Manager's Report

August 25, 2020

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE



Presentation Overview

- On June 9, staff presented a 30/60/90 Day Work Plan and over the past several meetings have updated Council and the community on our work.

- The 30/60/90 Day Work Plan was developed in response to numerous requests from the Black Asheville Demands coalition to address specific racial justice and economic inclusion issues.

- The Work Plan reflects when we would **start** working on these requests.

30 Days

1. Resolution to remove monuments and creation of task force.
   - ✓ Vance monument shrouded; Lee monument removed
   - ✓ Task Force orientation completed last week
2. Work with the community on the renaming of streets
   - ✓ Met with African American Heritage Commission
   - ✓ Continuing Community Engagement to develop next steps

60 Days

3. Continue partnering with Asheville City Schools (ACS) and Buncombe County Schools to address Opportunity Gaps

- ✓ Parks and Recreation partnering with ACS to create community learning centers or learning pods in city facilities
- ✓ ACS teachers will provide educational instructions
- ✓ Parks and Recreation will offer recreational activities
- ✓ Targeting black and brown students especially those in public housing communities
- ✓ Operate 7 days a week 8:00am to 8:00pm

60 Days

4. Initiate conversations with the district attorney's office regarding the probation decision for Mr. Hickman
   - ✓ City Attorney's office working with DA's office and Restorative Justice process related to probation process

5. Initiate conversations to Defund the Police budget by 50% Defund/Divest/Invest Strategy

90 Days: Work Underway

6. Provide protocol, practices and resource allocation data from the Equity and Inclusion Department on the our City Website

7. Better understand and work through solutions for remaining demands

8. Utilize best practices to recruit people of color

9. Develop Race and Gender Conscious Policy in response to the disparity study as part of City contracting and procurement.

- ✓ Draft Policy completed; Council review Sept. 8

60 Days

5. Initiate conversations to Defund the Police budget by 50%

   Defund/Divest/Invest Strategy
   Community Engagement

Public Engagement Process

- Step 1 (complete): Get feedback on an approach from key focus groups
- **Step 2 (in process): Host Community Meetings**
- Step 3: Report, Recommendations and Implementation

Focus Group Responses

What did we learn?

- Use paid facilitators, not city staff
- Need to have authentic conversations about types of change that's really possible; figure out what's broken and commit to making changes
- Convene smaller groups so people have optimum opportunities for genuine input
- Use lots of mediums for input, questionnaires, blogs, face to face meetings, etc.
- Make a special effort to hear from most impacted populations, Blacks, Indigenous, and Latinx

Facilitation Services

- Issued Request for Interests
- Posted on August 7, 2020
- 6 Proposals submitted on August 14, 2020
- Sent to 10 local groups and only 2 responded
- Interdepartmental Team selected two teams
- Costs for services not to exceed $10,000

Selected Facilitators:



Shemekka Ebony Coleman, MS, Founder of Shemekka Ebony, Founder of Black Girl Magic Market, Co-Founder I Am Brilliant and the CROWN Campaign, Raleigh, NC



Glenn Thomas
Project Facilitator, Amplify Community Consulting
Founder and Managing Partner of Leadership Matters Group



Christine Edwards
Founder and Principal
Amplify Community Consulting (Amplify Charlotte)

Public Engagement Process

- Facilitators will hold virtual and small group in-person meetings
- Facilitators will connect with small groups focusing on some of the most impacted
  - (e.g., Black, Indigenous, & People of Color, People who live in public housing, Victims of Crime, Parents, People without housing)
- Street team will go out into the community and meet people where they are
- Facilitators have included opportunities to compensate and/or provide professional development for a limited number of people representing most impacted groups
- City staff will provide surveys, questionnaires, blogs same questions as facilitated experience

Public Engagement Process

Week of Aug. 24

- Dates for upcoming engagements finalized
- Launch website page 8/27
- Promote engagement dates

Week of Aug. 31

- Promote engagement dates/survey information
- Virtual Community Engagement Meeting - Intro 9/4

Week of Sept. 7

- Virtual Community Engagement Meetings
- In-person small group meetings - focus on most impacted groups

Public Engagement Process

- Step 3: Report, Recommendations and Implementation

  - Develop Preliminary Recommendations for Divesting/Investing (Sept. 3- 22)
  - Implementation of first round of Divesting/Investing Strategies (Sept. 22 and on-going)
  - Begin next round of discussions (if necessary) Nov./Dec.

Key Takeaways

- Our City is operating in unprecedented times and being challenged with economic, social, racial and public health issues that we have never experienced **all** at the same time.
- People are experiencing and expressing valid feelings of sadness, anger, fear and uncertainty.
- As evidenced by numerous requests, the community often looks to and expects local government to calm their fears, to provide resources to address their issues and concerns.
- We often can't respond or move as fast as most would want us to due to complexity of issues and/or available resources.
- Reassure the community that we hear you and commit to working with you for as long as it takes to make our City better for all people.



THE CITY OF
ASHEVILLE
NORTH CAROLINA