

Appalachian Mountain Community Health Centers

828.202.5200 | 141 Asheland Ave., Suite 300, Asheville, NC 28801



February 1, 2021

Asheville City Council
70 Court Plaza
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of Appalachian Mountain Community Health Centers (AMCHC), I write to express our support and endorsement of the proposal for deeply affordable housing on Asheland Avenue envisioned by the Haywood Street Community Development Corporation (HSCD).

AMCHC's mission is to deliver timely, comprehensive, and quality health services with dignity and respect to WNC residents, regardless of a person's ability to pay. We are dedicated to working collaboratively and have existing relationships with a number of organizations in Buncombe County. Our peer support specialists provide much needed engagement services on the streets of Asheville and are able to connect the person with the care they need.

We are aware of the urgent need for all forms of affordable housing in general, and deeply affordable housing in particular, in our community. We are familiar with the plans of HSCD to fill some of that unmet need by constructing 42 deeply affordable apartments on a lot on Asheland Avenue currently owned by the City of Asheville.

We support this project because more deeply affordable housing options are needed in Asheville and this location would be very convenient for lower income people who need to live near the city center to access essential services. We also note the following more specific reasons:

- The Bowen Report underscored the significant deficit in housing available to those at the lowest area median income levels, including that 90% of subsidized housing operates with a waiting list, and that there is no availability of affordable housing units in Asheville.
- Housing like that envisioned on the Asheland Avenue property is essential to address the unmet needs of those living in poverty in our community. In particular, we endorse the vision of HSCD to provide housing "designed with dignity, built for belonging, and created to frustrate poverty."
- The plan allows for community meeting space and engagement with community partners to address needs such as access to food, legal services, health care, mental health services, and other critical support.

We support and endorse this project and appreciate Council's consideration of the many ways it will address the critical need for housing in our community. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Reuben J. Pettiford
President & CEO