

From: Maurice Jones
Sent: Thursday, January 07, 2021 11:08 PM
To: Town Email Users
Subject: A Message from the Manager

Hello Everyone,

After all we experienced as a nation in 2020 there was genuine hope that 2021 would be different. As the delivery of effective vaccines to combat the coronavirus began to roll-out we could see a light at the end of this long, dark tunnel. A light that could lead to a return to normal activities – social gatherings with friends and family, in-person schooling for our children, robust activity for our struggling businesses. And most importantly being able to lead our lives without the fear and suffering of the last ten months. Meanwhile, the racial awakening from last summer opened many eyes to the plight of many African-Americans and led to important discussions and actions about how we can move forward and become a more equitable society. Yes, 2021 was going to be a year of rejuvenation for our community and country. Sadly for many of us that optimism took a hit yesterday as we watched thousands of people unlawfully descend upon the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to intimidate our nation's duly elected representatives as they participated in the peaceful transfer of power.

The attack on the U.S. Capitol was an effort to undermine our democratic processes and it understandably, shook many of us to our core. Never in our wildest dreams would we have envisioned such an attack on the "people's house" committed by our own fellow Americans. At one point, as I watched the riot unfold, I felt this overwhelming sensation of grief – a sorrow for how polarized our nation has become. We truly hit a new low in the recent history of our nation. The anger and disdain of government demonstrated by the rioters, based primarily on the false narrative of a "stolen election", led me to believe, for a moment, that we as a nation are destined to be divided for many more years to come.

Thankfully that wave of pessimism was relatively brief as I turned my attention back to the great work we are doing here in Chapel Hill. I refocused on last night's work session with the Town Council where we discussed affordable housing opportunities for our residents and how to ensure we are promoting and sustaining equity in every aspect of our work. I took a moment today to think about all of you and your efforts to provide high quality services to our residents. Those services are offered to everyone, regardless of their station in life, their race, their age, their politics. We do not ask whether someone supports one party or the other when we pick up their trash, or clean their streets, or rush into their fire ravaged home, or provide protection from those who would do them harm. And all of us who work for the Town come from different walks of life, with differing opinions on important issues and yet we work together for the greater cause of building a community where all can thrive. That's the way it should be and will continue to be here in Chapel Hill ... thanks to you.

I am still holding out hope for that light at the end of the tunnel. The assault on the Congress, as horrible as it was, did not stop the wheels of democracy from churning. The men and women of the United States House and Senate eventually conducted the business of the people. The electoral college vote for a new president has been confirmed and he will be inaugurated on January 20th. And it is my sincere hope that the collective scorn expressed from both sides of the aisle in the last 24 hours against the violence we saw in Washington, will help chip away at the polarized nature of our politics, and maybe reduce the intense rhetoric that has led us to where we are.

I know many of us continue to struggle with all of the stress of the last year. As I've mentioned on many occasions it is important for those who are feeling overwhelmed to seek the assistance you need to get through these unprecedented and disturbing times. We want you to be healthy both physically and emotionally. Please take advantage of the resources we offer.

As always, I want to thank you for your commitment and dedication to our Town. You are appreciated. Please continue to take care of yourselves and keep the faith. Better days are ahead.

All the Best,
Maurice

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