

Dear Vice Mayor Smith & Councilwomen Turner and Mosley,

We are a group of neighbors in WECAN who would like to take a moment to thank you for your brave leadership this past Tuesday @ the HSCD meeting.

In choosing to continue to fund the Haywood Street Community Development Project of 45 deeply affordable housing units being proposed in WECAN, you are supporting a great need within our community and helping to continue WECAN's reputation as a place that welcomes and celebrates diversity. The West End /Clingman Avenue Neighborhood is an amalgam. West End was traditionally the white side of the neighborhood, while Clingman Avenue has traditionally been home to a large community of African American residents. WECAN, like many other sections of our fair city, has seen its share of transitioning, away from its working class roots to the detriment of our socioeconomic and racial diversity. There are those of us in WECAN who welcome the opportunity to have more working class / diverse neighbors and see this project as helping to achieve that goal.

We also welcome housing to the site @ 343-357 Haywood Street. In 2018, when this property was up for rezoning from Neighborhood Business to CB1, there were many opinions in WECAN as to what would be best. The one commonality amongst all of the opinions was a preference for housing rather than a commercial use. Those of us in favor of this project harken back to those discussions in thinking that the HSCD project may well be the highest and best use of a set of parcels that has so far been shown little interest from the commercial or single family residential builders.

WECAN has been also dealing with challenging issues around homelessness. Tents crop up on this property & the DOT lot next door on a regular basis. This is not new. This has been an ongoing issue for many years in WECAN. This did not start when Haywood Street Congregation began its ministry and would not disappear if they stopped. Unfortunately, the two are being conflated by some in our neighborhood. Every city of any size is dealing with these issues for a host of structural reasons that ultimately, this housing initiative could help to remedy. Providing the stepping stone out of public housing and making room in public housing for the next set of folks who need housing is something that those of us signed below feel is important enough to spend some of our privilege to accomplish.

As WECAN neighbors we greatly appreciate HSCD efforts to date to engage productively in conversation with our community members. We anticipate *and expect* ongoing consultation and collaboration with HSCD to evolve the project plan as needed and practical to promote WECAN community harmony *in concert with* endorsing this site as a suitable WECAN location to welcome new neighbors and support Asheville housing affordability needs.

So again THANK YOU for your courage and your leadership!

Our best to you,

Pattiy Torno
Slyvia Organ
Lesa & Rich Peterson
Jocelyn Olcott
Russell Lacy
Michael & Davina Weirich
Hildy Teegen
Carrie Pettler
Matt Bacoate
Pat Crisp
Sandra Burton
Byron Ballard
Joe Fioccola
Lynn Player
Zac Altheimer
Stefanie Riggs
Patrick Pearson
Susanne Willis
Rachel Larson