

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****April 6, 2021**

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**SUBJECT: CITY'S RESPONSE TO APARTMENTS FOLLOWING THE
FEBRUARY WINTER STORM**Issue

City Council requested information about the City's response to apartments following the February winter storm. During the storm itself, the Joint Emergency Operations Center was activated. Services specifically offered to apartments during the storm included warming shelters, transportation to warming shelters, blankets, check the welfare responses, water and other emergency services.

Immediately following the storm, Code Compliance initiated damage assessments at all apartment complexes. This is a standard practice following large natural disasters and other events that could cause damage. While damage assessments were being conducted, the City worked with individual complexes and apartment associations to distribute bottled water (most immediate need given the warming temperatures and dry weather).

Immediately following the storm on February 14th, staff noted that most complexes were already taking action to address broken pipes, accumulated solid waste and other damage caused by the winter weather. Plumbers and general contractors were on-site making repairs as necessary. While obtaining plumbing parts was difficult early on, most complexes were able to make repairs and restored water within the first week.

On March 3rd Code Compliance was working with 25 apartment complexes still having water issues, including no water or no hot water. Code officers went door-to-door delivering flyers detailing available resources for winter storm recovery. It contained contact information for FEMA, United Way, and various service providers for housing, food, utilities, and other available assistance. While going door-to-door code officers also conducted needs assessments and engaged other departments and agencies to address the tenants' needs. By March 5th the number of apartment complexes still having water issues decreased to 14 and by March 10th there was only one complex without water at some units (The Reserve at Bellevue). Also on the 10th, there were still four complexes with no hot water at some units (but they did have cold water service). Hot water was restored by March 25th.

The Reserve at Bellevue

While extensive plumbing/pipe damage was observed throughout the city, the Reserve at Bellevue had some of the worst. After several weeks of trying to repair the pipes and experiencing rebreaks/new breaks on an ongoing basis, the property owner decided to vacate the property and replace all of the plumbing.

The property owner provided tenants potable water and City staff arranged for a shower trailer on site. Once the trailer was removed, showers were made available at the Handley Meadowbrook Community Center.

Neighborhood Services and Code Compliance were on-site multiple days to conduct needs assessments and assist residents with filling out applications for assistance. On March 13, 2021, Neighborhood Services dispatched staff to the Reserve at Bellevue to provide aid through the Community Action Partners' Disaster Assistance Program. Staff was able to certify families for hotel vouchers and provide

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\$25 gift cards donated by United Way. One per household member was issued (i.e. 3 members = \$75). Staff returned on Monday, March 15 to pick-up applications.

- \$525 was dispersed in gift cards.
- A total of 10 households were certified for hotel vouchers. More are pending.
- A total of 48 applications were received from the Reserve at Bellevue residents. This number continues to increase as residents learn about the Disaster Assistance Program.
- Six households were approved for security deposits and first month's rent. Fourteen households are pending based on receiving apartment move-in approval.

Applications were left on site and the leasing manager scanned and emailed tenant applications to our processing site.

On Tuesday, March 23, Neighborhood Services scheduled a tenants' meeting at the Crossroad Tabernacle, a church in the community within walking distance of the apartment complex. Councilmember Bivens was invited along with City departments, including Neighborhood Services' Community Action Partners, Diversity and Inclusion and Code Compliance. Agency partners included Catholic Charities, Fort Worth Housing Solutions, Tarrant County Housing, Northwest Texas Legal Aid and the executives from the Reserve at Bellevue. Approximately 45 households were represented and 20 partner agencies and City staff.

Neighborhood Services staff continue to work with the Reserve at Bellevue and will work with other complexes should the need arise. For more information on Neighborhood Services Programs, please contact Victor Turner, Neighborhood Services Director, at (817) 392-8187.

David Cooke
City Manager