

Manager's Report

February 23, 2021



Key Takeaways

- Repair the harm done by decades of discrimination
- Create opportunities for community input and dialogue (truth telling and healing)
- Strategic focus to define disparities and actions needed to address disparity and begin the process of creating generational wealth

Presentation Overview

- Overview of the Resolution
- Community Reparations Commission Process
- Next Steps

Reparations Definition(s):

“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”

Resolution 20-128: Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville

Adopted on July 14, 2020

WHEREAS, Black People have been:

- denied housing through racist practices
- impoverished by discriminatory wages paid in every sector of the local economy
- experienced the denial of education through admission, retention and graduation rates
- receive inadequate, if not detrimental, health care
- unjustly targeted by law enforcement and criminal justice procedures, incarcerated at disproportionate rates

Resolution Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Council of the City of Asheville:

- (1) apologizes and makes amends for its participation in and sanctioning of the Enslavement of Black People;
- (2) apologizes and makes amends for its enforcement of segregation and its accompanying discriminatory practices;
- (3) apologizes and makes amends for carrying out an urban renewal program that destroyed multiple, successful black communities;

Resolution Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville

(4) calls on other organizations and institutions in Asheville that have advanced and benefitted from racial inequity to join the city in its apologies and invites them to address racism within their own structures and programs and to work with the city to more comprehensively address systemic racism;

(5) calls on the State of North Carolina and the federal government to initiate policymaking and provide funding for reparations at the state and national levels;

(6) directs 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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(7) Fully supports its **equity department, staff and its work**, and **encourages the city manager to utilize their talents when forming policy and programs that will establish the creation of generational wealth and address reparations** due in the black community as mentioned above;

8) **Seeks to establish within the next year, a new commission empowered to make short, medium and long term recommendations** that will make significant progress toward repairing the damage caused by public and private systemic Racism. Other local government community organizations may also be invited to have representation on the Commission. The task of the Community Reparations Commission is **to issue a report in a timely manner** for consideration by the City and other participating community groups for incorporation into their respective short and long term priorities and plans. **Accountability for achieving equity will be enforced in the appropriate offices.**

The report and the resulting budgetary and programmatic priorities may include but not be limited to **increasing minority homeownership and access to other affordable housing, increasing minority business ownership and career opportunities, strategies to grow equity and generational wealth, closing the gaps in health care, education, employment and pay, neighborhood safety and fairness within criminal justice;**

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(9) calls on the city manager to give, at minimum, a bi-annual update to the city council on the progress of work performed pursuant to this resolution.

Proposed Process Outline

Three Phase Process

- PHASE 1: Information Sharing and Truth Telling
May 2021/June 2021
- PHASE 2: Formation of the Commission
May 2021/July 2021
- PHASE 3: Finalize and present the report
January 2022/April 2023

Phase 1: Information Sharing and Truth Telling

May 2021 - June 2021

- Speaker Series: Recruit local and national speakers to share information followed by a facilitated discussion with the community about the community's:
 - i. Past - History of Asheville identifying key policies, actions etc. at the federal and state with emphasis on local policies and private practices that created or advanced disparity. Identify locations within the community that were impacted
 - ii. Present - Current trends, data and disparity related to the key focus areas to be discussed by the Commission.
 - iii. Future - Futurist/visionary to identify potential for Asheville related to the key focus areas, latest efforts and initiatives and trends to help stimulate thought about what changes are needed and are possible.

Phase 1: Information Sharing and Truth Telling

May 2021 - June 2021

Desired Outcomes:

- Better understanding of policy impacts and where those impacts occurred
- Identify and understand current disparities and areas that need focus
- Identify barriers to addressing generational wealth
- Inspire our community to identify collaborative opportunities to create a more equitable Asheville
- Hear community perspectives about our past, present and future

Phase 2: Formation of the Commission

May 2021 - July 2021

- Commission consist of 21-25 total participants
 - i. 11- 13 Representatives from neighborhoods/areas that were impacted by policies and practices that created disparities
 - Neighborhoods/areas selected will be informed by phase 1
 - ii. 10- 12 Broad Community Sector Representatives
 - Appointed by City Council and County Commission
- Charge of the Commission - empowered to make short, medium and long term recommendations that will make significant progress toward repairing the damage caused by public and private systemic racism.

Phase 2: Formation of the Commission

May 2021 - July 2021

- Key Focus Areas:
 - The Commission takes deep dive and discusses areas of disparity.
 - Divides itself into smaller work groups to develop specific strategies to address disparities based on key focus areas.
 - i. Housing
 - ii. Economic Development
 - iii. Public Health
 - iv. Education
 - v. Public Safety and Justice
- The Commission meets monthly or more often as needed to exchange ideas and discuss issues.
- The work groups would consist of 3-5 people to provide deeper discussion and to develop key strategies for consideration by the larger Commission.
- Sub work group meetings should occur once a month or more as needed.

Phase 2: Formation of the Commission

May 2021 - July 2021

Desired Outcomes:

- Recruit diverse representation to participate on the Commission i.e. include people from impacted areas with lived experiences coupled with subject matter experts.
- Increased awareness of disparities and focus on potential strategies to address issues building on the various perspectives and/or experiences.

Phase 3: Finalize and Present the Report

January 2022 - April 2023

Schedule for Commission deliverables:

- Short term recommendations: January 2022
- Medium term recommendations: July 2022
- Long term recommendations: January 2023
- Final report March/April 2023

Desired Outcomes:

- Advancement of key strategies in a timely manner
- Recommendations aligned with the City and County budget processes and schedules
- Final recommendations to develop funding and implementation strategies

Resources Needed

- Funding to support Speaker Series
- Funding to support Commission Members (travel, meals if in person, possible stipend for participation and other ways to address possible barriers to participation)
- Funding for facilitators for full Commission and work groups discussions (recruit local facilitators for various work groups)
- City and County staff to support Commission and work groups in addition to facilitators

Next Steps

- Identify partners and funding opportunities
- Recruit speakers and finalize dates
- Identify project manager and recruit facilitators
- Continue outreach and dialogue with other communities and content experts for information, lessons learned and possible course adjustments

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