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**To:** sbarnwell@ashevillenc.gov  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** 5/11 Community Night: SimpliCity II Demo & Captains Unmasked!

News, updates, and announcements from Code for Asheville

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### SimpliCity II at the 5/11 Community Night

Frances Ruiz of the City of Asheville IT joined us to demo and share plans for the next iteration of SimpliCity, Asheville's city dashboarding and data search engine. Read below to find out what's coming, what's here now and how you can influence where it goes. Also we finally reveal the true identities of your brigade co-captains!

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## Upcoming events

### Monthly Planning Meetup

Our next brigade planning meeting is on Tuesday, May 23, at 5:30pm on April 25th at the Battery Park Book Exchange. RSVP [here](#).

### Monthly Community Meetup

Our next monthly community meetup will be at 5:30pm on June 8th at the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center. We'll post details on [Meetup](#) as soon as they are available.

[RSVP on Meetup](#).

## About Asheville's Government

Asheville's government shapes the lives of everyone in the city, but can be dauntingly opaque to locals looking to get involved. Drawing from over a decade of experience covering City Hall, local reporter David Forbes of the Asheville Blade is offering [About Asheville's Government](#), a presentation and discussion of how local government actually works, what some major current issues are, and how to get involved. There are two more sessions: Thursday, May 18 at 6pm at the Edington center and Sunday, May 21 at 2pm at Firestorm books. *Highly recommended.*

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## 5/11 Community Night Report

### Captains Unmasked

Our May 11 Community Night gathering was small but lively. We kicked off the evening by shattering our co-captains'™ secret identities. In our get-acquainted go-around, responding to the question "What cartoon character are you like and why?", we learned that:

- **Jesse Michel is Doug** from the TV series [Doug](#) because "He's kind of a character who is always in his own head, and tends to romanticize mundane things in his life. He may think he's a little cooler than he actually is, but he has a good heart."
- **Eric Jackson is Sully** from the Pixar film [Monsters, Inc.](#) because "I love John Goodman and I'm big and can be scary, but at heart I'm just a big softie."

We also talked about how people prefer to learn about opportunities to pitch in on projects and to get project updates. Email won hands-down, with a preference for short updates or digests on specific projects over a full compendium. More on this as we figure out how to implement. At the end of the evening, Eric and Jesse reviewed current projects and highlighted opportunities to contribute. Check them out [here](#).

### SimpliCity II

The highlight of the evening was a presentation and demo by Frances Ruiz of the City of Asheville IT of the upcoming SimpliCity revamp. [SimpliCity](#) is the City of Asheville's™ city data search engine. Launched in 2015, it offers a simple Google-like interface that lets you put in an address, neighborhood, or owner name and pull up information on properties, crime, development, trash collection and more at or near the place selected. The first version of SimpliCity won a [Code for America Technology Award](#) at the 2015 Summit.

[SimpliCity II](#) is a complete rewrite and will have some exciting new capabilities. In addition to the existing search features, the new version will provide city-wide topic and performance dashboards on a variety of important issues. The first such dashboard, the proposed 2017-18 city [budget dashboard](#), was released on May 9, 2017. Future dashboard topics will include homelessness, capital projects, permit turnaround times, and more.

The City would love your help! If you are interested in participating in user research, testing out the new site, or sharing ideas for features, please sign up [here](#).

### City of Asheville Online Data & Services

During the conversation at Community Night, someone asked about the City's™ mapping and other online services, so we thought it would be helpful to publish a short list here.

- [SimpliCity](#) - Search by an address, street, property, owner name, or place to find information about a property, crime, large scale development, trash pickup, recycling, street maintenance, and more.

- [SimpliCity II](#) - This complete rewrite will eventually supercede the current version. For now, check out the new [budget dashboard](#). If you would like to help guide development by providing feedback, sign up [here](#).
- [mapAsheville](#) - An advanced geographic information tool for exploring data from the City of Asheville.
- [Open record portal](#) - Submit a request for public records or view what others have requested.
- [Open data portal](#) - Review, download or connect programmatically to any of the open datasets hosted by the City.
- And lots more. Check out the [transparency page](#), the [online services page](#), and the [map Asheville page](#) and more on the City's [website](#).

Buncombe County also has rich troves of information resources and online services. Check out their new [Discover Buncombe](#) site and [website](#). We'll highlight specific resources in a future edition.

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## News from the network

### Code for Miami Hacks Sea-Level Rise

A student at Florida International University made [this video](#) about [Code for Miami](#) and its efforts to address sea level rise through civic hacking.

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## Help wanted

We have a bunch of new opportunities coming out of the last Community Night and our recent planning conversations. They include:

- Help end homelessness by helping the Homeless Coalition and the Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee identify and set up better collaboration and communication tools.
- Improve the Code for Asheville website by bringing fresh eyes and ideas.
- Contribute to this semi-weekly newsletter by taking or sharing responsibility for one or more sections.
- Join Code for NC's effort to build a statewide reentry resources website along the lines of the [Buncombe County Reentry Resources Hub](#).

Get more details on our [Help Wanted page](#) and email us at [code4asheville@gmail.com](mailto:code4asheville@gmail.com) if you are interested.

Join the CfA Discussion on Slack

(It may take a moment for the form to load)



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