

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for Council Committee Discussions on Monday, February 3, 2025, at 6:02 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Marjorie Molina, and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember Malcolm Graham

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmember Dimple Ajmera

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mayor Lyles** said so, this is the opportunity that we take at the beginning of the month to talk about the committee work that the Council is doing as we establish and build on the opportunities that we have as well as to examine those opportunities that we want to have. So, I want to welcome everyone to the Monday, February 3, 2025, meeting for the Charlotte City Council and we'll go ahead and have our Clerk introduce herself and then we'll go around. I do want to say that Ed had his town hall along with James Mitchell having a town hall. So, I think we had a lot of information out for the public and the communities over this week.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 1: COUNCIL COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS**

**Mayor Lyles** said I want to remind everyone that most of us watch this on television. We know what's going on. So, let's get the opportunity for the highlights and then if there are questions, that's more important I believe at this time.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said we had a great meeting led by our Chair Malcolm Graham, myself, Councilmember Driggs, Councilmember Molina, Councilmember Bokhari. We talked about two important things. One, we got an update from workforce development from Danielle, and she's going to come back to us in March 2025 with a whole update and master plan. Then we talked about a new program called C-Piece. C-Piece is a funding option for private developers. The key thing I would say, the big takeaway is we need County participation. So, we talked about how we're going to work with our County Commissioners to make sure they support C-Piece and it will be implemented by the Economic Development Program for the State of North Carolina. That's all I have Mayor for a great meeting we had with ED (Economic Development).

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, any questions for the great Committee work from the Jobs and ED Committee report?

**Councilmember Anderson** said I just have a quick comment about the C-Piece portion. I think what the key takeaway for me was we need to work with our County counterparts because they can approve this to take affect in all of Mecklenburg County which will impact commercial property in Charlotte. So, we really need to be proactive around having a conversation around whether or not we are interested in the program and any other double clicks we'd like to take with that.

Mayor Lyles said well, when we have the opportunity, we will definitely have a follow up. So, thank you very much. Alright. So, any other questions? Hearing none, Mr. Mitchell thank you. Alright. So, the next report that we will have is Transportation, Planning and Development.

**Councilmember Driggs** said our Committee met first this morning. Members are myself as Chair, Ms. Molina as Vice Chair, Mr. Graham, Ms. Johnson and Dr. Watlington. We had two topics. One was an update on the Strategic Energy Action Plan. Sarah Hazel, Robin Byers and Julie and Joy with Ernst and Young are working on an update of the plan which will be interesting. It reviews the experience of the last five

years and also establishes some new goals based on science, based on coordination with international agencies and so on. The plan for that is that we will be told about updated focus areas in March 2025, review strategies and actions and then in April 2025 the goal is to adopt an updated SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan) by Council. The other topic was the Unified Development Ordinance.

**Councilmember Ajmera arrived at 6:06 p.m.**

There were basically two reports there, one related to conforming our UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) to the Senate Bill 382, I think it was. The Bill that basically prohibited down zoning, and staff are in the process of reviewing all the places where language changes may be needed in order to conform with that, particularly given that it goes back six months. It's retroactive. So, there's quite a lot of work done there, although at the same time some bills have been filed or are being filed in the legislature that might change the requirements and rollback a little bit of what is in there. So, staff are adapting to the thing as written, but we're prepared for the possibility that there will be some relief on points that were really probably not intended the way it was written.

The other part of that report was text amendments that are in process as part of our ongoing kind of living document modification of the UDO. So, there will be Council decisions in the second quarter of 2025 on UDO residential refinement texts as filed in the spring and in the third and fourth quarters, they will be working on a semiannual maintenance text amendment with a few modifications that we were told about in the meeting. That's it.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I do have a few questions about the update that we received. I was able to watch it. I wasn't able to attend it today. There was a graph that Mr. Pettine showed, the impact of the Senate Bill 382. I wanted to get some detail or some more information. It looked as though faith-based initiative might be affected or delayed, neighborhood overlay and then I had a question about ADUs (Affordable Dwelling Units). So, I didn't know if the Housing Committee was going to get this same presentation or if someone from staff could give us some detail about that.

Mr. Driggs said we saw a table that showed because of 382, what the impacts might be and one implication was a potential delay in the faith-based. The goal was to broaden it to include other organizations. There was some question whether as conceived, the 382 would be triggered by what we were doing. So, they're just working on it. I don't think there's any loss of commitment to it, but the thing was intended to show that as a result of the State legislation, it could take a little longer. I cautioned them against using the word delay. So, they were walking on tiptoes, but I think that's all it is. So, we are expecting it to be realized and just as committed as before, but there are some issues that have to be worked out because of State law.

Ms. Johnson said then ADUs, I wanted to know what the implication would be.

Mr. Driggs said so, I don't think we heard a lot about what is going on with ADUs. I mean the conversation is pretty much the same as it was, but once again, that chart that you saw was in the context of State law and its effects. So, I can't recall exactly whether or not the staff went into detail on the impact on ADUs, but it's the same general principle which is they're conforming our language to align with State law, and then we will find out whether or not they're actually any subsequent changes to the state law, but I don't think there's a fundamental change in our policy about ADUs.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Thank you.

**Councilmember Bokhari** said super quick. If we're going to be contemplating SEAP changes, increases, things like that, I just want to make sure we have a view of what budget and investment implications it has had over the period that it has been out there. So, I would hinge any additional things that I would want to do based on a lookback of what those budget implications were and what they ultimately achieved.

Mr. Driggs said we did talk about that in the meeting today and one thing I pointed out was that as we look at what we're trying to achieve, like zero carbon emissions at a date in the future. A lot of the things that you can do to achieve that costs money and particularly if we have a community wide goal involving other people and not just us, then it may be that in order to achieve those goals, we will have to ask ourselves, "Do we want to actually offer policy or financial incentives the way we do for housing?" So, I agree I'm watching also pretty critically to make sure that if we reach a point where we want to invest, we are mindful of the fact that what we do locally has only a limited effect on the air because it moves around. It's a national, it's international. So, I haven't heard anything yet from the discussion about the update in some of the goals which were more to align with international organizations and science and didn't in my mind represent a radical departure from our policy of the last five years financially. So, that's all I can tell you right now but it's a very valid question. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright. Thank you. Alright, our next report is from Budget Governance and Intergovernmental Relations.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said so before I give an update, I just wanted to recognize Committee members starting with Vice Chair Councilmember Bokhari, Councilmember Brown, Councilmember Mayfield and Councilmember Mitchell. So, during today's Committee meeting we discussed two very important topics. First is our budget development process for fiscal year 2026. I'm sure all of you have this timeline budget development topics where it talks about what we are going to discuss at our budget workshop. We have two budget workshops. As you can see, one on February 10, 2025, and one is on March 24, 2025. The Committee will take a deeper dive into our enterprise funds, water, stormwater, CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System), aviation, pretty much a similar process as to what we had done in previous years. So, from our Committee discussion, I did emphasize that we should plan ahead and potentially look at the [inaudible]. If there is a potential version two that comes up, we need to be prepared for it. So, staff will bring us some updates and we'll discuss that as either a Committee or in one of our budget workshops. So, a potential impact of whether it's CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds or anything else that we should be looking at.

As part of our budget review topics, Councilmember Mitchell wanted us to review the financial partner process in depth. As many of you know, we revised our financial partner process last year. That was the charge that was given to our Committee where we said we want to streamline our processes for the financial partners so that we are not spending five hours at one of our budget workshops discussing half a million dollars, which is less than five percent of our budget. So, I really hope that we make a commitment to each other that we stick to the process that the Committee and full Council has approved and adopted, so that we can have very effective and efficient conversations at our budget workshop, especially during budget adjustments. There was a very streamlined process that was introduced for financial partners to apply back in October 2024. All the applications were supposed to be received by December 2024. Marie Harris and Cherie, they have been doing an excellent job trying to do an outreach. This is the first time we had 51 applications for our financial partners. This has been the highest. So, that means that Marie and Cherie, they both did an excellent job trying to do an outreach. So, I think at this point if you were to introduce new partners during our Budget Adjustment Meeting, it would be unfair to the ones who did submit their applications on time and followed the process that you all approved. So, I know that Councilmember Mayfield and Mitchell wanted me to highlight the fact that hopefully six of us at least will stick to that during our Budget Adjustments Meeting. So, that's on financial partners. If there are no additional questions on that, I can give an update on the second item which is the MWSBE (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise).

Mayor Lyles said are there any questions on the recommendation to maintain the policy as it was and to have the 51 partners that submitted to be the discussion point for the budget process? So, is there anyone that disagrees with that?

**Councilmember Brown** said I'm only one. It doesn't matter.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Brown said I don't need to go into detail.

Ms. Ajmera said alright. So, the second item we had on our agenda was increasing MWSBE participation in our capital projects. So, we had the CBI (Charlotte Business INClusion) team provide an update on their work to review our current procurement policy and the policies that are being used for capital project contracting. So, as you know we received this big package right before the retreat. I hope all of you had an opportunity to review that. It answered a lot of the questions and just the process in depth, but pretty much CBI has developed this CIP (Capital Investment Plan) master utilization plan to increase our utilization rate from minority women owned businesses. It streamlines our procurement process; it really expands our outreach. It also delivers our targeted support.

So, you see based on the pilot, and this will be presented by the CBI team, that our goal is to really increase the percentage of MWSBE participation and really the total amount of the MWSBE spend. That's our goal that Council had asked for. We are also tracking the number of MWSBEs that are being awarded prime contracts. We will also be tracking new businesses that are being certified. So, I'm looking forward to providing some sort of recommendation at our next Committee meeting. In report out you will hear staff's recommendations as well as the Committee's recommendations. One point that I did want to highlight that Councilmember Mitchell and Councilmember Mayfield had asked staff to look into is Council members serving on the selection process for contracts. The County outlet, Councilmember Mitchell talked about that in depth, but pretty much the County has a process where they let a County Commissioner serve on selection process for architecture and general contractor. In our package that you all received, staff doesn't recommend that, neither does the City Attorney. So, I'll let the City Attorney provide an update on that if y'all have questions or a Committee member can chime in. So, currently we are waiting. We will be getting more information on that, but that was really the gist of MWSBE participation. That's all I have Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said any other questions for Ms. Ajmera or a member of the Committee? Okay. So, we look forward to having the 51 financial partners be reviewed with no exception for people that would be responsive after that deadline, and that we will begin to work through that. I believe as well the City Attorney will provide, I guess, additional information on how the process should work if we're looking at MWBEs (Minority and Women Business Enterprise) and who does what. Is that correct?

**Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney** said yes. We were posed with the question and then we are going to look at the County policy that has a practice of allowing Commissioners, at least one or two to sit on a Selection Committee. Then we're going to look at the breadth of what the goal is with regards to this Council, and how to meet that goal perhaps in other ways.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Thank you. So, we'll have that.

Ms. Johnson said I just wanted to clarify. You relayed it as no exception. I know that was a recommendation that six of the Council members hope that the group is closed, but are we saying no exception or are we just recommending that we not present another potential partner after this period? Because here's the thing. We don't know who might come to us at that time. We don't know what the priority would be. I didn't want to say no exception, but is that what we're saying? No exception firmly?

Ms. Ajmera said yes ma'am.

Mr. Mitchell said Councilmember Johnson, we're just trying to level the playing field and be as efficient as we can on May 19, 2025, and May 29, 2025. We just felt like the application was out from October 2024 to December 2024 and it would kind of be unfair to those that did apply, the 51 applications we did receive, that during our discussion,

we would introduce someone else in the process. So, we're just trying to level the playing field to make sure we can be efficient during our budget discussion.

Mayor Lyles said I appreciate you asking that to clarify it, especially since you had something in your thought that we should do it differently. So, I want to make sure that this is what the Council agreed to. I know Ms. Brown already said she's addressed that for herself. So, I believe it would be accurate that we all agree to accept the 51 applications. Okay? Thank you.

Ms. Brown said not we all. We all don't agree.

Mayor Lyles said with the exception of Ms. Brown.

Ms. Johnson said maybe there should be a vote.

Mayor Lyles said I wrote down Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown said I'm a strong no.

Ms. Johnson said maybe there should be a vote, Mayor, on that. Maybe there should be a vote so it's on record who's for it and against it.

Mayor Lyles said I'm fine with that. I think a vote would be helpful for guidance. So, I'll recognize Ms. Mayfield first.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said what I supported is that we review the 51, recognizing we have a process that we started last year, we're streamlining. That doesn't mean that these 51 are the ones that are automatically going to be approved and awarded at whatever amount that they requested.

Ms. Ajmera said exactly. Right.

Ms. Mayfield said so, while we're having this conversation, I want to make sure that we have transparency, and we don't give misinformation or the ability for misinterpretation that the 51 that applied are automatic.

Ms. Ajmera said that's right.

Ms. Mayfield said those are the ones that we're going to review.

Ms. Ajmera said eligible.

Ms. Mayfield said what I think in Committee we were trying to do, based on previous conversations last year and with changes, is we were trying to say opposed to doing what we historically do when we all vie and spend a day plus in adds and deletes trying to get \$100,000 here, \$50,000 there, whatever that amount is. That we streamline that because we've had a full year, we stick between the 51 and have real discussions around them of whether or not we're going to fund and if so, at what level?

Mayor Lyles said yes, thank you for saying that that way because it's basically saying that these 51, they're all going to be reviewed.

Ms. Ajmera said they're eligible.

Mayor Lyles said okay. I think you did a really great job. Thank you, Ms. Mayfield.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, 51 will be eligible.

Mayor Lyles said right. Okay.

Ms. Johnson said one other question. I don't know what the RFP (Request For Proposal) looked like, I don't know if it was very clear that that was the deadline, that no additional applications would be accepted or how that was presented. So, we have to look at that legally, I guess, but I don't know, or we can just take a vote on how we want to move forward.

Mayor Lyles said well I think it would be good to take the vote and then my understanding is that the members on the Committee really had some purview for this.

Mr. Fox said Madam Mayor, if you would like for me to propose a motion for the Council with regards to this issue.

Mayor Lyles said I know we have to put it on the agenda.

Mr. Fox said I think the motion really relates to with regards to your financial partners during the budget process, the motion should be whether to limit any consideration to the 51 financial partners who submitted applications within the timeframe established by the Council.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Mr. Fox said by the City.

Mayor Lyles said okay. The question is now do you want to vote on this tonight?

Ms. Brown said I'm fine with voting on it. Mine is a no.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Brown said discussion, no discussion. I spoke about how I felt about the process. I'm not sure if everyone that could know about the process. There are some concerns, some loopholes with the way that some of the organizations have been funded. I don't think everybody's been funded. There's some things going on. I'm just going to vote no. It's a no for me because I think we can do a better job of coming together and making sure that it's pretty clear on how they can apply, but I think that some of the organizations that want to apply that may not have the full instruction, who I advocate for, and I understand we run a professional business, we have a \$4.2 billion budget, but I just want to kind of see something different. Like what United Way does for organizations and maybe we're a part of that.

Mayor Lyles said I think that as you say, there's lots of ways to do this.

Ms. Brown said yes.

Mayor Lyles said I think that what we're trying to do is figure out how the best way it is to accomplish what I think the Committee Chair was saying is that, you know, instead of it being kind of like, I don't know, chaotic might be the word that I would use, but to be able to narrow it to the 51. I don't believe that we have to say that's the next time that we do something. I believe that we should always try to improve what we're doing.

Ms. Brown said okay.

Mayor Lyles said so, if this is a chance that we would have for what we have in place now, that I think the staff perhaps are ready to move forward.

Ms. Brown said yes, we're ready to move forward and I clearly understood Councilmember Ajmera, the way she presented it and I understand the Council, but just I can't. I don't want to support it.

Mayor Lyles said I understand.

Ms. Brown said I'm in feelings about the way that we approach things for this particular item. That's it. I'm not angry, I'm not upset but I just, for me, I don't want to support it in its capacity.

Mayor Lyles said thank you so much.

Ms. Brown said you're welcome.

Mr. Driggs said so, if I understand the issue, the question is whether or not we limit ourselves to people who submitted timely applications. I would just like to emphasize that deadline is important. We're processing these applications, we're ranking them, the staff is looking at them. There needs to be some timeframe around that. So, I feel pretty strongly that we ought to respect that deadline and I'm willing to make a motion. Let's see whether or not we can get the answer that we limit ourselves. Can I do that now?

Mr. Fox said well I don't know if it was on the agenda.

Mayor Lyles said well I think it's on the agenda because it's a report from the Committee coming out and the Committee discussed it.

Mr. Fox said okay.

Mr. Driggs said so, I would note it's 0.01 percent of our budget, just so we're clear on the magnitude here.

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to limit for the purposes of financial partner grounds consideration to those who submitted timely applications.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Driggs, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Brown and Johnson

Mayor Lyles said thank you. Alright. So, now our next is Housing, Safety and Community meeting.

**Councilmember Watlington** said so, today we met as you know, the Housing, Safety and Community Committee service Chair with my Vice Chair Councilmember Mayfield and members Councilmember Brown, Johnson and Ajmera. Today we had one item which was our follow up from last month and an ongoing policy referral which is related to our minimum housing code. So, we were able to get some feedback on some of the work that staff has already been doing as it relates to stakeholder engagement. We got some early insights. Staff did some benchmarking and gave us some information about where we sit versus some of the other cities as it relates to our civil penalties. We also did two deep dives into our case studies, Lamplighter and in Tanglewood Apartments to really understand what opportunities, what constraints, what key learning needs to come out of that as it relates to our processes and how we can strengthen our code enforcement processes and our partnerships externally.

Some of the things that we're looking forward to, one thing that I know is particularly important to Councilmember Brown was additional stakeholder focus group meetings including residents in particular. Vice Chair Mayfield lifted up that we're not just wanting to preserve affordable housing and definitely what we do not want to do is preserve slum lords or slums, but what we'd like to do is ensure that people are able to get connected to our workforce development programs over time. We're really trying to drive economic mobility and to the extent that folks do need affordable housing, Councilmember Ajmera was particularly vocal about making sure that that affordable

housing is quality affordable housing. Then Councilmember Johnson brought up some great points as it related to enabling folks to number one, be able to get into housing and have access to it despite whatever their background and then also wanted to make sure that we're using whatever tools that we have in place to hold property owners accountable, particularly to recoup the costs that we invest when we have to go in and remediate. So, those were some of the things that were on the table, some of the things that we're looking forward to recommendations from Committee, but I would open it up to Vice Chair and other members of the Committee to add any additional comments. None? Awesome. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said no additional comments? Any questions from your other colleagues that were not there? Okay. So, that concludes the Housing and Safety Community Committee meeting. Mr. Jones, do you have anything?

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said no.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **ITEM NO. 2: CLOSED SESSION (AS NECESSARY)**

No closed session occurred.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Brown, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.
---

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.



---

Ariel Smith, Lead Clerk

Length of Meeting: 0 Hours, 32 Minutes  
Minutes Completed: March 24, 2025