Comment	Comment Date
Dear Members of the People and Environment Recovery Board, Please task the Urban Forestry Commission to develop a policy to utilize the existing fee in lieu money. This policy needs to be developed and incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan and the Urban Forestry Commission, with their depth of knowledge and expertise, is the best group to write this policy. A firm policy will also ensure that available funds are used for the intended purposes as stated in the UDO. Kind regards, Mary Spivey Tree Protection Task Force for the City of Asheville	1/5/2026 8:12 PM
Dear Members of the People and Environment Recovery Board, I am writing today about a situation of stagnancy that should be addressed. With development projects, should an applicant elect not to follow the City's tree canopy installation requirements per Article XIX, Section 7-19 of our municipal ordinance, the party may pay a fee in lieu of compliance. These funds have been sitting unused when they could be applied towards restoring and nurturing our valuable and living green assets in the city of Asheville. The Urban Forestry Commission is comprised of some of the most educated and experienced individuals in the field of arboriculture with additional knowledge on soil conditions and sustainable practices. The UFC should be the body assigned to develop a policy that could put these funds to use. This policy should then be incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan. I would not recommend that the City spends hundreds of thousands of dollars (or millions) to hire yet another consulting firm to perform a task. The board members currently serving on the UFC are more than capable of accomplishing this: in fact, they are experts. We all want to see maximum recovery of the environment following Helene. Entrusting the UFC with the creation of a policy for the use of the fee in lieu funds would be a sound step forward in the right direction. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,Gloria Shen	1/7/2026 3:25 PM
Dear Members of the People and Environment Recovery Board, Thank you for your time today. I am writing to ask that you task the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) with developing a policy to utilize the existing fee in lieu money for trees that are cut, despite there being regulations that they not be cut! This policy needs to be developed and incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan by the Urban Forestry Commission. This volunteer commission is made up of many experts in their field regarding urban tree canopies and arboriculture. The 'fee in lieu' are very meager, yet important funds that need to be used in the wisest way possible. These funds can help make our CIty a little better protected from storm runoff, flooding, heat island effects, beautification and much more. Thank you for your work on this board. I hope you will help the UFC to be able to participate in the recovery of our City. They are so vital. Sincerely, Diane Hillgrove	1/15/2026 5:25 PM
Dear Members of the Helene People and Environment Recovery Board, Please task the Urban Forestry Commission to develop a policy to utilize the existing fee-in-lieu money. This policy needs to be developed and incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan, and the Urban Forestry Commission, with their depth of knowledge and expertise, is the best group to write this policy. Thank you, Steven C. Rasmussen Member, Tree Protection Task Force	1/25/2026 1:50 PM
The Rhododendron Creek + Horney Heights Community Neighborhood Association urges the City of Asheville to repair and re-open both wings of the closed West Asheville Community Center below the Asheville Police Department's West Resource Center at 970 Haywood Road. The Center served West Asheville for decades as a place for residents to meet in person for classes, dances, group meetings, choir practice, elections, and much more. At this time of rapid private development when public space in our community has become an endangered species, the Center needs to be enabled to serve its critical function of bringing people together once again. We believe it was shortsighted of the City to hand this space over to the Asheville Police Dept., without public input, instead of renovating it. It was permanently closed to the public just before our city was devastated by Tropical Storm Helene, forcing residents and officials to scramble to find places that could serve as disaster-resource centers. Instead of having to congregate outdoors in the West Asheville Library parking lot to get cell service and internet, for example, residents could have sheltered in the community center instead, had its facilities been upgraded in a timely manner instead of neglected for years as they were. Now that the APD has chosen to expand its Resource Center elsewhere, this space needs to be returned to community use. Doing so will align with the City's long-range goals for "resiliency centers" in neighborhoods, as described to the People and Environment Recovery Board in its Dec. 2025 meeting. Our Neighborhood Association would have applied for "upfit" funding for this space had it not been rendered apparently ineligible by the handover to the APD. Reopening the West Asheville Community Center is all the more urgent now that even the high-demand community room in the West Asheville Library is no longer available in the evening, which is the only time most people are able to attend a community function. The building's large windows that are a safety concern for a police station are a welcoming feature for a community center. Local businesses as well as community groups could use this easily accessible space -- which includes a fully equipped kitchen -- for holding events. Going forward, City officials must ensure that our neighborhood association is involved in decisions about the future of 970 Haywood, which lies within the boundaries of RC+HHC NA. Steve Rasmussen, Chair Rhododendron Creek + Horney Heights Community NA (828) 242-5859	1/25/2026 4:04 PM
Steve, Thank you for detailing your community's experience with the Center and sharing the desire and need for public spaces in the neighborhood. Helene put so much in perspective for all of us, and staff, as well as our People and Environment Recovery Board, have been having conversations concerning what it looks like to have resilience hubs in West Asheville and across the city. Staff will continue to explore this concept, and I'm happy to keep you posted as this project progresses. Currently, the plans for 970 Haywood are for it to remain an APD Resource Center that continues to serve the West Asheville community. This facility was chosen as a prioritized project in our 2024 General Obligation Bond, specifically in the $20 million bucket for Public Safety Facility Renovations. Given this, we are obligated to spend the funds in a way that is consistent with what was initially described to the public before it was voted on and approved. That said, this project is in the very early phases, and the concerns detailed at your most recent community meeting, as well as in this statement, have been shared with the project team that will be working on this. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns on this matter. Best, Trey On Sun, Jan 25, 2026 at 4:03 PM Steve Rasmussen wrote: > The Rhododendron Creek + Horney Heights Community Neighborhood Association > urges the City of Asheville to repair and re-open both wings of the closed > West Asheville Community Center below the Asheville Police Department's > West Resource Center at 970 Haywood Road. > > The Center served West Asheville for decades as a place for residents to > meet in person for classes, dances, group meetings, choir practice, > elections, and much more. At this time of rapid private development when > public space in our community has become an endangered species, the Center > needs to be enabled to serve its critical function of bringing people > together once again. > > We believe it was shortsighted of the City to hand this space over to the > Asheville Police Dept., without public input, instead of renovating it. It > was permanently closed to the public just before our city was devastated by > Tropical Storm Helene, forcing residents and officials to scramble to find > places that could serve as disaster-resource centers. Instead of having to > congregate outdoors in the West Asheville Library parking lot to get cell > service and internet, for example, residents could have sheltered in the > community center instead, had its facilities been upgraded in a timely > manner instead of neglected for years as they were. > > Now that the APD has chosen to expand its Resource Center elsewhere, this > space needs to be returned to community use. Doing so will align with the > City's long-range goals for "resiliency centers" in neighborhoods, as > described to the People and Environment Recovery Board in its Dec. 2025 > meeting. Our Neighborhood Association would have applied for "upfit" > funding for this space had it not been rendered apparently ineligible by > the handover to the APD. > > Reopening the West Asheville Community Center is all the more urgent now > that even the high-demand community room in the West Asheville Library is > no longer available in the evening, which is the only time most people are > able to attend a community function. The building's large windows that are > a safety concern for a police station are a welcoming feature for a > community center. Local businesses as well as community groups could use > this easily accessible space -- which includes a fully equipped kitchen -- > for holding events. > > Going forward, City officials must ensure that our neighborhood > association is involved in decisions about the future of 970 Haywood, > which lies within the boundaries of RC+HHC NA. > > Steve Rasmussen, Chair > Rhododendron Creek + Horney Heights Community NA > (828) 242-5859	1/26/2026 2:37 PM

Thanks, Trey. I am planning to comment on this topic at the Feb. 2 P&E Recovery Board meeting in hopes of continuing the conversation about "West West Asheville's" need for a readily accessible community center/resilience hub. Certainly a public-safety argument could be made for renovating the old one, considering its central location and proximity to emergency services, so perhaps there could be justification for using bond funding for this. At all events, I think it would be unwise to close off that option before any better -- and real -- alternative is opened up. On Mon, Jan 26, 2026 at 2:30 PM Trey Irby wrote: > Steve, > > Thank you for detailing your community's experience with the Center and > sharing the desire and need for public spaces in the neighborhood. Helene > put so much in perspective for all of us, and staff, as well as our People > and Environment Recovery Board, have been having conversations concerning > what it looks like to have resilience hubs in West Asheville and across the > city. Staff will continue to explore this concept, and I'm happy to keep > you posted as this project progresses. > > Currently, the plans for 970 Haywood are for it to remain an APD Resource > Center that continues to serve the West Asheville community. This facility > was chosen as a prioritized project in our 2024 General Obligation Bond > , specifically in > the $20 million bucket for Public Safety Facility Renovations > . > Given this, we are obligated to spend the funds in a way that is consistent > with what was initially described to the public before it was voted on and > approved. That said, this project is in the very early phases, and the > concerns detailed at your most recent community meeting, as well as in this > statement, have been shared with the project team that will be working on > this. > > Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns on this matter. > > Best, > Trey > > On Sun, Jan 25, 2026 at 4:03 PM Steve Rasmussen < > stevencrasmussen@gmail.com> wrote: > >> The Rhododendron Creek + Horney Heights Community Neighborhood >> Association urges the City of Asheville to repair and re-open both wings of >> the closed West Asheville Community Center below the Asheville Police >> Department's West Resource Center at 970 Haywood Road. >> >> The Center served West Asheville for decades as a place for residents to >> meet in person for classes, dances, group meetings, choir practice, >> elections, and much more. At this time of rapid private development when >> public space in our community has become an endangered species, the Center >> needs to be enabled to serve its critical function of bringing people >> together once again. >> >> We believe it was shortsighted of the City to hand this space over to the >> Asheville Police Dept., without public input, instead of renovating it. It >> was permanently closed to the public just before our city was devastated by >> Tropical Storm Helene, forcing residents and officials to scramble to find >> places that could serve as disaster-resource centers. Instead of having to >> congregate outdoors in the West Asheville Library parking lot to get cell >> service and internet, for example, residents could have sheltered in the >> community center instead, had its facilities been upgraded in a timely >> manner instead of neglected for years as they were. >> >> Now that the APD has chosen to expand its Resource Center elsewhere, this >> space needs to be returned to community use. Doing so will align with the >> City's long-range goals for "resiliency centers" in neighborhoods, as >> described to the People and Environment Recovery Board in its Dec. 2025 >> meeting. Our Neighborhood Association would have applied for "upfit" >> funding for this space had it not been rendered apparently ineligible by >> the handover to the APD. >> >> Reopening the West Asheville Community Center is all the more urgent now >> that even the high-demand community room in the West Asheville Library is >> no longer available in the evening, which is the only time most people are >> able to attend a community function. The building's large windows that are >> a safety concern for a police station are a welcoming feature for a >> community center. Local businesses as well as community groups could use >> this easily accessible space -- which includes a fully equipped kitchen -- >> for holding events. >> >> Going forward, City officials must ensure that our neighborhood >> association is involved in decisions about the future of 970 Haywood, >> which lies within the boundaries of RC+HHC NA. >> >> Steve Rasmussen, Chair >> Rhododendron Creek + Horney Heights Community NA >> (828) 242-5859	1/26/2026 5:21 PM
From: Mary Spivey Date: Mon, Jan 5, 2026 at 1:07 PM Subject: Payment in Lieu fund for the City of Asheville To: Dear Members of the People and Environment Recovery Board, Please task the Urban Forestry Commission to develop a policy to utilize the existing fee in lieu money. This policy needs to be developed and incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan and the Urban Forestry Commission, with their depth of knowledge and expertise, is the best group to write this policy. A firm policy will also ensure that available funds are used for the intended purposes as stated in the UDO. Kind regards, Mary Spivey Tree Protection Task Force for the City of Asheville	1/28/2026 9:23 AM
From: Coven Oldenwilde HPS Date: Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 5:54 PM Subject: Policy development re: fee-in-lieu tree canopy recovery use To: Dear Members of the People and Environment Recovery Board, I am writing today about a situation of stagnancy that should be addressed. With development projects, should an applicant elect not to follow the City's tree canopy installation requirements per Article XIX, Section 7-19 of our municipal ordinance, the party may pay a fee in lieu of compliance. These funds have been sitting unused when they could be applied towards restoring and nurturing our valuable and living green assets in the city of Asheville. The Urban Forestry Commission is comprised of some of the most educated and experienced individuals in the field of arbori-culture with additional knowledge on soil conditions and sustainable practices. The UFC should be the body assigned to develop a policy that could put these funds to use. This policy should then be incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan. I would not recommend that the City spend hundreds of thousands of dollars (or millions) to hire yet another consulting firm to perform a task. The board members currently serving on the UFC are more than capable of accomplishing this: in fact, they are experts. We all want to see maximum recovery of the environment following Helene. Entrusting the UFC with the creation of a policy for the use of the fee in lieu funds would be a sound step forward in the right direction. Thank you for your time and consideration. Dixie Deerman, member Tree Protection Task Force; Rhododendron Creek + Horney Heights Neighborhood Association; 33-year W. Avl taxpaying resident & activist (Also published as Lady Passion, High Priestess, Coven Oldenwilde Asheville, NC	1/28/2026 9:24 AM

From: Patrick Gilbert Date: Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 11:46 AM Subject: Time for Using Fee-in-Lieu Funds for Helene Recovery To: Dear Ms. Bulan and Members of the People and Environment Recovery Board, I'm writing today about a situation that urgently needs addressing. According to Article, 7, Section 19, the Tree Canopy Preservation Ordinance unanimously approved by the City Council in 2020, developers who cannot or chooses not to abide by the ordinance's tree preservation or tree plantings requirements, must pay a fee-in-lieu to the City. Since passage of the ordinance, these fee-in-lieu funds have accumulated to nearly $400,000. These funds have been sitting unused when they could be applied towards restoring and nurturing our valuable and living green assets in the City of Asheville. Before Hurricane Heene, the City of Asheville Urban Forestry Commission had been working with City staff on developing a fee-in-lieu policy with clear criteria for spending that money, for such important projects as comprehensive tree planting in areas with minimal tree canopy coverage or the purchase of land for tree-lined pocket parks. The Urban Forestry Commission consists of volunteers with extensive backgrounds in urban forest management, arboriculture, and public health with additional knowledge on soil conditions and sustainable green infrastructure practices. The UFC, along with staff, was instrumental in developing the Tree Canopy Preservation Ordinance, the Zero Net Canopy Loss Resolution (committing the City of Asheville to restore the urban tree canopy coverage to 50 percent) and pushing for funds to hire a city urban forester. Based on its members' expertise and its track record in protecting the city's urban forest and thus the quality of life for all Asheville residents, the U FC should be the body assigned to develop a policy that could put these funds to use. This policy should then be incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan. We all want to see maximum recovery of the environment following Helene. Trees are a highly effective and relatively inexpensive method for mitigating stormwater runoff, managing steep slope erosion, functioning as natural air filters, and generally regulating climate change. Helene caused extensive damage to Asheville's urban forest. The time for restoring the trees lost from this catastrophic event is now. Entrusting the UFC with completing a policy for the use of the fee-in-lieu funds would be a sound step forward in the right direction. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Patrick Gilbert Chair, Asheville Area Urban Forest Council-present Chair, City of Asheville Urban Forestry Commission 2022-2024 Member, City of Asheville Urban Forestry Commission 2018-2024	1/28/2026 9:25 AM
From: Carol Meyer Date: Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 3:39 PM Subject: Fee in Lieu Funds Policy for People and Environment Recovery Board To: Dear Members of the People and Environment Recovery Board, I am writing today about a situation of stagnancy that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. With development projects, should an applicant elect not to follow the City's tree canopy installation requirements per Article XIX, Section 7-19 of our UDO, the party may pay a fee in lieu of compliance. Many developers have chosen to do so, but these Fee in Lieu funds have been sitting unused when they could be applied toward restoring and nurturing our valuable and living green assets in the city of Asheville. The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) is comprised of some of the most educated and experienced individuals in the field of arboriculture with additional knowledge on soil conditions and sustainable practices. The UFC should be the body assigned to develop a policy that could put these funds to best use. This policy should then be incorporated into the Urban Forest Master Plan. Please do not recommend that the City spend hundreds of thousands of dollars (or millions) to hire yet another consulting firm to perform this policy development task. The board members currently serving on the UFC are more than capable of developing the policy. Iin fact, they are experts. We all want to see maximum recovery of the environment following Helene. Entrusting the UFC with the creation of a policy for the use of the Fee in Lieu funds would be a sound step forward in the right direction. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Carol Meyer West Asheville Contact Person for Sulphur Springs Neighborhood Association	1/28/2026 9:25 AM
From: Terry Scholl Date: Mon, Jan 5, 2026 at 1:02 PM Subject: Funding for Trees To: I understand money exists that was collected as part of the fee in lieu of planting trees. Please have the Urban Forestry Commission create a proper program for use of these funds as part of the master plan. The funds need to be restricted to protecting, developing, etc. the trees in Buncombe County and diverted to any other program or project. Best, Terry	1/28/2026 9:26 AM