writing to ask for assistance for our commission in order to facilitate the complex community engagement and visioning process of designing and placing a marker to our African American heritage downtown. After months of discussion, it's become clear that a project of this nature and magnitude requires a level of planning that may be beyond the abilities of our volunteer commission. As the African American Heritage Commission is a joint commission of Buncombe County and Asheville City, we would like to request financial support for a thorough planning and visioning process for this important historical monument. We would like to request \$10,000 allocation from Buncombe County for this planning effort. We are also making a request for an equal portion from the City of Asheville.

Please let me know if I can provide additional information. And thank you again for your efforts to better our entire community.

Very truly yours,



Sasha Mitchell