

From: David Zack <dzack@ashevillenc.gov>
Sent: 6/5/2020 10:23:32 AM
To: Chris O'Connor <coconnor@hotmail.com>
Cc: esthermanheimer@avlouncil.com
Subject: Re: Thanks from a local

Chris,

Thank you for this.

Chief Dave Zack

On Fri, Jun 5, 2020 at 10:13 AM Chris O'Connor <coconnor@hotmail.com> wrote:
Police Chief Zack & Mayor Manheimer:

I am unsure how many emails you've received over the last few days which praise you for your actions. I sincerely hope there have been quite a few, but if not, I'd like to say my piece. I rarely, if ever, write emails like this; but given the vitriolic knee-jerk reactions I've seen on Twitter, Reddit, etc, I felt it necessary.

I like to think I'm Ashevilleian as they come. I volunteer, I donate monthly to Pisgah Legal and the ACLU, I see live music whenever possible (not so much now, of course...), I hike, I bird, I love the Tourists, I try to be kind to all that I meet, and I give too much money to Burial Beer.

Last year I had the pleasure of attending the Citizens' Police Academy with my partner, and it was truly one of the most elucidating, civic-minded things I've ever done. The officers were sincere to their causes, happy to teach, and, above all, human.

Over the last few days, it became clear that the protests for the unconscionable death of George Floyd were taking a turn for the worse, and every indication was that a few people were preying on our peaceful protests. The events were clearly shifting after nightfall, and if I can be forgiven for conclusions I've made from the arrest reports, it does not seem likely that the offenders were experienced, wise devotees to this cause which unites us all. And though it is and was wrong to take action on the medic's station - even though it was done in the spirit of enforcing the now-necessary curfew - the city and the police both have apologized for this hasty and reckless act, offered financial reparation & sincere apologies, and planned to prevent future occurrences of this ilk.

Our collective social cancer is one which manifests in binaries: the idea that the other side is irredeemable, all bad, not worth considering the whole. I ask that you and your staff - especially the AVL police officers - please do your best to tune out these loud and reductive voices. The protests have featured thousands of good hearted citizens and a few true birdbrains; the protests also have featured dozens of respectful civil servants and some caustic & regrettable actions. But I hope, possibly in vain, that our focus can somehow shift to the good in both.

I am proud that our city is coming out in droves, wearing masks, to protest endemic racial inequality, and proud of

the difficult, necessary services you are providing - and will provide - in order to put us all on a better path.

You have taken knees; you have shaken hands; you have given hugs; you have sworn reform. Please follow in the spirit of those tokens of kindness, turn these sentiments into true and palpable reform, and know that, as you do so, we're all rooting for you.

C.

PS Though I hope this message is heard by those who need it, I ask that you refrain from attributing this to me or keep my name on this; as noted, there is a virulent strain of dialogue out there now, one in which you're on one side or the other. I am certainly not looking to join the fray.

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