From: Debra Campbell <dcampbell@ashevillenc.gov>
Sent: 12/10/2021 11:05:32 AM
To: Chief David Zack <dzack@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc: Bill Davis <bdavis2@ashevillenc.gov>,Dawa Hitch <dhitch@ashevillenc.gov>
Subject: Re: DRAFT = APD NEWS RELEASE: Statement by APD Chief David Zack Regarding I-240 Homeless Camp

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See my suggestedÂ edits.Â

On Thu, Dec 9, 2021, 12:34 PM Chief David Zack <dzack@ashevillenc.gov> wrote:

> Found a couple mistakes. Will address when I return.Â
>
> On Thu, Dec 9, 2021 at 12:29 PM Bill Davis <bdavis2@ashevillenc.gov> wrote:
>
> > Dawa and Debra,
> >
> > DRAFT statement by Chief Zack.Â Please advise of any thoughts/changes you may have before we send to the public.Â Â
> >
> > Debra, please let us know if you would like to add any comment.
> >
> > Thanks,
> > Bill D.
> > PIO
> >
> > ---
> > Â
> > Asheville, NC (Dec. 9, 2021):Â
> >
> > There has been much discussion over the past few weeks about the tent encampment that has grown near the NC DOT property located on Haywood Street near I-240 and the increasing safety hazards it has presented. Â Â This is not a new issue, but it is surely one that needs to have a decisive action because of the public safety and public health concerns for the campers and the community.Â
> >
> > I am concerned for the homeless, but I am just as concerned for the safety of our community.Â Leaders make tough decisions, and thatâ€™s what I have done by making the difficult decision to have the campsite removed.
> >
> > We have received numerous complaints of open drug use, theft, and sexual assault at the campsite.Â Â We have also had reports of fires at the campsite, even though we are under a burn ban, and Asheville Fire Department has responded five times to the campsite since Nov. 20.
> >
> > Furthermore, the tents are adjacent a busy highway, causing even further safety concerns, and the site has become a danger to the neighborhood and the campers themselves.
> >
> > APD officers made initial notification with the campers a few weeks ago and personally advised them that they needed to relocate because they were trespassing on NC DOT property and the continued safety issues.Â Our officers made at least eight trips to the campsite to reinforce that message.Â Despite our efforts, the campsite continued to grow.Â
> >
> > Homeward Bound has been out there multiple times over the past few weeks to provide services to the campers and help them relocate; additionally, Haywood Street Congregation has also offered their support to the campers and helped with the cleanup.Â
> >
> > During the cleanup efforts, officers found numerous hypodermic needles.Â Just on Wednesday, officers discovered a body found in the one of the tents, and our forensics detectives continue to investigate that death; at this time, it does not appear to be foul play.
> >
> > Thursday morning, an individual at the campsite was found to be in severe mental distress, and APD officers were able to get her mental health services.Â Â
> >
> > I have been coordinating with our City Manager and NC DOT over this increasing public safety and health concern over the past few weeks; I have made them aware of my decision.
> >
> > Our experience has shown that these camps will continue to grow and cause even further safety concerns, and it imperative as a city leader that I take action to maintain public safety for all â€“ our residents, our homeless, our business owners.
> >
> > I made a difficult decision that needed to be made, and I made it.Â
> >
> > Chief David Zack
> >
> > Asheville Police Department
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> > --
> > **Bill Davis**

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