

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Special Meeting on Friday, March 10, 2023, at 1:50 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Lyles presiding. Council Members present were Danté Anderson, Malcolm Graham, Marjorie Molina, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston II.

ABSENT: Councilmember Dimple Ajmera, Lawana Mayfield, and James Mitchell.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmember Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, and Renee Johnson.

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ITEM NO. 1: WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Lyles said everyone, we are so glad to have all of you who are participating today with us as we talk about what the City of Charlotte is expecting in terms of where we're going, how we get there, and what help we may need. What you do in Raleigh is absolutely the most essential connection that we have, and we really wanted to say thank you for being a part of our Delegation and for the work that you've done. So, on behalf of our City Council members, and all of our team that works so hard to make this City a place that you would choose to live in, I want to say welcome to our Legislative Briefing for this year, 2023. I know that many of you are sacrificing time away from family as well as work and we are grateful for that as well.

I do want you to know that the City is supported by a number of talented people that help us do things very well and I'd like to have all of our team introduce themselves and I'm going to start with our City Clerk. We do have the media joining us. Most of the time we are really glad to have them present and doing this.

Okay, I think it's important that we recognize these folks because as things are happening and as things are moving around, any resource that we can be to you please know that these folks are available and really appreciate it especially as we talk about some of the big issues that we have around sustainability and housing and growth and all of those things that mesh together.

Councilmember Driggs arrived at 1:55 p.m.

This team is really, really great at helping us figure out what we do. So, with those introductions, I'd like to now turn it over to our Delegation Chairperson, Representative, Mary Belk.

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ITEM NO. 2: REMARKS FROM DELEGATION CHAIRPERSON

Representative Belk said thanks, Vi. Thank you for asking us to be here, and the members of City Council for taking this opportunity this morning for a chance to meet and talk about how we can coordinate our efforts to get things done for Charlotte and for our region. Dana had asked me to go over basically and quickly, what is going on, a little update on the legislature. I'd have to say, you kind of picked a pretty good time to get a legislative update from us. Most of the news coming out of Raleigh for the moment, seems to me like we are having a lovefest up there, a bipartisan love fest.

Councilmember Johnson arrived at 1:57 p.m.

We did get a little taste of controversy with the bill restricting protest, but Medicaid Expansion and Medical Cannabis Reform have both been stealing the spotlight lately and with good reason.

When you're looking at things from the perspective of minority party, like the Charlotte delegation, it can be tempting to give up on accomplishing big things in the face of a concerted, and consistent and sometimes even an ideological opposition. The temptation is to lower your sights and to shift your focus on easier issues. If we had done that, we would have missed these golden opportunities to make real positive impact in the lives of our constituents. Various estimates I've seen say that the Mecklenburg County can expect to see as much as \$115 million per year under Medicaid expansion to keep the people of our county healthy, both physically and mentally. That number will undoubtedly be higher because the residents of other counties come in and receive medical care in Mecklenburg. It's going to be a game changer, of course, for the families who are now going to be able to access healthcare, who have not been able to do that before.

Now, Medical Cannabis seems to be a little less certain at the moment, but I'm fairly confident it's going to be brought to a vote in the House. The Speaker is definitely talking about, and in a different way than in this biennium, than he has before. I don't see it having a direct, as direct of an effect on Mecklenburg County, but I think it does hold a positive lesson for us too when we look at some of the same long-term things that we want to accomplish in Charlotte and in the region.

Councilmember Bokhari arrived at 1:59 p.m.

The way I see it, if the Speaker and the Republican Caucus can be brought about on Medical Cannabis, then we just need to keep working on them for mass and mobility, and mass transit because it's possible to change their minds. It just might take a little bit longer to get those things that we'd like to see happen. The truth is, is that transit supercharges growth, and growth is good for business. In my experience, everyone just can't say no to the things that are good for business forever. Eventually, the CPAs (Certified Public Accountant) and the CEOs (Chief Executive Officer) will come together and say this is good for business and what's good for business in Charlotte-Mecklenburg region and North Carolina prevails. For this reason, I'm optimistic about the long-term prospects for our democratic ideals like Medicaid Expansion and mass transit because they dovetail in the interest of business and development. Those groups, especially in the context of large cities like Charlotte, are some of our best allies. That being said, there is one area of concern that I'd like to mention that we're looking at and that involves our allies in the business and development community.

In my first Regulatory Reform Committee meeting this year we heard a presentation, and this is just a presentation from the Home Builders Association, that kind of gave us a little bit of pause. They're pushing for the state to put limits on the practice of restricted rezoning to regulate the building codes across the counties. All of this was, of course, presented as a way to make it easier and more affordable housing in the state, but the implication was that they wanted the state to adopt the Lowest Common Standard System. Obviously, that would make it more difficult to implement stormwater, affordability, and density policies that the City uses to guide zoning and in development decisions. If any of these proposals move in the Legislative state, we'll definitely keep you up to date. Dana is wonderful about communicating what's going on here and back in Raleigh and we'll keep doing that to let you know what we hear on those movements.

The large cities are not the only ones, however, that have to put a lot of work into thinking about zoning and developments. So, if they really try to go after that aspect in [INAUDIBLE] control, I think Charlotte would have a number of allies in the medium and small cities across the state.

So, looking forward to the budget, we're focused on trying to make sure Charlotte and Mecklenburg are treated more fairly in this biennium when it comes to the way the state is dividing up the resource pie. I know we lost out on some of our Powell Bill, funding for road repair last biennium. I know our teachers got left out on the Instructional Support Payments that were given for the rest of the state, but as your representatives in Raleigh, we're working tirelessly to make sure that those types of exceptions don't turn up again in this budget cycle. That is where we stand for now and certainly, there are

going to be other issues like abortion, and the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Cooperation Bill, where the delegation is going to disagree vehemently with the leadership. For the moment, we're at the edge of coming together to pass reforms that Republicans and Democrats have spent nearly a decade debating in North Carolina and that's progress. Thanks so much for having us here and look forward to discussing it.

Mayor Lyles said I want to thank Representative Belk for her leadership, and the work that she's been doing in the delegation. It's really been helpful to us.

Councilmember Driggs said I know there is a consensus between us and Raleigh about that meeting. I just wanted to mention the fact that clearly, the preponderance of representation there and here is different in political terms, but the problems we have to solve are not. So, my goal is to try to make sure that we have constructive conversations about the plans that we are making and just make it clear that they align very well with some things I've been hearing out of Raleigh about how desperate the mobility situation is becoming and it's an impediment to development. It affects many aspects of our lives, air quality, social issues and so, we need to get away from historical tensions between the parties and between Raleigh and Mecklenburg County and work together towards that cause. So, I appreciate the fact that you're here today and look forward to working with you.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you. So, what we'd like to do now is to have our person that's in Raleigh accessible to all of you, I hope. He's been doing this for a while and I think we've been very, very glad to have him as a part of our team as we think about how we work in Raleigh with you and with others. So, Dana Fenton is going to provide some updates about City projects that have a connection to what we're doing in Raleigh.

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ITEM NO. 3: CITY UPDATES

Dana Fenton, City Manager's Office said thank you, Mayor Lyles, for that very nice welcome, and City Council, and delegation. Thank you for being here today and also all of my colleagues as well. What I wanted to do was to start this off on a happy note today. I'm in a happy space right now so I want to start off on a happy note for everybody and it's a weekend coming up, I'm sorry about the weather. Let's go! I wanted to bring you up to date on some projects that the City has undertaken as Mayor Lyles said with the connection to the state. I wanted to highlight the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. You've heard a lot about the airport over the years, I'm sure some of you have flown through there before. There's a great program that the General Assembly approved several years ago in 2017. It's called the North Carolina Airport Improvement Program. It was established in 2017. It provides a source of funding to the ten commercial service airports in the state for capital projects and debt service. The funding is directed to the airports through a data-driven formula that emphasizes the impact of that airport upon the region and the state.

Now the airport has utilized this funding, in the past, for land acquisition and debt service. This year the airport is utilizing the funding as one source of revenue to expand Concourse A. Phase II of Concourse A, you have this beautiful rendition there. It's going to look a lot like the current, Phase I of the Concourse A expansion. It will add ten more gates to the airport, and this is important because adding more gates increases our capacity to serve other cities, including other North Carolina cities. I believe that other legislators, especially those in the appropriations area will appreciate hearing that we're using this funding for this purpose, that will lead to more flights from other North Carolina cities. In addition, I don't have any slides on this, but I wanted to let you know about two other airport projects that are advancing. One is the renovation of Concourse E. Just in the last few weeks, the airport received a Federal Grant of about \$31 million to renovate Concourse E and for those of you who have gone through there, you know that there's a lot of people and a lot of flights coming out of that Concourse. So, we're

really excited that the airport will be able to undertake this project and furthermore, you might have heard we have a Fourth Parallel Runway in the planning stages, actually, construction stages right now with some elements of it.

Just recently the airport submitted what's called a "Letter of Intent" to the Federal Aviation Administration to commit Federal Funding for construction of that runway. We expect to hear back from the FAA later this year as to whether they have accepted that Letter of Intent or not. So, big things coming to the airport and, with the airport, there's always more to come. So, be ready for things in the years ahead.

I wanted to highlight the state transportation funding, especially through the Strategic Transportation Investments Program. Ten years ago, in 2013, the General Assembly passed legislation to create the Strategic Transportation Investments Program with wide bipartisan margins, a very popular program. It provides funding to regions for surface transportation. It uses data-driven criteria to distribute that funding and it's been a very good formula for this region. In the last several years it's become apparent that the sources of revenue for it were insufficient due to rising costs and other issues such as supply chain issues we've experienced in the last few years. In last year, the General Assembly, you took action, you dedicated a portion of the state General Funds Sales Tax Revenue to transportation. In another three years from now, there will be \$643 million going to the transportation funds and that is a great boost in the arm for that program and when you couple that with the new federal funding that came through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, you are talking a lot of money for transportation. Of course, we all know there's more that needs to be done, and we look forward to seeing what might be out there in the future.

Okay, the next one, the Charlotte Gateway Station. A few of you in this room, Representative Logan, were at the groundbreaking for the track work for the Charlotte Gateway Station several years ago and this station will create a transit hub, here in uptown Charlotte. The first phase of the project, the track work, has now been completed. That work was funded by the Federal Government, the City, and the State of North Carolina. There's quite a bit of funding from the state on that project. We will now be able to enter into the second phase of that project and that is a public-private partnership to have the transit hub constructed and completed and that will include a new Amtrak Station. It will include a bus facility, and it will also serve as a point for the transit lines, right now the CityLYNX Gold Line will have a stop at the Gateway Station. This is a rendering, a beautiful rendering of what the facility will look like. So, if you go out there today trying to look for this, you won't find it. This is something about what it will look like. So, we're really excited about this project too.

Now I realize in the past when I've provided updates, I don't usually provide too many about Charlotte Water. Let's face it, they are very, very important to us and they are undertaking now a new project, a new treatment facility for wastewater. It's called the Joseph Stowe Regional Water Resource Facility. It will be just an amazing project! We have so much growth in Mecklenburg County, especially the western part and the northern part of it, but this facility will also serve the towns of Mount Holly and Belmont in Gaston County. Those two towns have some pretty aged facilities for wastewater treatment, and they will be closing them up and there are tunnels that are being drilled underneath the Catawba River to get the wastewater to that new site. There will be a groundbreaking for this in this coming June, June of 2023. We hope to have it online sometime in the year 2026. Now, the two towns of Mount Holly and Belmont each of them has received, I believe it's State Clean Water Revolving Loans Funds to finance their part of the cost of the project. Those loan funds were provided by the Federal Government. They're administered by the states and it's a very good use of that funding. There will also be, I really like this part of it, a beautiful rendition here right along the river, but there's going to be a 90-acre community benefit area involved with this. So, it's not all going to be just wastewater facilities, but 90 acres around it with trails and other things like that.

Finally, let's get to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department's CARES (Community Assistance: Respond, Engage, Support) Team. Remember a couple of years ago there

was some funding in the 2021 State Budget that would go to three police departments around the state to implement the STAR Program, which means Support Team Assistive Response. CMPD (Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department) was one of those police departments that received funding, \$330,000. That enabled them, along with some City funding, to implement the CARES Team to respond to the low-risk events mainly people who have some homeless issues perhaps or maybe some mental health challenges where you do not need to send an officer out to that call. The team started working back in December, they responded to 100 calls since then. I'm pleased to say that only two of those calls have resulted in arrest. I believe that's what the General Assembly was seeking. They wanted to find a response to these types of events where you didn't need to have a police officer. So, we're really excited so far about the results and of course, this pilot program will be ongoing for at least another several months or so. Mayor Lyles, that is all I have for City updates and got to turn it back to you.

Mayor Lyles said are there any questions that you have about anything that you've seen because we've got a team here and they are glad to answer any questions, airport, CMPD, before we dive into what the upcoming Legislative Agenda would be? I wanted to make sure you have the opportunity. Alright then Dana, why don't we just go ahead and go to our 2023 Legislative Agenda.

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ITEM NO. 4: CITY OF CHARLOTTE 2023 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Dana Fenton, City Manager's Office said thank you, Mayor. What I really like about presenting it today, not only is it because some significant legislation has already gone through the General Assembly, but the first thing I want to talk about today is the Civilian Traffic Crash Investigators. This is an outgrowth of our SAFE (Safety and Accountability For Everyone) Charlotte Process that resulted in a SAFE Charlotte Plan being adopted in 2020 and the thing about this legislation, it's already been introduced. One of the bills has already gone through a House Committee and is poised to be sent to the House Floor within the next few weeks. This is very similar to the CARES Team concept, where you have trained civilians who respond to low-risk events. So, there is an opportunity here to have trained civilians respond to nonlethal traffic accidents. Again, they would be trained. There would be rules in place for how they are deployed and what they can do. For example, what they will not be doing is issuing citations, which was a red line for a lot of members of the General Assembly last year and we are partnering on this legislation with the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police and the League of Municipalities and there's a lot of other cities that support it as well. So, I think we're off to a good start with this legislation.

Pretrial Services, this is another part of our SAFE Charlotte initiative. This is something that Chief Jennings has spoken very passionately about several times over the last year or so. What we're doing, we're supporting legislation that brings more accountability and reliability to the Pretrial Release System. We're working with the North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys and the Association of Chiefs of Police on this issue. What the legislation would do is to require judges to determine the pretrial conditions for individuals charged with serious crimes, such as murders, robbery, kidnapping, sexual assaults. Many times, for those types of cases, those individuals appear in front of a magistrate, and they are released on bond. Sometimes after the arrest is made, they're booked in at the detention center, a Magistrate will release them on pretrial within an hour. We believe in cases like this, for the serious crimes that is, that they should have to go before a judge to determine the pretrial release conditions, and even if a pretrial release is warranted for their case. Again, we're talking about cases such as murder, sexual assault, kidnapping, robbery, very serious offenses, and we anticipate that legislation will be filed on this in the next few weeks. So, there is more to come on it.

The next one is the Homestead Tax Exemption, and this is part of our Affordable Housing Strategy here in the City. As you've seen in the past, we've had several bond issues approved for the City to provide assistance in getting affordable housing built, but

another part of that strategy that you really don't hear much about is there's a lot of different things we're working on, and we're working very closely on aging in place issues. This is the effort for older adults to be able to live in the community and to be able to, what they call, age in place. This is what we're seeking here is supportive of that concept. The Homestead Tax Exemption Program, I'm sure many of you are aware of it. This is a program that enables people with limited incomes to have a break on their property taxes and what we've found is that with a statewide amount that's set by the legislature and also by the North Carolina Department of Revenue, that amount right now is \$33,800 per year, but that doesn't go very far here in Mecklenburg County. It may go further in more rural counties, but it doesn't here, and other urban counties are facing the same issue. So, we're partnering with Mecklenburg County, the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, and the Real Estate Building and Industry Coalition to get that raised. It's anticipated that legislation like the other one will be filed in the next few weeks, but it will include an option for the larger counties to adjust maximum income threshold to account for disparities in the cost of living with other parts of the state. So, more to come on that. Again, Mecklenburg County is the entity that administers this program on behalf of the state, and they have done yeoman work on this, this year. They are working very, very closely with the other partners like we are, and also with, they are taking part in that bill drafting effort.

Alright, let's turn to infrastructure and specifically the Powell Bill. Earlier we were talking about the data-driven programs that distribute funding for transportation needs, whether it's the North Carolina Airports Improvement Program or the State Transportation Investments Program and how that criteria for those programs help our region improve the transportation and aviation networks. There are two other data-driven programs I want to bring up with you. The first is the State Maintenance Assistance Program for transit and this is used for maintaining our bus fleet. That funding was restored for all the transit agencies in the 2021 State Budget, which we're very thankful for. In 2020, the City's Powell Bill allocation was set at two-thirds of our Fiscal Year 2020 allocation and the result is, well first of all it's still in effect this year and the impact this year is about \$9 million to the City's Powell Bill Fund. With that two-thirds cap on our Powell Bill, our residents risk navigating more streets with more potholes, cracking, ruts, heaved areas and utility cuts. Essentially the timeframe between repavings for streets would go up. It would be a longer term of years, but without the cap we'll be able to respond to those street maintenance needs on a much quicker schedule. For example, street repavings, every two years we have a street repaving list to accomplish in the next two years. We'd like to see more streets added to that list, of course.

Finally, we're talking a little bit about mobility here. Before we get to mobility, these are the uses that the City utilizes its Powell Bill for. Anyways, we're using it for street paving, resurfacing, maintenance, drainage and storms, sewer, traffic control, snow and ice and equipment leases. Essentially, several years ago in the transportation committees in the House and Senate, there was discussion about how this funding could be used. Legislators wanted to emphasize, repaving, street maintenance, things like that, as opposed to sidewalks, and bicycle lanes, which we don't use that funding for, and essentially, this is what we're doing. I think we're following what the General Assembly had said in committee, that the leadership had said that they would like to see the funding be used for and street paving and resurfacing is a single biggest part of that. It's around \$7.5 million a year.

Next one, the final one is mobility and, of course, this is an issue that is forefront in our minds, and I know all of our minds, of course. The transportation network in Charlotte in Mecklenburg County, it's utilized we'd like to say by residents, businesses, and visitors on a daily basis. You know, too, our region's growing rapidly. We're faced with challenges concerning not just moving around, but also equity access to opportunity, housing and sustainability. All of those issues, it's an all-in-one approach to working on those issues and mobility is right at the center of it and our vision is based on opportunity. We want to ensure that our residents have a good quality of life and opportunities for economic mobility and these issues need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner that involves working on a cross-jurisdictional basis. That's what we have been doing and these reasons here, this is why we're focused on

mobility. We still have a lot of work to do in this, of course, but it is something that is in the forefront of our minds. This is the position that was adopted by the Charlotte City Council on mobility and again, we're continuing to work with our stakeholders in the region, especially our partners right here in the county, in Mecklenburg County, the towns, the county, and, of course, ourselves. We've been working within the county on a cooperative basis for the last 25 years through the Metropolitan Transit Commission and we'll continue to do that. Also, what we are seeking is the authority for the voters to tell us whether they're willing to tax themselves for improvements to the transportation network and then, of course, longer-term vision is the ability of all the localities to be able to issue revenue bonds with the revenue that would be collected.

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ITEM NO. 5: DISCUSSION

Mayor Lyles said well, I'm glad to turn it over for questions from the delegation or comments from our Council members.

Councilmember Watlington said I just want to piggyback off Mr. Drigg's comments around transportation. I know that we've had a lot of conversation here about what we believe is happening in Raleigh, what the appetite is as it relates to transportation or what needs to be true for it to even move at all. I just want to know if anybody can speak to what the current conversation is in Raleigh as it relates to mobility and what we could be doing to make that a little more palatable there.

Representative Cunningham said since I'm touching Huntersville now, actually go inside Huntersville, I've had some conversations with Mayor Bales as well as had conversations with my colleague, Representative Bradford. They are not ready. They see a pushback as far as being included in the plan to move forward because there're some issues that were preexistent, but we're still talking about it. We're not through talking about it. One thing I'll say and being straightforward and honest about it, it's good that Dana is up there walking the halls because those interactions mean something and he's not just always talking to us. He's talking to other people and the power in Raleigh is on the other side of the aisle.

One of things that you must recognize is they do hold the power and you have to do some negotiating and you have to do some conversating and be present in their face. So, that's about the size of it. If they've made a decision of what they are not going to do, they're not going to do it and basically because lots of people say the state of Mecklenburg. I say stop saying it's the state of Mecklenburg, because the power is not in Mecklenburg. The power is in Raleigh, and we have to recognize that and learn how to work within the space that we have to operate and function in every day. So, Dana, thank you for coming, thank you for being there because it's not an easy job. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, Representative Cunningham. I really appreciate the candid and truthful and direct way that you said that because we do understand that is the issue and what's going on. Even with all of our history, I'd like to say it was 2007 since the Blue Line was initiated. Part of what we were doing, and we were very fortunate to have the support from both, everyone in the county, and the ability to put something on the ballot, so that people could do this. At the same time as we go further, and we expect between 200,000 and 300,000 people in the next ten years and if everybody brings their 1.6 cars with them, the issues that we have around mobility are not just moving people for people's sake. It's about how do we have jobs and people having the ability to get to home and work in a way and especially around affordable housing because if we expect everyone to live in Charlotte and have a car, then we're going to be gridlocked.

Imagine if we don't have the ability to have people live in places that are more affordable than Charlotte? Where do they get to work and how do they get to work, and we believe that this idea of mobility is one that's significant around the entire economic

development for our community and we believe more. I just want to acknowledge that Mayor Hinnant in Kannapolis and I are chairing the Advance Beyond Committee out of the COG (Council of Governments). So, as we talk about what we're trying to do, what we're really working on as a regional aspect not just Charlotte and so we know that many of you have lines that cross Huntersville, cross over into other parts of our county, but we got to start with our county first. That is a significant challenge for us, but one that we think has a place for us to do this and so hopefully this isn't something that I know that we do in a year, and I know it's not something that we're going to get immediately. It takes a lot of communication and education, and we're grateful for the delegation taking the time to work with us. We also see other people in our community, our other mayors, our other representatives at the state level, participating in this dialogue and it is a dialogue.

Representative Logan said thank you, Madam Mayor. I had a conversation with the Railroads in my office the other day. I don't have my notes with me, but I was very happy to hear it because I'm a big train person. Trains are expanding! Within the next two months, he said that they would be looking at the rail system coming out of Asheville, down Old Fort through Salisbury. He was telling me he said much like I was familiar with as a child, that corridor. They are looking to expand rail system up to 12 new corridors, he said, within the next few years. From Charlotte to Greeneville, North Carolina, it's going to open up. They would be expanding corridors out of Charlotte to Raleigh. They're going to be having I think about five more running out of Charlotte. He said so the rail system is really going to be picking up. They're expanding the tracks down in through Cary to where freight will not be stopping the passenger trains from coming through because passengers' trains are usually stopped so freight can move. So, they are expanding the tracks right there in the Cary area so passengers can continue through there. Like Dana was talking, I asked the question, "Where was my new Amtrak Station?" He said they expect that to be right around '26. At first, he said '26. So, I said '26 of what? He said 2026. So, he was in my office for quite a while. Just the other day, we had a good conversation about the rail system here in North Carolina and it sounds pretty good because we talked about you can't build your way out of a transportation system. We can't grow land. We'd have to learn to manage what we have, and I think one way to go with that is rail. We can move a lot of people on the rail system. He said, "It's coming, and it's going to be just in a few years."

Mayor Lyles said I really appreciate you doing and having that conversation with NCRR (North Carolina Railroad). They are an important partner with us. Representative Belk and then I'll come.

Councilmember Driggs said was the first person you were talking to a railroad person or a legislator? Was it Carl?

Mayor Lyles said so, the question is, were you meeting with Carl from NCRR?

Representative Logan said it was not Carl. He was the director of North Carolina Railroad. He was director there, and the liaison, it wasn't Carl.

Mr. Driggs said okay, just curious to know who was able to make all those representations for the railroad.

Mayor Lyles said I'm sure it's NCRR.

Dana Fenton, City Manager's Office said I was adding onto what Representative Logan had to say. I appreciate you bringing that up. I received a map this morning of the 12 corridors that are being sought by NCDOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation). I'd be glad to share that with the Mayor and Council and with the delegation as a follow-up to this meeting. There are four different lines there that touch Charlotte. There's the Charlotte to Winston Salem, Charlotte to Kings Mountain, I think Charlotte to Greensboro, I believe, and then another is Charlotte to Atlanta. So, there would be a lot in there at stake for us.

Mayor Lyles said that's so important. All of those are very important, some more important than others. I do say a lot of those lines include a lot of our region that we would have because what we're doing in Kannapolis with the Research University, what we're doing in Concord with the Eli Lilly, and all the development, these are all opportunities for trains to serve people in a way that they can get to work and have job opportunities. This really is about upward mobility and also keeping our region vibrant and ready for the economy that we can build, that we work to provide for our residents.

Councilmember Winston said to that point, I know some of our neighbors in Gaston County are also exploring some ideas around rail, some exciting things. So, I definitely think everybody in the room should find ways to kind of sharpen our pencils around what they're doing and if there's ways that we can support them in that, I would certainly encourage all of us to get smarter about that and find ways to do that. So, I think there are exciting things that are happening about rail all across the state. I mean when you look back at our history the way we often talk about the urban-rural divide, but the history of this state has been the actual connections between our rural communities and our urban centers to grow business in this state through many different time periods. So, in a lot of ways we're trying to turn the clock back, and I think we should remind all of our constituents about that. I think that's valuable as we try to kind of contextualize the problems that we have and the solutions to those problems. In a lot of these situations, the tracks are already on the ground. So, how do you improve infrastructure that we already have, but also encourage us, this idea of the great state of Mecklenburg, the great state of Charlotte, what have you? Control what we can control about that, right? We can't stop other people from calling us names, but we can certainly change the narrative, right? I've been trying to understand this over the past few years that I've been in office of how do we change this?

Some of the advice that I've actually gotten in the last couple of months has been interesting. Take a look at Texas. Why is Texas so powerful? There's a lot that goes into it, but obviously there's a diversity of thought when it comes to the Federal delegations. When there's an issue about Texas, they move as a whole, it doesn't matter Democrat or Republican, they move things through, and they find ways to get together. So, while our delegation might be unbalanced, it actually, if we think about it, it could be a way that we could find ways to provide strong bipartisan support when parts of Mecklenburg County need things, how can we move as a one Mecklenburg delegation? I'm not suggesting that that doesn't happen, but every time that we have the opportunity, I think doing that allows us to have a narrative and it speaks to the rest of the state that Mecklenburg is strong and they're going to move together regardless of who is representing the certain geography. So, I think an opportunity, as Mr. Fenton said, the Homestead Act could be one of those things. I do believe, heard that there will be, just as Mr. Fenton said, that there will be some legislation that could be considered pretty soon and could be considered in a bipartisan fashion. So, I would hope that you would read that closely and it would be great if we could get all of Mecklenburg County supporting that as that comes forward.

Representative Belk said one of the good things that we have going and we have worked on is that our delegation does move together as a whole and we're open to talking to and we have to be, to be realistic, and to get the things done that we need in our county is to cross that aisle and work. That stuff is happening even around mobility and transportation. There are a lot of people that are coming together with different ideas and saying, "Okay, let's get this done!" They're not ready to finish what's going on. They are still working on that and it's going to come because they all know that we talk about exactly what the Mayor talked about, what everyone talked about. This has to do with development, and this has to do with where people live, it has to do with business being able to continue to do that, so, we do. We have always supported as an entire delegation having the Trust Fund and having that absolutely. So, I'm sure we're going to continue to do that.

Senator Waddell said I just heard some information about drafting of bills and about legislation coming forward concerning Homestead and to let you know there's something in drafting concerning that as we speak. We got to put those fine touches to

it, because it is important that we have places for our elderly to remain in their homes and you have a lot of that here in Mecklenburg County and it has an effect on all of our neighborhoods. So, we're working on that and working very closely. The details of it, how much a person has to have in order to be able to be tax exempt needs to increase, needs to change because our salaries are changing, income is changing. We got to be mindful of that, so it's in drafting, we'll have to put the details to it to make it palatable. So, thank you for mentioning it. That you Mayor Pro Tem Braxton for mentioning that.

Mr. Winston said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay, I think that Mr. Driggs wants to address us, but I promised you that we would get you out in time for your next meeting. I know that you met with CPCC (Central Piedmont Community College) earlier today. I want you to know how much we support that Community College. It's actually a lifeline for so many things and we're talking about how we do workforce development and upscaling people, all talking about how will the impact of the PEARL (Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives) be and what jobs are going to be needed and how the Central Piedmont can contribute and make that possible for everyone. So, know that we come at this in a way that we're talking about quality of life for everyone, and we support those efforts and understand them because they contribute so much to our community.

Mr. Driggs said Mayor, I reckon we have about 60 seconds left. So, it seems like a good time to bring up the subject of I-77. I'll just say briefly right now that CRTPO (Charlotte Regional Transportation Improvement Planning Organization) is in the process of considering alternative approaches to funding for I-77 including a P3 or the STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program). The STIP would result in a delivery of the road in the 2045/2050 timeframe. We were told by NCDOT that if we did a public-private partnership, that could be 10 or 12 years sooner. The urgency there, if anybody has driven on that road, is apparent. Cintra has submitted an unsolicited proposal which has caused controversy because of a lot of the issues around the northern section, so, particularly representatives from northern Mecklenburg will know that this is a sensitive subject. So, I'm not going to try and start a discussion. I just want to make sure that the delegation is aware that those conversations are taking place and, if you have any input on that, since I sit on CRTPO and have some influence there, please get in touch.

Mayor Lyles said I think that's a great suggestion. So, with that, I want to again, express our gratitude to you for the service.

Representative Cunningham said what I wanted to bring up was a piece of legislation that I'm working on and that is more additional grant funding for CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) training for police officers all across the state. I've spoken with Chief Jennings several times and I hope that all of you in our delegation get to know Chief Jennings and reach out to him and know what type of programs are going on. We know across the state of North Carolina that numerous small counties don't have the same funding that we do. So, the grant program would help in the smaller counties, and we could apply for it too, if we need it. It would give that additional opportunity for people to be CIT trained in this Crisis Intervention, which we need very much so because of the complexity of what we're seeing in the communities now is that people going off and people are doing whatever, anytime they feel like it. So, we have entered a different dimension after COVID. We are seeing a number of types of different behaviors displayed and we don't quite understand. So, that's going to be one issue that is going to be coming up, and I know everyone has heard that the Governor and the legislature intend to spend \$1 billion on mental health in the state of North Carolina and so we're looking already to see where we're going to invest and what programs to look at going forward.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. We always appreciate the work that you do as you think about the wellbeing and the health of our community and you're just knocking it out of the ballpark.

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ITEM NO. 6: CLOSING

Mayor Lyles So, with that, thank you again for your service, what you do. Feel free, Dana's in the building often, but we're also going to have more presence by Council members as well and so thank you. Any questions just send them Dana's way, and we'll get back to you. Have a good rest of your Friday.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.


Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 0 Hours, 57 Minutes
Minutes completed: April 16, 2024