City Manager's Update

September 26, 2023



Cease the Harm Update

Brenda Mills, Director
Equity and Inclusion

September 26, 2023



Key Takeaways

- The Commission passed an immediate recommendation for an audit to be conducted to assure the cessation of harms to African-Americans in the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.

- City Council authorized city staff to develop a scope of work for an official audit and conduct a competitive process to select a vendor in response to the CRC immediate recommendation.

- The Audit process kicked off in August for both the City of Asheville and Buncombe County

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

CRC Recommendation to Cease Harms

- The Community Reparations Commission (CRC) passed an immediate recommendation on December 5, 2022 to request an official audit of both the City of Asheville and Buncombe County which would include compliance with federal and state laws, regulatory bodies, codes of conduct, court orders and consent decrees.
- The intent from the CRC is for the City and County to select an independent third-party firm to conduct the audit per the immediate recommendation.
- The audit is to assure the African-American community that the City of Asheville and Buncombe County have ceased harms that continue to injure and, in turn, intensify disparities.
- And that effective measures are taken that end ongoing and current harms due to intentional or unintentional policies, programs, practices and procedures.

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Scope of Work and RFP Process

- On January 24, 2023, City Council authorized the City Manager to develop a scope of work for an official audit in response to the Community Reparations Commission's Immediate Recommendation to cease harm to the African-American Community.
- City and County staff along with four (4) members of the Community Reparations Commission completed the scope of work and issued an RFP for qualified firms to conduct the audit.
- Staff from both local governments and representatives from the CRC participated in the review and selection process.
- Buncombe County contracted with the selected firm for the audit and through an interlocal agreement (approved July 25, 2023) the City of Asheville will share equally in the costs of the audit, up the total amount of $174,375 (the City's total share is $87,187.50).
- The selected firm is Carter Development Group.

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Audit Process

- An Initial planning meeting with Carter Development Group was held on August 2.
- The firm met with City and County staff and attended the August 21 CRC meeting.
- On September 6, City staff was introduced to the firm, provided an overview of the project and a review of the data matrix requests.
- The firm is looking at seven (7) areas to include the five (5) Impact Focus Areas (Criminal Justice, Economic Development, Education, Health & Wellness and Housing) and additional areas of focus includes Internal Workforce (Human Resources) and the Equity Department operations.
- Data matrix requests were completed and provided to the firm on September 25.
- There will be cohort meetings in the areas noted above.
- There will be an interim update to the CRC in December.
- The audit is scheduled to be completed February 2024.

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City Manager's Update

September 26, 2023



City of Asheville Employee Recognition

Master of Public Affairs Alumni of the Year Award



THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

City of Asheville Employee Recognition

Master of Public Affairs Alumni of the Year Award

- Brenda Mills has been an invaluable professional resource for the City of Asheville for 18 years, with 33 years of experience in local government.
- Brenda joined the City of Asheville in 2005 serving in multiple roles including: Minority Business Program Manager, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Project Manager, Administrative Services Manager, Economic Development Specialist, Neighborhood & Community Engagement Specialist, and most recently Director of Equity & Inclusion.
- **About the Award:** Beginning in 2020, the WCU Master of Public Affairs program established the Alumni of the Year Award to honor program graduates whose careers have made significant and lasting impacts in the field of public affairs. The award recognizes alumni whose outstanding leadership, commitment to public service, and legacy of professional accomplishments have strengthened the communities and organizations where they live and work. Award recipients are nominated and selected by a committee of current faculty members and presented with an engraved plaque. Their achievements serve as an inspiration to current students and other alumni following the path of public service. This year Brenda Mills is the award recipient.
- We so appreciate the work that you are doing and your tireless commitment over the course of your public career.

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Community Events

The Parks & Rec Department put together another fantastic Community event bringing parents and toddlers together to share a little sparkle!



- The 1st Annual Toddler Prom was held last Saturday at the Shiloh Community Center.
- I would like to thank Tameka Crudup and all the Parks staff involved in such a wonderful event.
- The Parks and Recreation Department has hosted many elegant affairs for participants ranging in age from school age to adults and they did not want to leave the Toddlers out!
- The event was a huge success and Parks looks forward to it continuing for years to come.










TODDLER PROM
2023



Festival of Neighborhoods - September 30





- **Organized by the Neighborhood Advisory Committee** (the last Festival was pre-2020)
- Supporting Council's Vision of **Neighborhood and Climate Resilience**
- Connecting **Emergency Preparedness Month** and **Neighbor Month**

- **Connecting Communities:** Engage with neighborhoods to learn about current projects, initiatives, and volunteering opportunities
- **Entertainment and Activities:** Inflatables, food trucks, music, interactive entertainment, giveaways, door prizes
- **Local Services:** 8+ City Departments, Buncombe County Tax Assessors and local nonprofits
- **Neighborhood Resilience Building:** How to prepare for emergency events

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