Joint Taskforce Final Recommendation

Taskforce Co-Chairs:

Oralene Simmons & Deborah Miles

Board of County Commissioners Meeting

December 7, 2020

City Council Meeting

December 8, 2020

Presentation Outline

Taskforce Objectives & Scope

Membership & Support

Timeline & Milestones

Community Engagement & Public Input

Final Recommendation & Additional Considerations

Taskforce Objectives & Scope

- ✔ Develop a recommendation regarding the removal, relocation or repurposing of Vance monument
- ✔ Develop and implement and inclusive community engagement plan focusing on those harmed and/ or most negatively impacted by the Vance Monument
- ✔ Develop a list of African Americans to honor the local history of Asheville-Buncombe County

Timeline & Milestones | Aug 20 – Nov 19, 2020

✔ **August 20th | September 3rd | September 10th |** Taskforce members undergo orientation, outline timeline, and develop a a needs-based strategy in order to complete the scope of work.

✔ **September 17th | September 24th | October 1st|** Taskforce members undergo a **period of historical analysis and community education**, hearing from community leaders, historians, and educators from the African-American community, and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian community.

Membership & Support

- Oralene Simmons, **Co-chair**
- Deborah Miles, **Co-chair**
- Katherine Calhoun Cutshall
- Dennis A. Fagnant, Jr.
- Savannah Gibson
- Lawrence Gilliam
- Elizabeth Harper
- Esi Hutchison
- David R. King
- Bernard Oliphant
- Andrea Olson - Alternate
- Ben Scales
- Shirley W. Whitesides

Appointed Members with Partial Term:

- Antanette Mosely
- Carmen Ramos-Kennedy

Additional Support:

- Cortina Jenelle Caldwell, Facilitator
- Lillian Govus, CAPE

Membership & Support

County Staff Support Team:

- DK Wesley, County Management
- Lynn Smith, County Management
- Lamar Joyner, Board Clerk
- Rasheeda McDaniels, Engagement
- Rebecca Brothers, Engagement
- Kassi Day, Communications
- Michael Frue, County Legal

City Staff Support Team:

- Richard White, City Management
- Kimberlee Archie, Equity & Inclusion
- Nia Davis, Equity & Inclusion
- Ashley Traynum-Carson, Communications
- Sarah Terwilliger, Deputy City Clerk
- Brad Branham, City Legal

Timeline & Milestones | Aug 20 – Nov 19, 2020

- ✔ **October 8th | October 15th |** Taskforce members undergo period of community engagement planning, developing a list of **30+ local community organizations and groups** for direct outreach.

- ✔ **October 22nd | October 29th |** Taskforce members host virtual town halls to further engage public input, **hearing from elders, students, parents, Vance family descendants, and African-American community members actively working toward resolve**

Community Engagement

Based on the suggestions and guidance from taskforce members, community facilitator, staff support and others involved - groups, associations + historians engaged in this process included, and was not limited to:

Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians
Asheville Black Historians
African-American Heritage Commission
Human Relations Council of Asheville
Historic Resources Commission
The Divine Nine
(sororities and fraternities)
Preservation Society of Asheville & Buncombe County
Racial Justice Coalition
Western NC Colleges & Universities (Comm Engagement Depts)
Explore Asheville/BCTDA + African American Heritage Trail
Parks & Recreation Managers
NC Cultural & Natural Resources
Asheville Living Treasures

Keeping it R.E.A.L. Student Club
Friends & Neighbors of Swannanoa Valley (FANS)

VANCE MONUMENT TASK

Community Engagement

VANCE MONUMENT TASKFORCE

Virtual Town Halls

We want to hear from you! Call In! Lift up your voice to remove, relocate, or repurpose the Vance Monument.

October 22 & 29 from 4:45 - 6 p.m.

Call (855) 925-2801 and enter code 9722 to join. If you can't make the meeting, leave a voicemail. You can also text "avlvancemonument" to 73224 to provide public input, or email VanceMonumentTaskForce@PublicInput.com.

Visit PublicInput.com/VanceMonumentTaskForce to watch the meetings and keep up with the progress.

Would you like to watch the meeting but don't have online access, a computer, or phone?

Call (828) 250-4102 for info on public spaces where computer access has been arranged.



Examples of community engagement that took place during the 12-week process.

VANCE MONUMENT TASKFORCE

COMMUNITY INPUT

The Vance Monument Task Force (VMTF) was created by joint resolution by the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. The VMTF is tasked with gathering citizen input, particularly from those most impacted by the monuments, and will make a recommendation to the governing bodies in November 2020 to remove or repurpose the Vance Monument within legal requirements.

Chime in!

We want to make sure our community is included in this process. Visit publicinput.com/VanceMonumentTaskForce to tune in to the meetings and keep up with the progress.

Send your feedback, comments, and suggestions to VanceMonumentTaskForce@publicinput.com

2020 PROJECTED TIMELINE

July/August
BEGINNING STAGES
Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Commissioners appoint six members each to the Task Force. Weekly meetings begin.

September 3
PROCESS REVIEW
Task Force begins review process.

October 1
COMMUNITY INPUT
Task Force begins seeking community engagement and public input.

October 22
DRAFTING
Task Force begins drafting recommendation for Vance Monument.

November 12
RECOMMENDATIONS
Task Force presents second draft of recommendations.

November 19
FINAL REPORT
Task Force presents final report to the public.

publicinput.com/VanceMonumentTaskForce

Community Engagement

The following quotes were notable from the October 22nd & 29th virtual town halls, and were selected as a small representation of the kind of input that was heard from various citizens.

"I am a senior at SILSA and the leader of Keeping it R.E.A.L. which is the first of its kind at Asheville High School and SILSA and I'm calling from West Asheville....my recommendation for the Vance Monument is for its removal, and that the money for its removal should come from grants and other financial resources rather than taxpayer-funded. This is wage to the monument being built by repressive forces and should be demolished without the need from taxes from the very people it is currently offending. Thank you for donating your time to this endeavor and removing an emblem of hate" – **Seth Bellamy**

"As a direct descendant of Vance...removing the monument does not erase my family's legacy, but it does represent a small step toward repairing the harm my family legacy imposed upon this community, which I call home and I deeply love. On behalf of my family, I thank you for your work." – **Noel Nickle**

"I would like to see the Vance Monument removed. I think that it is cultural appropriation at its finest...I don't see how you would repurpose what it was originally erected for just by placing a plaque upon it or a painting it some different colors. It's not going to change the nature of what it is and who it was erected for and what it [obelisk] is meant to do throughout the Egyptian belief system. I do not believe that it should be kept in the form of fashion that it is..." – **Robert Thomas**

Timeline & Milestones | Aug 20 – Nov 19, 2020

- ✔ **November 5th |** Taskforce members work in small groups to conduct due diligence.

- ✔ **November 12th | November 19th |** Taskforce members present total findings from small group work, historical analysis, public input and community engagement. **Final recommendation voted.**

Final Recommendation

Taskforce members received over 700+ comments,
conducted 2 virtual town halls, engaged with history over 4 key education sessions, and deliberated over a period of 12 weeks, including small group work and all contributing toward making a final recommendation.

Taskforce votes on a final recommendation to remove with a vote of 11-1 at the November 19th public meeting.



Final Recommendation

- ✔ **Prior to 2016 - 1800 monuments, plaques, and buildings to individuals and activities related to the Confederate States of America. Half of those were monuments**
- ✔ **124 have been removed since 2016**
- ✔ **59 removed since May 2020**
- ✔ **19 of those in North Carolina**

Linn Park Monument, Birmingham



Augusta Confederate Monument



National & Local Organizations Support

National Organizations who called for Removal

- ✔ NAACP
- ✔ Black Veterans
- ✔ National Trust for Historic Preservation
- ✔ National Urban League

Local organizations who supported the work of the taskforce

- ✔ Asheville Arts Council
- ✔ The Preservation Society

Recommended Next Step & Considerations

- ✔ To complete a starter list of people and events from the African American community that could be included in the future of the square. The completed list can be expected by no later than Jan 26, 2021.
- ✔ To seek alternative funding sources that are directed to: Placemaking, Outdoor Art & Changing spaces once help by Confederate monuments.
- ✔ To pursue educational opportunities for the community on issues related to Confederate monuments such as the work of the Mellon Fund for Monuments
- ✔ To develop a vision of the square to be connected to other social enterprises in the community that return wealth creation in all communities.

Thank you for this opportunity!