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Subject: Town Council Update from Cheryl - July 2020 Edition
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Cheryl Stallings

Apex Town Council
Improving Quality of Life for Our Community



Hello Neighbors and Friends –

I hope you all are safe and well as we continue to work together in managing the public health, public safety, and economic impacts of COVID-19. I know a number of families, teachers, school staff, students, and decision-makers are going through a challenging time right now as plans are being made for the upcoming school year. I am thinking about you all and sending my best wishes for wisdom, strength, patience, good health, and a collaborative spirit as we transition into the upcoming months. If you can lend support to a neighbor in our community, please do so. If you need help, please reach out to family, friends, or me and we will try to offer assistance or help you get connected with someone who can help you.





June 16th Town Council Meeting

We had a lengthy agenda on June 16th as we try to keep up and address the local government needs of our town within the context of the pandemic. I will provide some summary highlights of the meeting. Also remember that Council meetings are livestreamed and recorded for residents to watch as well. You can find out more on the town website (<https://www.apexnc.org>).

During public forum, we had a number of speakers (from elementary age to older adults) who spoke about their experiences with racism and discrimination. These inspiring speakers advocated for continued racial justice work in policing and beyond.

Of the rezonings Council approved, we are working with developers to provide conditions related to tree replacements, energy efficiency, and housing affordability. These are all issues I campaigned on, and I am happy

to report that we are making progress in these quality of life areas for residents.

With the Wolfe Planned Unit Development, the developer is replacing trees of a certain size (18 inches in diameter) and above. All homes will be pre-wired for the possibility of future solar panels and will have energy star certification. Electric charging stations will also be options in garages. Additionally, 10% of the homes will be affordable to a person earning the median income for a Wake County resident (not an Apex resident, which is a higher median income).

- Rezoning # 19CZ22 - Wolfe Properties PUD (Wimberly Road)
Public Notice: <https://www.apexnc.org/DocumentCenter/View/31756/19CZ22-Public-Hearing-Notice?bidId=>
Contact the Planning Department at (919) 249-3426 with any questions regarding this project.

With the annexation and rezoning of a small property off of New Hill Holleman Road, the developer was also willing to work with Council on tree replacements. Again, trees with diameters of 18 inches or greater will be replaced either on site or at another site agreeable with Town Planning Staff.

- Rezoning # 20CZ02 - 3036 New Hill Holleman Road
Public Notice: <https://www.apexnc.org/DocumentCenter/View/31758/Public-Notice---20CZ02?bidId=>
Contact the Planning Department at (919) 249-3426 with questions regarding this project.

In other areas, we approved an "Adopt A Park/Adopt A Trail" Program as another investment in the care for our town. For anyone who is interested in this type of outdoor service opportunity in Apex, contact Parks and Recreation Director John Brown (john.brown@apexnc.org).

Council also made a \$20,000.00 contribution to the Apex Chamber's "Angel

Fund". This fund has been created to support our area small businesses who are struggling due to the economic impact of COVID-19. Council provided an additional \$20,000.00 contribution to the Chamber itself to support operational expenses.

And finally, Council adopted a resolution recognizing June as LGBTQIA Pride Month. I believe it is important to acknowledge people who continue to be marginalized, and to work for just and equitable policies and treatment for everyone. I also celebrate and give thanks for the many contributions of the LGBTQIA community within our midst.



New Employees

As a follow-up to previous discussion on tree replacements and new development projects, I would like to see more work on policy regarding our urban tree canopy and environmental stewardship. The good news is that we have just hired our Sustainability Program Coordinator, Megan Pendell! With this newly created position to help us shape environmental policy,

Megan competed with about 200 applicants for the job. She graduated from Apex High School and earned a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Sciences with a Minor in Applied Ecology from NC State. She has done research in South Africa, and has worked with the Environmental Protection Agency, NC Museum of Natural Sciences, and Apex Parks and Recreation department.

Megan will also be supervising and mentoring the Town's first ever Lead for North Carolina fellow, Valeria (Val) Mera. Val will be our new Sustainability Analyst. She graduated from NC State with a BA in Political Science, and Minors in French and History. Val has studied abroad, which was a decision inspired by her Peruvian background. While at NC State, she worked with the campus Food Pantry, French Club, Ambassador Program, and was the Director of Sustainability for Student Government.

Megan and Val will work with Council and Staff to help us evaluate and develop environmental policy for the Town. As we work to be good stewards of the natural resources in our midst, they will help us meet one of our key strategic goals of Environmental Leadership & Responsible Development.

One more new employee to introduce is Tesa (Jontesca) Silver as our new Deputy Clerk. As our Town has grown, so have the responsibilities with the duties at our Clerk's office. Tesa and Donna Hosch (Town Clerk) will share the load of many administrative tasks such as public information requests, recording and filing meeting minutes, and preparing agendas and a number of documents related to the business conducted by the Town Council.

Community Engagement & COVID-19

Thanks to Duke Divinity School student Anita Salazar for inviting me to a Zoom call with her graduate school classmates and advisor on June 26th. Anita is currently working at an area Apex church as part of her school curriculum, and wanted to reach out to an elected official to discuss

important matters in our community. We discussed a number of topics including development and growth; environmental stewardship; food and housing insecurity; voting, health care and mental health care; and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the African American and Hispanic/Latinx communities.

In an effort to better support the vulnerable members in our community, Town Staff is distributing additional face masks that we have received to a number of people and places. These include Compare Foods, six taco food trucks, Western Wake Crisis Ministries (for clients who visit and for their monthly food distribution service), local clergy who work with at-risk persons, and other groups at food distribution sites.

If you know people who are looking for COVID testing sites, here are a couple of links provided by the County:

- For testing administered by Wake County:
<https://covid19.wakegov.com/testing/>
- For statewide testing sites, this list is provided by NCDHHS:
<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19/testing/find-my-testing-place>

And finally, many of you likely know that COVID statistics for the county and local municipalities are available at www.wakegov.com. Information regarding the Town's response to COVID-19 is frequently updated on our website: <https://www.apexnc.org>.

Racial Justice & Policing

On June 26th, I attended another youth-led Black Lives Matter Apex event

On June 20th, I attended another youth-led Black Lives Matter-Apex event in downtown. Many young people and adults spoke about discrimination, inequities in policing, and the need to dismantle systemic racism.

As I noted in last month's newsletter, the Apex police department is well accredited, participates in annual implicit bias training, and has no one employed with any history of police brutality. Nevertheless, these times call for a sound re-evaluation of our policies and procedures to determine where any improvements may be needed.

Our police department has a lot of information under their section of the Town website. You will find the department's annual report <https://www.apexnc.org/DocumentCenter/View/31913/2019-Annual-Report> and policy statements on excessive use of force <https://www.apexnc.org/DocumentCenter/View/31879/Policy-Statement-Reiteration-Campaign-Zero>. The department is also working to provide General Orders and Written Directives on the website as well, in an effort to be as transparent as possible under the fullest extent of the law.

Additionally, the Town Council members have recently concluded small group meetings with the Mayor, Town Manager, and Police Chief that discussed police policy and racial equity. The various meeting notes are currently being summarized and synthesized into a report with recommendations on next steps. More to come on this work.





Concluding Comments

On July 4th, I enjoyed attending the physically distanced “Drive Through Red, White & Blue” car parade in downtown Apex. Thank you Apex Police Department, Apex Downtown Business Association, Town Staff, and American Legion volunteers for organizing such a fun event!

Looking ahead for important representational and funding purposes, have you completed the US Census yet? The deadline to respond has been extended to October 31st, but please complete it as soon as possible if you have not done so to date. The 2020 Census results will shape our town, state, and country for the next decade. It is critical that every person be counted to ensure that we have just representation and fair funding. Currently, a little over 70 percent of households in Apex have replied to the census, but I think we can do better. If you did not receive a mailed questionnaire, you can complete the Census online here. Click [here](#) to reply **online**, by **phone**, or by **mail**.

As we think about the upcoming November election, I know that a number of people are making plans for safety and effectiveness. Here is a link to the nonpartisan group, Common Cause NC, that discusses ways to vote this November: in person on Election Day; in person for early voting (and remember that the Apex Community Center will be an early voting site!):

remember that the Apex Community Center will be an early voting site, and by mail (absentee voting).

<https://www.commoncause.org/north-carolina/resource/absentee/>

Best wishes to you all in the coming days. If you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at cheryl.stallings@apexnc.org. Feel free to share my newsletter with others, or have your friends send me a request to be on the distribution list. Take care - Cheryl



Our Vision

- A community unified in the stewardship of our small town charm, natural environment, and a future where all succeed.

Our Mission

- Provide exceptional public service that cultivates opportunity for the

individual and community to live, thrive, and reach their peak.

<https://www.apexnc.org/1321/Strategic-Goals>

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