



**June 6, 2020**

## **Message from City Manager Timothy Baroody on the Curfew and Events of the Past Week**

I am pleased to announce the end of the nightly curfew in the City of Fredericksburg, effective immediately. After consulting with the Chief of Police, members of City Council, and the Police Department Citizen Advisory Panel, I signed a new emergency order ending the nightly curfew at noon today.

This morning Police Chief Layton convened an emergency meeting of the Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) at the Police Department Headquarters, with members Reverend Jarvis Bailey, Meredith Beckett, Reverend Hashmel Turner, Assistant Principal PJ Pcsolinski, and Superintendent Marci Catlett in attendance and Mayor Mary Katherine Greenlaw joining by telephone. In unison, the group voiced support for the previous nights of curfew, the benefits of now lifting the curfew early, our continued commitment to communicate with protest organizers, and acknowledgment of much more work that remains to be done together.

This is a significant milestone in the narrative of our great City. It is appropriate, and it is important to me personally, to take this moment to express my profound gratitude to the people of Fredericksburg for their patience and support during this very difficult week. I would also like to offer some thoughts, and to express my own commitment and that of the City Council and staff, to work with the community as we assess the path forward.

Last Sunday early morning, the Fredericksburg Police Department was firebombed and the Memorial to Fallen Officers was defaced by a cowardly individual (or individuals). The criminal investigation into these violent acts of destruction is open and ongoing. I look forward to the day when we bring these people to justice. Later that day, the City was confronted by a large group of protesters who were justifiably angry at the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. This anger was directed at our own law enforcement. Yet, as our own Police Captain Betsy Mason has observed, "No one hates a bad cop more than a good cop."

As I personally observed the Sunday night procession, the takeover of Route 1, and the march first on Police Headquarters and then on City Hall and the courthouse, I experienced a deep feeling of foreboding and an unshakable fear that protesters (both local and those from elsewhere), law enforcement officers, or likely both, would be seriously injured or possibly killed. The scene was chaotic and there were no familiar faces in the crowd to reach out to provide order or calm. Law enforcement, to include our mutual aid law enforcement partners, and after announcing an unlawful assembly, deployed tear gas Sunday night, something that we hope to never see again. I declared a local emergency and ordered a curfew to begin at 11:30 that night. The curfew was extended for Monday and Tuesday nights, and then again on Wednesday for a period that I thought might need to extend through the weekend.

Our business community has been hit hard by the COVID-19 emergency; it was just emerging into the Commonwealth's Phase Two when the civil unrest began. I am so grateful for their continued patience and support (many of whom urged a continuation of the curfew) in these unprecedented times. To many who wrote me, our City's safety (and future) was more important than loss of business activity in the very near term.



The whole community responded to the mayhem of Sunday night to help frame peaceful expression of grievances. The protests continued daily, but protest organizers began to reach out to the City to plan for safe events, and the City, especially law enforcement, reached back. Faith and elected leaders were among the first to step up, along with educators, and members of the business community. We are so very blessed to have many veterans of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s as City residents. Let's face it – they never really “retired” – but they re-emerged to aid and guide the young people of our City. City Council adopted their “Message to the Community,” including the important affirmation that Black Lives Matter. Black Lives Matter to me and to every Fredericksburg public servant.

Finally, we achieved another major milestone when, yesterday morning, Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, City staff removed the slave auction block from the corner of William and Charles streets. This act lived Council's direction from 2019, direction that came from more than 18 months of robust community dialogue on race. The block was a painful reminder of a dark period in our nation's history, and that corner is now available for this community to actively reclaim it. The work of “telling the whole story” of our community, especially the experiences and contributions of African Americans, will continue on that spot (through work not yet accomplished) and throughout the City.

There is a lot of work ahead and today's protesters have made it clear – they will not rest until they see change. This work will require a “whole of community” response. I expect the City government to lead but I know we will not be alone. City schools, our community college and university, law enforcement, the business community, the faith community, residents young and old, will all have a part to play. Of course as we move forward on this work, we can expect to see continued protests in Market Square and our public spaces in the near term.

I want to conclude by conveying my deep sense of the honor that is bestowed on me as your City Manager - by the City Council, City staff, residents, and businesses every day. The events of the last week have brought that sense to the fore. Thank you for your expressions of confidence, and even for the criticisms that you've conveyed. It is an honor to serve you, and I look forward to the future with determination, optimism and great hope. I see momentum, not darkness. We are a City with unlimited potential, and this past week even with its chaos has brought us closer to living it.

Timothy J. Baroody  
City Manager, City of Fredericksburg

Please feel free to contact the City Manager's Office by calling 540-372-1010, emailing [citymanager@fredericksburgva.gov](mailto:citymanager@fredericksburgva.gov) or visiting [www.Fredericksburgva.gov](http://www.Fredericksburgva.gov).