From: Patrick Conant <patrick@prcapps.com>
Sent: 5/26/2018 6:15:43 PM
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Cc:
Subject: Traffic Stop Reforms

Members of City Council,

I wanted to contact you to express my strong support for the motions taken last week to make traffic stops and consent searches in our City more equitable and fair for Asheville residents.

Our City has waited long enough to take action to address racial disparities in traffic stop outcomes, as inaction to this point has only seen the data trend in the wrong direction. These proposals have been discussed in our City, with Council and directly with APD, for quite some time - I first met with Chief Hooper to discuss our traffic stop data in November 2016. Since then, I have attended a presentation with Ian Mance for the benefit of APD, a Community Lunch and Learn, a CPAC meeting, three Public Safety Committee meetings, and two meetings of City Council where we have talked about traffic stops.

I have met with several of you personally to discuss the traffic stop data, and I understand many of you have also met with the NAACP or Ian Mance to discuss this information as well as the policy reforms. The proposal here is not new, and there has been extensive opportunities for discussion amongst Council members, and to discuss the matter with Chief Hooper.

To state that actions taken at the last Council meeting “rushed” the process ignores the 18+ months of effort that brought us to this point.

If we want to rebuild trust between our community and police department, we need to ensure that we are taking steps to move our City forward, and I was so encouraged by the actions taken at last Tuesday’s Council meeting.

My hope was that the all of the tension that had built to that point would subside due to clear action from Council, and we could finally take a step forward and analyze other important aspects of equity and policing in our City.

Obviously that’s not the case - I understand that the PBA is threatening our City Council members with a lawsuit, but I hope that our Council sees fit to hold strong around the courageous actions taken last week. We need to keep moving our City forward, and even more importantly - we need to take steps to bring APD and our community together.

Please do not let these threats drive us even further apart. 21st Century Policing, especially in Asheville, will be about give and take, a collaboration between community members and police departments. Please do not go back on the progress we worked so hard to achieve, and keep working to build a constructive process to move our City forward.

Thank you,

Patrick Conant