Manager's Report

August 24, 2021

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE



Manager's Report

- Tropical Storm Fred Response
  - Deputy Fire Chief Chris Budzinski
  - Greg Shuler, Public Works Director
- Reparations Process Update
  - Brenda Mills, Interim Equity Officer
- Legislative Update -
  - Brad Branham, City Attorney

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Tropical Storm Fred Response

Recognize the tremendous work of our interdepartmental/ intergovernmental team

City Departments:

- Fire Department
- Public Works
- Police Department
- Development Services
- Communications and Public Engagement
- Parks and Recreation
- Water Resources

Partners:

- Buncombe County
- Duke Energy
- MSD
- National Weather Service
- NC DOT

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Tropical Storm Fred Response

Coordination

Constant coordination with BCEM beginning Monday 8/16

- Meetings and discussions included BC CMO, NCEM, NWS, BCFDs, NC DOT, Haywood Co. EM throughout the event

Actions Overview

- Activated COA EOC to Level 3, eventually upgraded to Level 2 due to potential intensity increase
  - Level 2 activation included PW, APD, Water Resources, AFD, CAPE
- Utilized AVL Alert to request evacuation of residents from the most impacted areas of the Swannanoa River
  - APD notified unhoused communities near both Swannanoa and French Broad
- AFD responded to 144 incidents during the 24 hour period
  - Conducted over 40 water rescues. 22 victims were rescued from a MH community on Sand Hill Rd.
  - Requested and received additional Swiftwater Rescue team from BCEM/NCEM due to call volume
  - Deployed 9 members to Haywood County to assist and have been assisting since then which will continue over the foreseeable future.
- Swannanoa crested @ 14.7ft @ 0345 8/18- (Moderate flood stage - 14.5 ft, 19.2 ft crest in 2004)
- French Broad crested @ 12.7 ft @ 0238 8/18 - (Minor flood stage - 11.1 ft)
- Conducted damage assessments to assist in disaster declaration
- COA in conjunction with BC declared a state of emergency due to this event

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Tropical Storm Fred Response

- Beginning Tuesday August 17th Tropical Storm Fred began dumping rain on the Asheville metropolitan area.
  - Total of 18 streets were closed and barricaded by Public Works crews. The public was informed of these closures through social media, the Buncombe County EOC and other media sources.
  - 20 downed tree calls. Many entangled with utility lines
  - Slope failure adjacent to the current one on Vance Gap Road
  - Section of Appalachian Way in West Asheville washed out.

- As soon as the waters began to recede, crews began cleaning the streets of silt and debris and doing safety inspections prior to reopening the streets.

- Consequently, through their efforts, **by late Wednesday afternoon nearly all these streets were reopened**, with the exception of Riverside Drive at the railroad trestle in the River Arts District, which remained closed until early Saturday morning August 21st.

- The road was reopened in time for the half-marathon event that used Riverside Drive as part of the certified course for the race.

- Public Works continues to remove debris from bridges, clean drainage structures, pipes and sweep streets in final clean up.

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Resolution 20-128:
Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville

On July 14, 2020 the Asheville City Council passed a resolution supporting community reparations for Black Asheville.

Definitions of Reparations:

”*The action of repairing something”*

“The making of amends for wrong or injury done”

“The making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged”

The resolution calls for the city manager to, “establish a process within the next year to develop short, medium and long term recommendations to specifically address the creation of generational wealth and to boost economic mobility and opportunity in the black community.”

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Proposed Process Outline

Three Phase Process

- PHASE 1: Information Sharing and Truth Telling Speaker Series
  May 2021/June 2021 **(Completed)**

- PHASE 2: Formation of the Commission
  July 2021/August 2021 **(Underway)**

- PHASE 3: Finalize and present the report
  January 2022/April 2023

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Role of Project Manager

Project Management objectives include, but not limited to:

- Assist in the development of a process to appoint members to Reparations Commission.
- Support for the work of Reparations Commission to include:
  - Incorporation of information received during Phase 1
  - Continued community engagement, information sharing and discussion within impacted communities.
  - Attend and facilitate commission meetings.
  - Schedule development for short, medium and long term deliverables, including adjustments based on the progress of work and specific recommendations for prioritizing and accelerating critical path items.
  - Assist the commission with final report and recommendations to the City Council.
  - Support the formation of working groups of commission members.
- Provide process updates on a bi-monthly basis.

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Reparations Project Manager

RFP issued July 7 and Responses due August 6 - Nine (9) responses received. All respondents complied with the City's Asheville Business Inclusion Policy.

A city team reviewed RFP responses and chose **TEQuity** - an African American-owned management consulting firm specializing in advancing equity through the use of project management services, strategic planning, technology and analytics. They have worked extensively with:

- Federal, State and Local government agencies
- Minority and women owned businesses
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Reparations Project Manager

TEQuity's relevant project experience in Western NC:

- TEQuity worked with BBC Research Consultants on the City of Asheville's Disparity Study serving as the community engagement lead and interviewed minority and women-owned businesses in the region. Examined how these businesses were faring in the local marketplace and as part of the City's contracting and procurement as well as measuring participation and availability.

- Conducted an economic leakage study for the Western NC New Economy Coalition to identify industries for minority and small business creation and expansion.

- Led the Small Business Capacity Enhancement project in WNC for the NC Department of Transportation working to grow the capacity of minority and women owned businesses in 31 counties of Western North Carolina.

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Reparations Project Manager

TEQuity is additionally partnering with RTI International, an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. Provides a full range of economic analyses to support client goals. RTI International recent projects include:

- Blueprint to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Wake County (2021) - a community-based strategy planning process for its development.

- North Carolina Innovation Corridor (2020) - conducted research to imagine a regional economic development concept that leverages the innovation and placemaking assets within a 100-mile radius of an established, high-performing innovation hub-the Research Triangle Park and surrounding metro areas - how to generate higher wage job opportunities and more equitable economic growth in the coming decades.

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Next Steps

- Currently in the process of completing the contract and will bring to City Council on September 14 for approval.

- Formation of Commission by October/November

Legislative Update - City Attorney

- **State Budget Proposal**
  - Passed by the House of Representatives

<u>Policy Additions</u>

* Billboards
* Small Cell Wireless
* School Zoning
* Storm Water
* Short-Term Rentals
* Tree Protection

Legislative Update - City Attorney

- **Short-Term Rental Regulation**
  - Also exists in separate bills (HB 829, HB 911)
- **Tree Protection**
  - Asheville because of a Local Act (Session law 1985-556)
- **Legislative Process and Timeline**
  - Budget currently with the Senate
  - Governor's approval may not be required
- **Opposition Efforts**
  - My office working with other cities, NCLM, key stakeholders to oppose these policy additions in the budget.

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