

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina reconvened for Action Review on Monday, April 10, 2023, at 5:14 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Edmund Driggs, Malcolm Graham, LaWana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston, II.

**ABSENT:** Councilmembers Tariq Bokhari and Reneé Johnson.

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmembers Danté Anderson and Marjorie Molina.

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## **ACTION REVIEW**

### **ITEM NO. 1: MAYOR AND COUNCIL CONSENT ITEM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Mayor Lyles** said alright, now I think the first item on our agenda is to ask Ms. Harris to walk through any of the questions that you would raise in addition to the document that you have in front of you where she has responded. So, Ms. Harris, are there any additional questions or comments?

**Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget** said yes, good evening, Mayor and Council. I've gotten a chance to follow up with a couple of you, but does anybody else have any questions on the consent items for tonight?

**Councilmember Mayfield** said not an additional but would like to pull 16 aside.

Mayor Lyles said that will be a business item. So, right now, I think that Mr. Winston, do you still want to have a separate vote on number 44? So, if there are no further questions, we will have a separate vote on item 44, and the remaining items that are on the Consent Agenda. Do I have a motion to approve the Consent agenda items 37 through 56, with the exception of item 44?

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## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **ITEM NO. 2: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 37 THROUGH 56 MAY BE CONSIDERED IN ONE MOTION EXCEPT FOR THOSE ITEMS REMOVED BY A COUNCIL MEMBER. ITEMS ARE REMOVED BY NOTIFYING THE CITY CLERK.**

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, and carried unanimously to approve Consent Agenda items 37 through 56 as presented, with the exception of Item No. 44 which was pulled for discussion.

The following items were approved:

#### **Item No. 37: Stowe Regional Water Resource Recovery Facility Construction Phase 2**

Approve a guaranteed maximum price of \$57,985,658 to Crowder/Garney JV for Design-Build construction services for the Stowe Regional Water Resource Recovery Facility project.

#### **Item No. 38: Vest Water Treatment Plant Concrete Repairs Change Order**

Approve change order #1 for \$789,672.27 to CROM, LLC for the Vest Water Treatment Plant Concrete Repairs project.

#### **Item No. 39: CATS Bus Shelter**

(A) Approve the purchase of bus shelters and related amenities by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with Tolar Manufacturing Company for the purchase

of bus shelters and related amenities for a term of five year, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to one, five-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 40: CATS Facilities Security Camera Maintenance Contract**

(A) Approve a contract with A3 Communications, Inc. for cameras, blue light phones, and video maintenance on all CATS fixed cameras for a three-year term, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 41: CATS Light Rail Vehicle Cleaning Service**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Golden Cleaning Service LLC for light rail vehicle cleaning services for an initial term of one year, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to four one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 42: CATS Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance Services, and Dollies**

(A) Approve the purchase of Light Rail Vehicle dollies by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve the purchase of Light Rail Vehicle dollies from Siemens Mobility, Inc. for a term of five years, (C) Approve an amendment to an existing contract with Siemens for S-70 Rail Car Truck Overhaul Services to add the provision of overhaul services on additional vehicles, and (D) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

**Item No. 43: CATS Paratransit Route Planning Software**

(A) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and approve a contract with Via to provide SaaS solutions for Paratransit Computer Aided Dispatch/Automated Vehicle Location and Route Planning for a term of five years, (B) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was awarded, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to purchase such additional software licenses, services, hardware, maintenance and support, and system upgrades/expansions as required to maintain the system for as long as the city uses the system.

**Item No. 45: Public Auction for Disposal of Surplus Equipment**

(A) Adopt a resolution declaring specific vehicles, equipment, and other miscellaneous items as surplus, (B) Authorize said items for sale by public auction on April 22, 2023, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to approve certain administrative and storage fees as may be required for auction events.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 723.

**Item No. 46: Set a Public Hearing on Mt. Holly Riverside Area Voluntary Annexation**

Adopt a resolution setting a public hearing for April 24, 2023, for Mt. Holly Riverside Area voluntary annexation petition.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 735-737.

**Item No. 47: Resolution of Intent to Abandon a Portion of Dupree Street Right-of-Way**

(A) Adopt a Resolution of Intent to abandon a Portion of Dupree Street Right-of-Way, and (B) Set a Public Hearing for May 8, 2023.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 738.

**Item No. 48: Resolution of Intent to Abandon a Portion of Greensboro Street and a Portion of Raleigh Street Right-of-Way**

(A) Adopt a Resolution of Intent to abandon a Portion of Greensboro Street and a Portion of Raleigh Street Right-of-Way, and (B) Set a Public Hearing for May 8, 2023.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 739.

**Item No. 49: Refund of Property Taxes**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the refund of property taxes assessed through clerical or assessment error in the amount of \$168,558.61.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 740-741.

**Item No. 50: Meeting Minutes**

Approve the titles, motions, and votes reflected in the Clerk's record as the minutes of: February 21, 2022, Zoning Meeting, February 28, 2022, Business Meeting, March 07, 2022, Strategy Session, and March 09, 2022, Budget Workshop.

**PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS**

**IN REM REMEDY**

**Item No. 51: In Rem Remedy: 10912 Tradewinds Lane**

Adopt an ordinance authorizing the use of In Rem Remedy to demolish and remove the structure at 10912 Tradewinds Lane (Neighborhood Profile Area 368).

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 65, at Page(s) 492.

**Item No. 52: Charlotte Water Property Transactions - Clarke Creek Basin PS and FM Project, Parcel #31**

Resolution of Condemnation of 622 square feet (0.01 acres) in Permanent Sewer Easement and 118 square feet (0.00 acres) in Temporary Construction Easement at 11737 Trails End Lane, Unincorporated Area of Mecklenburg County from Michael L. Tinsley and spouse, Tracy W. Tinsley for \$5,625 for Clarke Creek Basin PS and FM, Parcel #31.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 742.

**Item No. 53: Charlotte Water Property Transactions - Clarke Creek Basin PS and FM Project, Parcels #32 and 35**

Resolution of Condemnation of 45,739 square feet (1.05 acres) in Permanent Sewer Easement and 29,072 square feet (0.67 acres) in Temporary Construction Easement at 11731 and 11735 Trails End Lane, Huntersville from Robert Gene Baucom and Gail B. Long for \$40,250 for Clarke Creek Basin PS and FM, Parcels #32 and 35.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 743.

**Item No. 54: Charlotte Water Property Transactions - Clarke Creek Basin PS and FM Project, Parcel #36**

Resolution of Condemnation of 34,423 square feet (0.79 acres) in Permanent Sewer Easement and 22,027 square feet (0.51 acres) in Temporary Construction Easement at 12240 Old Statesville Road, Huntersville from Gloria E. Johnston and Judith Johnston for \$43,775 for Clarke Creek Basin PS and FM, Parcel #36.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 744.

**Item No. 55: Property Transactions - 5531 West Sugar Creek Road, Parcel # 1**

Acquisition of 2,081 square feet (0.047 acres) Permanent Sewer Easement and 1,850 square feet (0.042 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 5524 Chasewind Drive from SFR JV-1 2021-1 Borrower LLC for \$14,350 for 5531 West Sugar Creek Road, Parcel # 1 Program: 5531 West Sugar Creek Road.

**Item No. 56: Property Transactions - Prosperity Church Road (Old Ridge to Benfield), Parcel # 24**

Resolution of Condemnation for 268 square feet (0.006 acres) Fee Simple at 5124 Ridge Road from RK Pointe at Prosperity Village DST for \$1,650 for Prosperity Church Road (Old Ridge to Benfield), Parcel # 24.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 745.

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### ITEM NO. 3: ACTION REVIEW AGENDA OVERVIEW

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said thank you, Mayor and members of the Council. We have two items under the Action Review tonight. First, we'll have an update from Assistant City Manager, Reenie Askew, and Steven Coker, on the CBI (Charlotte Business INClusion) Bonding Program. Some exciting news there. Then, we will have Shawn Heath give you an update on the Housing Trust Fund recommendations. It would be the first set of recommendations that would come from the new \$50 million bond that was passed last year. So, with that, Mayor, if there are not any questions, I'd like to have Reenie and Steve come up.

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### ITEM NO. 4: ACTION REVIEW ITEMS

**Reenie Askew, Assistant City Manager** said Steven Coker, who is responsible for the Office of Business INClusion, is going to do our presentation today, but what's really great is the goal is to help build capacity within the community. So, with that, I want Steven to go ahead and take over.

**Steven Coker, Business Inclusion Officer** said thank you, Reenie, and good evening leadership. This presentation is not going to be that long. I do want to say, though, just to give you a backdrop on all of this. Years ago, I myself, was a contractor who had reached that glass ceiling of not being able to grow beyond my current capacity, and because of a program like this that we're going present to you, I was able to grow my business by being able to obtain surety bonding. In addition to that, and you may have heard this before, probably a month after I walked in the door starting this position, I got the knock from Councilmember Mitchell, "Steve, we have a number of firms who are talking about things like, we can't get bonding." "We can't grow beyond that \$150,000, \$200,000 contract that we're working on at the airport." He said he'd like me, and a couple of others of us, to look into it. I put together a small team, which consisted of Shawn Thomas, who worked here, Michelle Torres, who worked here, and by the way, she's going to be coming back, as well as Holly Eskridge.

We did a lot of fact finding. We looked into what it would take to put together a Bonding Program so that we could present it to leadership. We didn't just simply do that, but we also polled the marketplace to understand if there's evidence-based need for this type of program, and lo and behold, we got over 300 folks raise their hand and said, "If you did this type of program, we would be interested." So, here we are today. We had a selection process, and I'll talk about the firm we selected. This was an RFP (Request For Proposal), but even before that, we issued an RFI (Request For Information) and learned as much as we could about the idea of having a Bonding Program. We talked to Legal, led by our council, Thomas Powers, and we crafted something that would fit the needs of the City of Charlotte.

So, what I'm going to present now, and I'll get through it really quickly, is where we are now and where we hope to go in the next couple months. Just for information, what is a surety bonding? A surety bond offers assurance to the owner of a construction project that the contractor will perform the work specified in the contract and pay it's subcontractors and suppliers. Why is bonding such a problem for small contractors? The evidence suggests that contractor's ability to grow is actually determined by a host of business factors, including their ability to obtain bonds, working capital, which by the way are the two number important reasons why we do a lot of this capacity building

work, bonding and working capital. Then, this lack of bonding and working capital affects their ability to maximize their contracting capacity.

Also, this hurdle was especially prevalent amongst MWSBEs (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise), which we certified, and DBEs (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise), who are the firms who work on the federally funded projects at the airport. Factors include profitability, net worth, working capital, cash flow, work in progress, calculations, overbillings, underbillings, and accounting for change orders, and claims. Now, on the right here, where it says bonding prequalifications, these are all the elements of consideration that a surety will look at, and you're going to be hard pressed to get approved for surety bonding if any one of those are missing. So, wonder why firms can't get it? You look at all firms who have a difficult time obtaining bonding, but particularly your minority and women contractors have a difficult time.

Now, Merriwether and Williams Insurance Services, they are one of the foremost experts in the industry as far as administering these types of programs. They were one of four that responded to our RFP, and after reviewing everything that they presented, our Review Committee, and there was a 100% consensus, this is the firm we want. They have over 25 years doing this type of programs, supporting hundreds of small businesses with obtaining and/or increasing their levels of bonding. They developed contractor supportive service programs with the City. That's what they're hired to do for our certified firms, with a range of technical assistance and financial resources, which will include bonding and capital, to help position these firms to successfully complete City projects and build their capacity. They also, and we really didn't push this too much, but they felt the need to add a local certified firm, The Wonder Group, to help support with community outreach and prime contractor engagement.

Now, the intent of the program, number one, to provide a full range of services, tools, technical support to firms competing on City projects, provide support mechanisms for our certified firms with securing bonding and working capital to participate on our projects, including ones at the airport. Also, leverage their existing relationships with sureties for risk mitigation tools to actually help these firms obtain the bonding, and that was a really important element. Then, provide pathways for our MWSBEs and DBEs to grow from subcontractors to prime contractors, and that's what we do. We really don't want to get someone stuck in a box to always be subcontractors. We want them to grow into primes. So, that's what the grand intention of this program is.

Now, when you talk to Merriwether, they're going to tell there's four pillars of contractor development. There's that assessment period. We will literally have dozens of firms who are looking to participate in this program, and none of them are the same. They all are different. So, that's going to be important. There's the bonding assistance, education and training, and then prime partnerships with our larger firms in the marketplace. Then, once we get them under contract, and we are very close with that happening, now we want them to develop the actual program. We anticipate that to take a couple months, and this will be able to come out of the gate, at least starting the program, I believe in either August or September.

**Councilmember Anderson arrived at 5:26 p.m.**

That's what we're looking like at this current time. As a project plan, we'll have them meet with us to discuss what we're looking for, create a program development and task assignment, set frequency and calendar of weekly progress meetings, meet with prospective CDFIs (Community Development Financial Institution), that's where they're going to be able to borrow the money from, finalize program design, conduct internal staff orientations. They're going to need to meet with our departments to get their input and identify projects that perhaps we might be able to attach this to. Then, we'll have the official launch, like I said in, I would say August/September.

Now, we all know the expression, what gets measured gets done. There are five components representing our KPIs (Key Performance Indicator)/reporting, that we'll look at. We'll give you a report on these periodically, talking about the number of applicants,

the number of firms participating in the first cohort, the number of classes offered and the types of classes, participating MWSBEs and DBEs by category, and the number of firms that have actually established new bonding or increased bonding. So, we'll provide that information on an ongoing basis.

So, again, what are the next steps? This will go before Council members on April 24<sup>th</sup>. We'll have the contract signatures from all parties. We, CBI, will meet with Merriwether and the Wonder Group to discuss the program development and outreach and marketing of the program, and then again, we'll look to commence this initiative, this program in FY (Fiscal Year) 24. That's my presentation, and I would like to open it up for any questions that Council might have.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said Steve and Reenie, thank you all so much for your leadership. I know this has not been an easy journey, but I think end of the day, you got a product here that would make our MWBE feel very proud of the work you're doing on CBI. So, I'm going to say to the formal District rep in District 3, LaWana, this did come up at the airport the first time I got the call, and I have to thank staff for taking off your hat and rolling up your sleeves, and making sure we can get this done. I do have one request, though. If you can move up the implementation to July 1, beginning of the fiscal year, as opposed to August, just a separate request, that's all. Great job. Thank you, Mayor Pro Tem.

**Councilmember Watlington** said thank you. I'm very, very happy to see this come to fruition. I know this one has been a long time coming, and this is very impactful for MWSBE firms. So, I'm very looking forward to the implementation of this. I will plus one to what Mr. Mitchell said. Whatever we can do to help support getting it done or implement it sooner at the beginning of the fiscal, that would be fantastic. So, please know that you've got support there. A couple questions that I have, and it may be later on in the implementation that these are figured out, but can you paint a picture a little bit more about the size of the firms that we anticipate will be able to really assist with this bonding, like what is the target tier, if you will?

Mr. Coker said I will say to your point, we'll know more once we get information and report that to you immediately, but these are going to be firms that are already out of the gate with their businesses. They're already working on construction, and we know this is focused only on construction. It's our largest spend area, and of course, we want to treat this different than how we treat other programs. As far as the firms who participate, they're going to be a variety of size. Some of them actually already have bonding, but they're maybe stuck at, for example, a half million, and they want to do a million-dollar project. Then, you might have some that have done consistently hundred-thousand-dollar projects, but they just can't break through and get a bond. So, those are firms that we're going to be looking to service as well.

Ms. Watlington said okay, and then probably more into the logistics piece, is we think about when there are competing firms for particular bids, is it going to be whoever gets the award is then worked with, as far as getting bonding, or is securing bonding going to be a part of that award? What happens when there's more than one firm?

Mr. Coker said that is a great question. It's going to be one of two things that happens. Some of the participating firms will be ones that they don't have a contract yet, yet they want to go through the program and build their capacity. They are certified. By the way, it's a race and gender-neutral program. So, we're leading with our SBEs (Small Business Enterprise). Then, there'll be particular projects. We may say we have, and I'm making this up, a \$25 million project, and we want to make sure that we have maximum inclusion on this program. I'll work with the departments, Merriwether will work with them, to say what can we do legally to help facilitate opportunities for firms to either participate where they can serve as primes, or perhaps as subs, but the contract amounts are so high, that it requires bonding. So, you'll have a mixed breed of who participates.

Ms. Watlington said, okay, and to that point, I'd love for you to put a little color around how this lines up with breaking down the WBSs (Work Breakdown Structure) in order to get scope that is right sized for capacity building. Can you just talk a little bit about how those two will work together?

Mr. Coker said that would work through close relationships with the departments. Right now, I'm slated to sit down with each and every director and learn about maybe some of the things that are a sore spot for them. Also, understand from a projection standpoint, what projects are out there and try to right size some of the future projects with the bonding program. Merriwether has years of experience doing this. So, naturally, they're going to be right there offering the guidance, what we're paying them for.

Ms. Watlington said okay, so I think that'll be definitely one we want to make sure are lined up together, because to your point, and maybe I'm misunderstanding, in my mind we're offering bonding support for firms that are doing business with the City, not for them to do private work?

Mr. Coker said yes, this is targeted for the City, however, what happens is if you're successful with the City, you can take your bonding and go work on a project for other large projects. At some point, they'll have what's called aggregate bonding, where they can do a project for the City. They might have one for one of the hospitals. We won't be able to dictate what they eventually do with their bonding. Certainly, we have hundreds of millions of dollars of work, and I think a lot of our firms look at the City of Charlotte as one of the pillars of their customers that they like to represent or work for.

Ms. Watlington said sure, sure. So, definitely, we'll be looking forward then to see how that scope breakdown goes with the bonding's. I'd love to see it. Thanks.

Mr. Coker said thank you. Other questions? Thank you for your time, and I will keep you all posted on where we go.

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you very much. This is really good news for our community, as we talk about mobility, and upward mobility especially. I guess you can get them both from Transportation and from Better Pay and Work.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said thank you Mayor, members of Council. So, next, we'll have Shawn Heath to give us an update on some of the recommendations from the Housing Trust Fund. As we go back to our discussions during the budget workshops, I'll remind you that, again, there's the \$50 million bond that has been passed, as well as there's some ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds that are remaining that we have we have in the housing bucket. Tonight, we will not be discussing the ARPA funds that are in the housing bucket, but rather some opportunities with the Housing Trust Fund. So, Shawn, good to see you again.

**Shawn Heath, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services** said thank you, Manager Jones. Good evening, everybody. Good to see you. As Manager Jones mentioned, tonight's really an opportunity to provide an update on the responses we received to our Winter RFP for the Housing Trust Fund, and I'll also provide staff funding recommendations. Tonight's an informational update for Council discussion and for staff to get a sense what your expectations are building up to the April 24<sup>th</sup> plan date for an RCA (Request for Council Action) on the projects themselves.

Quick reminder on the Trust Fund. As you know, it's really designed to provide gap financing. When you look at all the proposals that we receive, the City's investment in these projects is really a rather small percentage. So, the capital stack will include, for most of the projects, LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) equity, conventional financing through a first mortgage, deferred developer fees. It really depends on the nature of the project. The idea with the City investment component of the housing, is to provide that last enabler to gets these projects to pencil out.

As you'll recall, there's a policy provision set by Council for the multi-family rental projects, at least 20 percent of those units are targeting 30 percent AMI (Area Median Income) households. There are always strings attached, associated with the City's investments and affordable housing. One of the most significant strings is a long-term deed restriction to preserve affordability. That can be anywhere from 15 to 40 years depending on whether it's a homeownership scenario or multi-family rental. Then, finally, the Housing Trust Fund is replenished through the Biannual Bond Referendum, and in November of 2022, voters were overwhelmingly supportive of the Housing Bond with, I believe, 75 percent of voters endorsing that bond.

Here is a little bit of a historical perspective. Since the inception of the Housing Trust Fund in 2002, you can see accumulative amount of \$260 million has been programmed by Councils over those years with a significant ramp up starting in 2018 when the decision was made to increase the investment from a \$15 million bond to a \$50 million bond. You can also see here that since 2002, over 11,000 units have been created or preserved.

One of the things I wanted to acknowledge before we leave this slide, is Zelleka Biermann, who's in the room tonight who's on my Housing team. Zelleka started working for the City of Charlotte in 2002. So, she was brought on staff to administer what, at the time, was a brand-new tool for the City of Charlotte, The Housing Trust Fund. So, if there's one common thread throughout every single one of the RFP cycles on this slide, it's Zelleka Biermann. I think one of the highest compliments I can pay her, is that she has really defended the City's interests throughout all these years to help ensure that we're providing the best value proposition possible. At the same time, she's built the trust and respect of the development community, which is obvious to me in the conversations that I've had with folks. So, Zelleka, I just wanted to give you a little bit of tip of the cap this evening for the great work you've done. Thank you.

We generally will do two RFPs each year. One we refer to as the winter RFP that's released in January, one is the summer RFP released in the July timeframe. This shows you the schedule that we're currently on, for the most recent RFP, it was posted on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Submissions were due in mid-February. Tonight, we're doing the informational briefing, building up to a vote on the 24<sup>th</sup>. There was a very strong interest in this RFP, and there's a lot of information on this slide. The good news is we don't have to pour over all the specifics here, because in subsequent slides we're going to get into the details of each of the projects themselves, but I did want to highlight a few things associated with the 11 requests that we received.

First, these are all new construction scenarios. In terms of the multi-family projects, it's a combination of four percent LIHTC deals, nine percent LIHTC deals, we have one non-LIHTC, and then we have three homeownership funding requests that we received as well. In aggregate, the requests added up to over 900 affordable units. You can see the aggregate funding request was a little bit north of \$32 million. One noteworthy observation here, is you can see in the final column on the City cost per unit, we've seen some moderation in the costs that are being brought to us. If you think back to the October/November timeframe of last year when we had discussions around nine or ten previously awarded Housing Trust Fund projects, that we're facing a lot of cost pressure. Ultimately, when the dust settled, and eight of those were provided additional City resources, the average cost per unit for those projects was about \$55,000. So, as you scan the numbers in the far-right column here, you can see that we're generally seeing some cost per unit figures that are a bit more attractive than what we experienced last year. As I said, I'm intentionally moving over this particular slide pretty quick. We're going to have a chance to dive into a lot of these going forward.

Another eye chart here, this is taking the 11 proposals on the previous slide and narrowing it down to the 9 proposals that were received that are recommended for funding from a staff perspective. Once again, because I'll be going through project specific development summaries, and because at the end of my prepared remarks, we'll come back to this slide as a bit a home base, I'm just going to cherry pick a few things on here for your consideration, just to have in the back of your mind.

First, as I mentioned before, four of the proposals that we're recommending are four percent LIHTC deals, we have Union at Tryon in District 4, The View at Honeywood in District 2, and Evoke Living in District 7. The three nine percent deals we received, The Merit is in D-4, Long Creek Seniors in D-4, and Marvin Road is in D-1, with the River District in D-3, and then two homeownership recommendations, Avaline in D-1, and Hope Springs in D-2.

So, when you remove the two projects on the prior slide that are not recommended for funding, which I'll comment briefly on each of those at the end of the presentation, what we have left would be roughly 700 units, and a total ask of about \$26 million.

**Councilmember Molina arrived at 5:43 p.m.**

You can see here the cost per unit on average for the recommended projects is about \$37,000. I did want to take a moment on the City owned land to provide a little bit of context here. So, you can see Evoke Living at Ballantyne has City owned land associated with it, and we also have The Merit, a nine percent project with City owned land. In both instances, I think it's helpful to go back in time, really, and I'll do this fairly quickly, but in 2019, City Council established the guidelines for the evaluation and disposition of City owned land for purposes of affordable housing. That really gave us, at the staff level, a bit of a framework to work with, and of course, it underscored Council's desire to see staff look for opportunities to leverage City owned land for affordable housing.

If you fast forward to 2021, Brent Cagle, and then housing director, Pamela Wideman, in the middle of the year, provided a presentation to Council, and they identified six parcels of City owned land that appeared to be suitable for affordable housing. Based on a positive reception from Council, at that Action Review, the housing department, working with Phil Reiger's team, developed an RFP, requesting that developers step forward with their best project ideas for how they could activate those six parcels with affordable housing projects.

So, then I came back to Council in February of 2022, with staff recommendations associated with four of the six parcels, where we received compelling requests from the development community, two of which are ready for discussion tonight, and also have City supported funding requests associated with them. I just wanted to underscore that it's been a multi-year effort to get where we are here today on the City owned housing. I wanted to underscore that it was done through a competitive RFP process in a transparent way, and it was done with a lot of Council engagement throughout the process. So, as we get to those two particular projects we can, of course, bounce around on those. If there's specific questions on the City owned land component, but just wanted you to be aware of the back story.

One final comment on this slide. When you look at the funding request column for the nine recommended proposals of \$26 million, a couple things to keep in mind. One is, a couple of these projects we believe would be suited for federal funding. So, not every project on this page would put a strain on the Housing Trust Fund, and you can see that there are three of the nine percent projects on this slide. As you recall, historically, we would receive maybe one or two, nine percent projects in a particular calendar year.

Here, we wanted to show the AMI (Area Median Income) mix for the nine recommended proposals, and just to state the obvious, this is an incredibly part of your value proposition. Not only are you interested, and we interested in the economics of the deals and the cost per unit and the leverage ratio, but what does the AMI mix look like? This will change from cycle to cycle, and it really just depends on the nature of the underlying projects. Four percent deals, nine percent deals, non-LIHTC deals, homeownership deals. They all, on average, will have a slightly different AMI mix, but I think this is always a reminder to me, and hopefully a reminder to the public, that City dollars are being put into a good mix of affordability across the continuum. So, it's not just 80 percent units. Of course, you have the provision for the multi-family to have at

least 20 percent of those devoted to 30 percent AMI, but we're also seeing a good amount at the 50 percent and 60 percent level. So, wanted to underscore that.

Now, what we'll do is, I will very quickly move through a development summary slide for each of the proposals, and then I'll stop talking so we can get into the discussion. First, we'll start with the four percent deals, and this is Union at Tryon in D-4. The Annex Group has decades of experience with affordable housing projects. They've got close to 1,000 four percent units in various stages of development. You can see the overall funding request here. I'm moving to the top right part of the slide, was \$3.8 million for an attractive cost per unit of \$19,000. One of the things, once again, back to what do you, what do we, get in return for these investments? One of the things that we're really reinforcing with our development partners, is the affordable period.

Pre-COVID, you'll recall, that typically for the multi-family rentals, the normal was a 30-year affordability period. Now, what we're finding, and what you'll see in all of the multi-family rental opportunities that are recommended tonight, an affordability period at 40 years. On the rent range, I did just want to acknowledge that you'll see slightly different rent ranges for each of these proposals, and if you think about it, what's driving it is really AMI and number of bedrooms. So, \$437 would be a 30 percent AMI household with one bedroom, whereas the high end of the range, \$1,860, would be an 80 percent AMI household with 3 bedrooms. So, that's why you're seeing such a wide range there.

Moving on to the four percent project opportunity, we've got The Vue at Honeywood in District 2. Halcon has a number of LIHTC projects in their portfolio, a lot of experience in this space. You can see a roughly \$3.5 million request for a cost per unit at \$32,000. One noteworthy item in their application is, they mention that they will target persons with disabilities and/or experiencing homelessness for a certain number of the units reflected here. Evoke Living at Ballantyne in District 7. Once again, this is one of the two City owned land scenarios included in the staff recommendations this evening. We have a lot of experience over the last five years or so working with Crosland Southeast with a lot of success on a number of affordable housing projects. In the City, you can see the HTF (Housing Trust Fund) request at \$3.1 million, translating to an HTF cost per unit a little north of \$51,000.

On the City owned land, I did just want to underscore that this is, of course, always going to a point in time estimate in terms of the appraisals that are done, but we wanted to be fully transparent, since part of the value proposition here is associated with the use of City owned land for the project. One of the things that's interesting about this particular project, is it is absolutely, hands down, in a phenomenal area for affordable housing. It checks all the boxes in terms of access to jobs, amenities, services, local public schools. It's beautiful. I will say this, having walked the site yesterday, one of the things reflected in the application is some of the realities associated with the parcel itself. So, if you've been down to the Police Station in District 7, they're on Providence Road West near highway 521. If you're passing the Police Station and the Police Station is on your left, you would see a relatively thin strip of land. So, the shape of this parcel is essentially an L-shape that's adjacent to the Police Station. It's hard to see a lot of it from Providence Road West because the topography is incredibly steep.

So, walking around the site, it's clear to me, I understand now kind of on a firsthand basis, some of the design and construction challenges. They're putting a little bit of a pressure on the construction costs associated with this particular location, but we're always hungry for affordable housing in District 7. So, we recommend this without any hesitation. It's a proven partner. We think it's a wonderful way to leverage City owned land to get affordable housing in an area that really could use it. So, we can certainly talk more about that one if needed.

Mayor Lyles said yes, I have to say, Shawn, on this one, it was all about the jobs being associated close by the schools, the ability to do this. So, when Council approved this, and I'm looking forward to more of those discussions around this in Ballantyne, as we keep going through Ballantyne, I imagine. So, we'll see how it goes.

**Councilmember Driggs** said I just wanted to say that I was there when Shawn walked the site, and it was like a ski slope part of it, very difficult topography. Also, in District 7, it's long been a fact, it's expensive down there. That's the reason we haven't seen more. I'm very anxious to get this done just to demonstrate that there is no opposition in the district to this kind of housing. Very willing to see this diversification take place, but it does cost more to develop in areas like South Charlotte. So, I really hope we can all get behind this one. Thank you.

Mr. Heath said so, just a few more here. Shifting into the nine percent opportunities. Here's The Merit project in District 4, which once again, is another City owned land scenario. This is at the intersection of University City Boulevard and North Tryon, and I've also seen this site firsthand. It's in a great area. This site was rezoned TOD (Transit Oriented Development) in 2021. It's a half mile from a Blue Line station. It's just in a wonderful part of town for affordable housing. You can see the request for \$2.6 million in HTF. Then, the estimated appraised value, before we did the RFP that I reported on in February of 2022, was about \$1.36 million there.

Here we have Long Creek. This is the one senior project that's included in the mix with Graycliff Capital. They've got dozens of LIHTC projects in their portfolio in North and South Carolina, a \$2.25 million request. You can see here, I wanted to draw your attention to, often times with the nine percent projects you'll see a really attractive AMI mix at the 30 percent level in order to make the project more attractive and more competitive for the nine percent LIHTC funding. So, this particular project with 15 units at the 30 percent AMI level, that represents 26 percent of the total units.

Moving to Marvin Road in D-1. This one's in Grier Heights, a \$3.479 request for housing investment per unit of close to \$50,000. Once again, a very attractive AMI mix. So, 18 units out of the 70 represents 26 percent of the total units.

Mayor Lyles said this one, I've been reading the 31 to 50 seemed to be harder to get in there, and this one has 31 to 50. So, I don't know how many of those we're getting as a total, Shawn.

Mr. Heath said yes, I'm sorry, you referenced 31 to 50?

Mayor Lyles said on the AMI, the prior ones have pretty much not had housing units at the 31 to 50, but the seniors do, and I'm just trying to make sure that we remember that that 31 and 50 can be as important.

Mr. Heath said agreed, agreed. Okay, and then River District is one that we're excited about as well, and this one is interesting because with the River District opportunity, you have to go back to at least 2016. So, I had the chance to see some of you on video in the 2016 Zoning Meeting. There was a conversation at that Zoning Meeting in November of 2016, focused on the commitment included by the petitioner for the rezoning to help create the master plan for the River District, that included a commitment to have 85 affordable units included in River District Phase I. So, that was part of the approved petition in 2016.

If you fast forward to 2021, the first time Council saw this project as a specific affordable housing request, was a \$2.5 million Housing Trust Fund ask, for a 124-unit project. Then, in calendar year 2022, just like many of our other development partners that were facing cost pressure, that particular project opportunity was facing a lot of cost pressure due to rising construction costs. So, a new ask was put in front of us for consideration, which was approximately \$8.7 million for the 124-unit project. Laurel Street, through conversation at that point in time, voluntarily pulled back the request and said they would rework it, retool it, reshape it, and that's exactly what they've done. So, the opportunity that we have in front of us here tonight is really a different project than we looked at before, but I would say two things importantly. First, from a staff perspective, we wanted to make sure we didn't have our blinders on and be mindful of the bigger vision around the River District and the bold vision around the River District, and recognizing that this can and should be a catalyst in Phase I to get the affordable

housing on the ground, which will happen again in subsequent phases moving forward with the project.

So, \$5.8 million for a project that includes 87 units, a number of things were done in order to reduce the amount of the ask from what was \$8.7 million last year to an amount that's easier to accommodate within existing Housing Trust Fund resources. So, we feel very comfortable that, A, this definitively meets the terms of the rezoning from 2016. It's got the 85 units all at 80 percent AMI and below, and two, it's still includes your policy requirement that at least 20 percent of the units be at the 30 percent AMI level. So, it checks both of those boxes, and we bring this to you this evening without any hesitation for the recommendation.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said no questions. I have a statement, thank you. Thank you, Ms. Nelson. Yes, this is my baby, one of many, throughout the District when I was devout, but what I'm most proud of with this, is because we were building new, we had very clear conversations with commitments in writing on the front end, of not just the multi-family, but also the single family, and making sure that we had diversity, because, no disrespect, it's a beautiful place, the goal is not to create another Ballantyne. Here, we're starting from scratch with clear ground. Can we create something that's very different? We got commitments from CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) on the front end to extend the transportation from the Charlotte Premium Outlets to make sure that people had connectivity and creating a true diverse in workforce, in housing options, as well as income levels, to create a true community that is reflective of the community that we live in that didn't have high sections of wealth or high sections of poverty in it, to really create a stable community, since this was going to be one of the last chances that we had this much land, and had a collaborative effort with building.

So, I hope that, as the conversations move forward with this project, not only with Laurel Street, I hope everyone definitely supports this particular ask. We keep in mind the ultimate goal of having diversity when it comes to the ask for the single family attached and/or detached housing that may be making its way to us. Also, we've already had conversations with thinking about bringing new developers to the table, bringing some smaller developers, and not just relying on our partners who are the big developers, to just be more creative and think outside the box to address our need. Thank you.

Mr. Heath said okay, last couple here. Moving onto the homeownership recommendations. We have one here in District 1. It's a DreamKey project in Grier Heights. You can see a \$630,000 request. It has an attractive cost per unit profile and affordability period and leverage ratio. Importantly, this is enabling affordable housing stock to move into the market, so you can see the sales price range at \$275,000 to \$315,000 with the AMI focus at the 80 percent level here.

The final recommendation is a habitat project in District 2 referred as Hope Springs. You see it's a \$1.125 million request at \$45,000 per unit. Each of these has a different profile, right. So, it's not always the same value proposition we expect across the board. One of the interesting points on this one is, the initial sales will be done across a wider AMI distribution than we typically see for homeownership. So, here on the chart in the bottom right you can see not all of the units will be at 61 to 80 percent, some will be at 51 to 60, some will be at 31 to 50. So, it's a noteworthy attribute that will allow for a sales price range that dips down below \$100,000. So, we bring both of these homeownership recommendations to you without any reservations.

Then, the last two slides, I did want to acknowledge that we had received two requests that are not recommended for funding at the staff level at this time. One is Sycamore Station in District 1. It's a four percent project. This is an interesting scenario because, while it's technically certainly an eligible project for Housing Trust Fund resources, it's generally not what we've done in the past. So, this project is in construction already. It does not have any previously awarded City funds associated with the financing. I would estimate it's roughly 50 percent done in construction, and they have like many of our partners, faced some fairly significant cost challenges. If the Housing Trust Fund were not as resource constrained as I believe it is, this is the sort of thing that we think might

have felt like it would be an opportunity to bring to you, because in their defense, one thing that they will do, if the City were able to fund this, is to provide the units at the 30 percent AMI level that otherwise wouldn't exist. Once again, as we look through some of the subsequent slides on the implications of funding 9 of the 11 recommendations, it will use a lot of the existing Housing Trust Fund resources available.

Then, finally, we received a homeownership proposal in District 2 referred to as Henderson Manor. Of the three, this was the highest cost per unit proposal. It's not a bad proposal, but it's one that we'd like to have a little more iteration with the development partners in the months ahead, and this could be suitable for them to bring back a request in a future RFP round.

**Councilmember Winston** said yes, I see this one says there's no Project-Based Vouchers. Does that mean that they wouldn't accept vouchers as a source of income?

Mr. Heath said thank you for the question. No, it doesn't. We could maybe reword this. So, within living, they have the Housing Choice Vouchers and the Project-Based Vouchers, and some of the projects that are brought to us have PBVs (Project-Based Vouchers) and some don't. Whether they do or don't, that in no way would impact their, in fact now their requirement, that any project receiving City funds would be required to give people with vouchers a fair look, right, because of the source of income discrimination policy that you passed last year. So, that was a long-winded answer to your question, which is having the word no on the slide would not mean they would not accept voucher recipients.

I can sense everyone's ready to go into questions. So, if there's a desire at any point, we can talk about what the implications would be related to the existing balance of \$50 million and how these projects would impact that balance. Then, just to remind you of the timeline, Council approval today is really just one step in a fairly long process. For the most part, it's really projects that you would've approved back in 2021 that are now coming online this year. So, the projects that you're evaluating today, for the most part, if they're funded, the units will come online in about the fourth quarter of 2025. So, this is planning for the future, but this is an important step in the process to make those units a possibility. So, I will stop there and open for any questions.

Ms. Mayfield said can we go back to slide 17? I need some clarification on the Hope Springs subdivision. Why is the affordability period for those 15 years, but the other homeownership product of Aveline is at 30 years?

Ms. Heath said so, unlike with the multi-family, where in the past it would generally be 30/30, now it's 40/40. For all the NOAHs, (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) it's generally 20/20. For the homeownership scenarios, if you look at the ones that we funded over the last three or four years, there's more variability. These are different animals. The structuring here is a little different from one opportunity to the next. That's not a direct answer to your question, so I will underscore one point, which is, one of the requirements we have in the Housing Trust Fund as it relates to homeownership proposals, is that the affordable period be a minimum of 15 years. So, sometimes we'll see 15, sometimes we'll see 20. The one that we looked at here 30, I would say, is an outlier, an anomaly in a positive way.

We can work on something for a Council packet that might dive a little bit deeper, because I don't think I could give much more of an explanation tonight. There is enough nuance across these homeownership scenarios as it relates to affordable period. We could prepare a document to provide some clarity on that.

Ms. Mayfield said so, I want to make sure that we have transparent expectations, because we just had a presentation where, thanks to some of our funding and our support, we have an organization that is out there that's building homes for purchase that have basically a 99 year in perpetuity. They have both in their senior development that is multi-family off of West Boulevard, but they also have it in their for sale product,

where that individual still is able to sell and receive some profit, but that home still stays as a part of the trust in order to continue to create opportunities.

If we already have a model that is working, and we see it working locally, why would we not have those conversations, so that it's known that the expectation is how we move forward in order to create a city that is truly accessible to the many and not the few, if this is the new model that is going to have more points in the scoring system versus what you've always done?

Mr. Heath said I agree. I think all else equal, we prefer longer affordability. So, to the extent that we have some innovative opportunities in the marketplace, I would encourage them to submit applications in our next round. We would love for them to compete against other opportunities, and if there's an attractive AMI mix and an attractive cost per unit, and a highly attractive affordability period, then they will probably compete very well.

Ms. Mayfield said so, I think we have a disconnect in what you're responding to and what I'm saying. Looking at the numbers, I appreciate a number of the recommendations. Looking at this particular one for habitat, I would have a hard challenge saying yes, I'm just one vote out of the six that is needed, because we already have Historic West End partners that's already at the table that's already doing the work. We already have partners in our community that's doing it, opposed to saying, well for the next round or for future rounds, it would be great if people can do this. We have organizations that are doing it right now, addressing the need, where we're going to see it out of the ground, out of the end of 2023 or by the end of 2024. So, that expectation should be across the board.

All the projects that your team have recommended are really diverse and really great products, but it's almost a level of disrespect when you see these commitment levels of 40 years, 40 years, 40 years, 40 years, 40 years, 40 years, 30 years, 15 years. That's a challenge. Even when we have another single family attached product that is making that commitment, it's very difficult to look at this one and see how that is truly addressing the goals that this Council has put forth to staff and to our development community. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said it might be helpful to talk to the Grier Heights Community Association and see what's going on. I think it might be worth touching bases with them to see what's happening.

Mr. Jones said so, Mayor and Council, I think it may be a different question, and that is, and Shawn if I have this right, the bare minimum for the single-family homes is 15 years of affordability?

Mr. Heath said correct.

Mr. Jones said so, maybe it's more of a policy discussion that maybe 15 is not enough for the Council, but staff worked along the policy that's currently in place. Did I get that right? Ms. Mayfield, I totally agree with you, we had a conversation last week. Some of the other organizations that are willing to help us with this, we need to make sure that we're finding avenues for them to participate in these processes. So, I agree with you.

Ms. Mayfield said and Mayor, just to follow up. Mr. Manager, I would encourage us again, that if we have partners that are doing it, then those are the partners that we need to continue to try to figure out how to uplift and how to continue to work with versus having a partner that's been a long-standing partner that's coming with bare minimums. They are reading the same writing on the wall that we are. Bare minimums are not good enough.

Mayor Lyles said I think Tiffany Capers is the President of that Grier Heights Economic Development community, and I would say that that's a good conversation to see what they've been saying to her as well.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said so, can you go back to slide number five where you got all the funding requests? So, for the first one, I see that cost per unit is really low, but I did not quite understand why that was not recommended.

Mr. Heath said yes. So, this was the one that's already in construction. So, historically, our practice has been to provide gap funding for projects that have not yet closed on financing. But for our funding, the affordable units would never happen at all. So, this is just in a much different place in the project lifecycle than what we've historically done. With the constraints that I feel like we have associated with available resources, from a staff perspective at least, we weren't comfortable putting it into the recommendation column.

Ms. Ajmera said so, from what I understood, that this would not be possible. They're offering units at 30 percent AMI or below, so without the City funding, they wouldn't be able to offer that. Is that right?

Mr. Heath said, yes, it's my understanding that what they've done in the request that we received, they've indicated that in exchange for receiving our funding, they would establish those 30 percent units that would not otherwise exist, correct.

Ms. Ajmera said so, do we have anywhere in the policy that states if it's in the construction phase, funding would not be allowed?

Mr. Heath said I don't believe there was anything specific in the RFP that would preclude them from applying. I'm looking at Zelleka right now.

Ms. Ajmera said, so, that is not our policy, and we clearly know that we have dire need when it comes to units at 30 percent AMI or below, and plus cost per unit is significantly lower than some of the other ones. I just don't see why we wouldn't do it, but that's just my take on it. Okay, the question I had was, Ms. Mayfield had already asked why it was 15 years, but our policy does allow that.

Mr. Heath said it does, and historically 15 to 20 would have been what we would've seen. Correct.

Ms. Ajmera said, yes, okay. This, on slide number six, where you have City owned land column, so that \$1.3 million, is that factored into the cost per unit or that's separate? So, that's in addition to?

Mr. Heath said yes, so, what we've done here, is the City cost per unit is based purely on the request for gap funding, gap financing. The City owned land, we wanted to show that to be transparent, but it is not included in the calculation in the cost per unit. There's a bit of apples and oranges here. With the City owned land, I think one thing that's important to remember there, is that this would not be a land donation. This would be a long-term grounding scenario. So, the City would maintain ownership of these sites.

Ms. Ajmera said, so, even though it is a ground lease, it's \$1.00 per year kind of lease, right? So, there is an opportunity cost that the City's incurring. I think it's fair to include that in cost per unit to really understand what is actual cost per unit to the City, because certainly that land could be used for other things. So, I'm assuming, even number four, The Merit, that \$34,000 per unit cost does not include \$1.3 million City owned land value?

Mr. Heath said that is correct.

Ms. Ajmera, okay, and is all this land leased for 30 years?

Mr. Heath said, so it's interesting when you think about the term of the loan, the affordability periods, the lease periods. They're different timeframes. The lease would likely be for, I think, either 60 or 99 years.

**Councilmember Anderson** said Shawn, I first just want to congratulate you and the team on the mix and blend of this portfolio. It's pretty impressive when we look at the mix of affordability periods, the blend of the AMI from 30 to 80 percent, and the rent range and accessibility. I also think that the River District project is a great example of looking at a price point per unit that was above something that we really wanted to support, and having the developer go back to the table and reimagine that project, is a great example of how we can sort of be patient and diligent to get to a better solution. I know when we had this conversation several months ago, back in November I believe, the marketplace looked different. The cost and inflation was different as it relates to construction materials. So, it's good to see that the price per unit and other dollar figures here have decreased.

The one thing I would say, and I really absolutely support the concept of having homeownership as a part of this portfolio and blend, and having 43 units out of the 701 units be for homeownership, and in particular that 31 to 51 AMI ownership, to have families be able to grasp that, that sit within that AMI tier, is definitely an access to economic mobility. I would just say I would also like to see, as we move forward, if we could increase these homeownership units to be closer to 10 percent of the overall units, I think that would be a really good starting point for us. So, if we could increase those 43 units to be around 70, 71 units, I think that is a good sort of marker of how we could get after and support, of course affordable housing, but access to ownership as we know that unlocks the economic mobility to change the outcomes for families. So, congratulations. I support these projects, and I would like to just see an increase in that homeownership unit to be relative to 10 percent of the overall base. Thank you.

**Councilmember Graham** said Shawn, I too want to lend my voice in support of the work that you've done in this presentation. I also want to thank you for allowing me to bother you over the weekend on this. I don't take that for granted at all. I get it. Councilmember Anderson and Ajmera have asked questions that I was going to present to you, so I won't be redundant. I just want to, again, point out the fact that we are utilizing City owned land. That's a conversation that we've had around this dais for the last several years. So, I'm glad to see that is finally coming to fruition, and certainly in a way that is beneficial to the citizens in District 7. I think that's really, really a step in the right direction, as well as University City. So, I think that's a really, really good story to tell.

Secondly, two weeks ago, Ed and Councilmember Mayfield and Bokhari and I attended the ribbon cutting for the River District. It's great to have that project in the first phase. That affordability is top of mind right from the very start. The end is in the beginning. If you want to see how something's going to end, you take a look at how it starts. So, I'm very pleased to see that the River District project is included, and I thank you for your help and support with that as well.

The range for rent is, I think, impressive on all the projects throughout the City, and I think that gives everybody an opportunity to live and play where they desire. So, hopefully, we can continue to have these projects where the ranges are really significant and affordable for a whole host of folks. Then, lastly, as Councilmember Anderson has indicated, the homeownership opportunity, I think, is a big plus. So, more of that, as it relates to where she indicated 10 percent, sounds good to me. Having certainly, the homeownership in the mix, is another conversation that this Council's been having for the last two or three years. So, I want to thank you, and thank Councilmember Watlington and her committee for their work, and I look forward to supporting it.

Mr. Mitchell said Shawn, just echo. This has always been a tough job sometimes to find that balance between providing affordable housing, the right location, the right funding. Once again, your work reflects a top priority for the City Council, which is affordable housing. I think that's pretty impressive. So, I think this is a strong indication of how you have prioritized to make sure that all our AMI are being addressed. It's very impressive, the one we talk about a lot is 30 percent and 60 percent, and they both consist of 21 and 25.

My only other suggestion, those who have rent that are closer to that \$399 and \$455, somehow can we be very proactive and have a hotline set up or maybe a waiting list? I think those units are going to be in demand. I would like for us, since we're driving this process, to kind of be more proactive so if citizens call in, we can say, here's how many units left at \$399, here's how many units at, and so, if we could just think of how we can be more creative, and be proactive when we know we're going to have units at the price point that so many citizens would like to rent at. So, kudos, and I like the fact that River District. I agree with Councilmember Graham and Watlington and Mayfield, it's one thing to talk about the new Ballantyne, but as Councilmember Mayfield said, we want to do it a little different, but to say River District, you will have some affordable housing in phase I, I think sends a real strong message how committed we are.

So, thank you for funding that project. I agree, I remember Laurel Street. When we were talking about it earlier, you're right, she kind of volunteered and said we will pass on this round. We would like to come back again with better numbers. So, thank you, and Dion, thank you for being a team player.

Mayor Lyles said okay, Shawn thank you. We've heard from the Council on the commitments that are made here, represent policy, and so, I know policy doesn't come without a lot of analysis. So, thank you very much, and thank you, Zelleka, for your years of service. We're going to miss you, but I've already talked to the Manager about what your contract amount might be. So, thank you.

Mr. Driggs said, alright. I just briefly wanted to let everybody know this afternoon I received, from Kaci Jones from Queen City News, a copy of a memo related to CATS. I don't know if we all got it or if you've all seen it. I wanted to let you know about it. The memo is from Steve Hamelin and the General Manager of Transit Management of Charlotte, which is an RATPDev (Reliable Asynchronous Transfer Protocol Dev) affiliate to the employees of TMOC (Transit Management of Charlotte). So, those people work for TMOC and not for Charlotte. TMOC is a vendor to Charlotte under contract to operate CATS buses. In the memo, Mr. Hamelin tells employees he is "deeply disturbed by the attendance, absenteeism, and missed trip information," he is seeing, related to the bus service.

I only got this memo late this morning, and so, I'm just going to offer a couple of quick comments right now. For one, CATS operating performance improved greatly after COVID, and is still much better than it was during COVID. So, we have seen a somewhat disturbing trend in terms of those performance numbers not being as good as they were, which CATS is looking into with TMOC. There is also an RFP process underway, as you may know, in which we are going to kind of create new terms for our relationship with that management company.

So, the working group that I run is going to look into some of this data with Mr. Cagle, and we'll share with you some numbers around what exactly is going on there and with the public. So, at this point I just wanted to make you aware of this. Don't want another big story about CATS. You'll find out exactly what's going on in due course. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said we'll make sure that the workgroup has a copy of that memo, okay?

Mr. Driggs said, yes, we'll get that around to everybody.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you everyone. So, we are ready to go downstairs. If you actually get down in three minutes, we can start on time, but I wanted to recognize Mr. Mitchell first.

Mr. Mitchell said Madam Mayor, in the agenda, I would like to request that item 15 be pulled to a later date.

Mayor Lyles said alright, so, item 15 is going to be deferred until the next opportunity. I think Ms. Mayfield had suggested that it be pulled, but it's a business item, so it will be deferred.

pti:pk

Ms. Mayfield, so it can be deferred? So, I can second it. I actually had a question, Madam Mayor. We're doing nominations tonight, and I sent an email to my colleagues to ask if we could delay one of the nominations to the Advisory Board since I just, last week, asked for us to look at making sure all of our chambers are represented, not realizing that they will be coming up. So, I would like to have that pulled out of our decisions for tonight.

Mayor Lyles said Ms. Mayfield, do you have which number it is? It's in there somewhere.

Ms. Mayfield, yes.

Mayor Lyles said we'll delay that nomination process when we go to the selections for our boards and commissions. So, thank you, Ms. Mayfield.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you.

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#### **ITEM NO. 5: CLOSED SESSION (AS NECESSARY)**

No closed session occurred.

\* \* \* \* \*

The meeting was recessed at 6:28 p.m. to move to the Meeting Chamber for the regularly scheduled Business Meeting.

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#### **BUSINESS MEETING**

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina reconvened for a Business Meeting on Monday, April 10, 2023, at 6:36 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Councilmembers present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Edmund Driggs, Malcolm Graham, LaWana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Marjorie Molina, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston, II.

**ABSENT:** Councilmembers Tariq Bokhari and Reneé Johnson.

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#### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Councilmember Driggs gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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#### **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**Mayor Lyles** said before we begin deliberations on the many items of business that we have, I would like to read a proclamation recognizing April 2023 as reentry month. My understanding is that we have a number of people in our audience today that support this effort, work through it, believe in it, and make a true difference in people's lives. We will have Hope Marshall, who is the Mecklenburg County Reentry Service's Manager, and reentry partner chairperson of Mecklenburg County, be the recipient of this proclamation.

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**ITEM NO. 6: REENTRY MONTH PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Lyles read the following proclamation:

**WHEREAS**, Mecklenburg County receives approximately 1,200 residents returning from State and Federal incarceration annually, and 11,000 people in Charlotte are under correctional supervision at any given time; and

**WHEREAS**, formerly incarcerated people are 10 times more likely to experience homelessness, than those who have not been formerly incarcerated with the highest rates being those of color and women; and

**WHEREAS**, the unemployment rate among the formerly incarcerated is 27 percent higher than the U.S. unemployment rate at any given point, five times higher than our general population, and 30 to 40 percent suffer from chronic disease including diabetes, hypertension, kidney problems, lung disease, 20 percent have significant mental illness, and 50 percent suffer from substance abuse disorder; and

**WHEREAS**, every person leaving incarceration should have housing, employment, and health care, and not be unfairly excluded from those initiatives and efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, by focusing on prevention, reentry and social support, we can ensure that Charlotte, your City, offer second chances and opportunities for all people.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Vi Alexander Lyles, Mayor of Charlotte, hereby proclaim April 2023 as

**“REENTRY MONTH IN CHARLOTTE”**

and urge all of our citizens to appreciate the efforts that are being taken by so many to serve.

Now, we’re really grateful that you’ve come, but we also understand that you might want to leave. I want to ask you all to stand if you’re working in this area, this work, doing the hard work that’s necessary. Please stand so that we can recognize you. Thank you very much.

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**PUBLIC HEARING**

**ITEM NO. 7: PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CHARLOTTE BUSINESS INCLUSION POLICY**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Graham, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing and (B) Approve the Jobs and Economic Development Committee's recommendation to adopt a resolution for the revised Charlotte Business Inclusion Policy.
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The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 692-702.

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**ITEM NO. 8: PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2024 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Winston, seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing.

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**ITEM NO. 9: PUBLIC HEARING ON A RESOLUTION TO CLOSE A PORTION OF UNOPENED FIRST STREET AND A PORTION OF UNOPENED VERNEDALE ROAD**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing and (B) Adopt a resolution and close a Portion of Unopened First Street and a Portion of Unopened Vernedale Road.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 703-712.

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**ITEM NO. 10: PUBLIC HEARING ON A RESOLUTION TO CLOSE AN ALLEYWAY OFF BUCHANAN STREET**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Mayfield, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing and (B) Adopt a resolution and close an Alleyway off Buchanan Street.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 713-716.

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**POLICY**

**ITEM NO. 11: CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said I have a 30-day memo that you have in front of you. It's that time of year. We have a Zoning Meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Then April 24<sup>th</sup>, at the Council Business Meeting, we'll have an update from the SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan), and we'll also have an update that's related to where we are with planning. There's the budget presentation on the 1<sup>st</sup>, which it would still be a Council committee day. Then, on the 8<sup>th</sup>, we would have a public hearing for the proposed budget. So, with all that's going on, we're going to squeeze a budget in somewhere in the next 30 days, as well as a public hearing.

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**ITEM NO. 44: CATS TRANSIT SECURITY SERVICES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, and seconded by Councilmember Anderson to (A) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute unit price contracts with the following companies for transit security services for an initial term of three years: Strategic Security Corp, Professional Security Services (MBE), and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

**Joseph Sordi, 19 Bellemeade Avenue, Smithtown, NY, 11787** said good evening, Madam Mayor, and distinguished members of the Council, and those in attendance. My name is Joseph Sordi. I'm the Chief Executive Officer of Strategic Security, and I'd like to just share with you some brief points on the Letter of Intent that was given to our company to award us for the CATS security contract. We participated in a fair and open market competition. As a result, it was looking at we have 21 years of experience. They were asking for police security firms to bid on this project. As I said, we have 21 years of experience. We have experience doing public/private sector contracts, and public and transportation sector contracts with the Transportation Security Administration, and all of which, if anybody has any question on, or any ask of past performance, my colleagues have documentation to substantiate any of this, if it's so requested by the Council. Lynx Transportation Services in Ocala and Seminole counties in Florida, Georgia, Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Department of Administrative Services, which encompasses every state agency, the New York State Office of General Service Administration, the County of Mecklenburg. We do all of the county facilities within the entire county of Mecklenburg. In addition to that, we do the County Detention Center and the County Court Offices as well. We are under contract with the City of Goldsboro, the City of Asheville. In addition to that, we also do contracts with U.S. Customs Border Patrol and with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

So, we have direct synergistic past performance to this contract, so we feel we're well suited to substantiate this contract, and the current incumbent, Allied Universal Security Services. Actually, they subcontract to us to perform services for them at the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. Furthermore, we maintain all the proper licenses in place with the Private Security Licensing Board in North Carolina, with the North Carolina Department of Justice. We have an FFL (Federal Firearms License), which enables us to authorize and issue and move weapons in and out, and to issue them to people. We have the proper insurance as well, and we attended all the conference required documents and submitted them in order.

Furthermore, myself, as the Chief Executive Officer, I was a 20-year member of the NYPD (New York Police Department). I rose to the ranks of the supervisory capacity. I rounded out my career in the Transit Division, where with the NYPD, they have 468 subway stations servicing over 4 million riders a day. So, I have distinct managerial supervision experience to well serve the people of this community and the CATS Transportation Facility. Thank you.

**Charles Bohnenberger, 10735 David Taylor Drive** said good evening, Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem and Council members. My name is Charlie Bohnenberger. I'm the Senior Vice President of Government Services for Allied Universal. I've been with that company for 15 years, and my career includes 30 years total, many of which in government service as well. Over that time, we have built a security practice of up to 45 transit systems across the country, including one that Mr. Sordi just referred. Lynx in Florida recently selected Allied Universal as its security partner. I also serve on the American Public Transportation Association Security Steering Committee, which is an organization that sets standards and policies for transit systems across the country.

Lastly, I'm an associate member of the International Association Chiefs of Police, where I work with the public transportation section of that agency. Last, among that, I served on the board of two transit systems in my career. Last Monday, we submitted to you a copy of Allied Universal's protest of CATS award, with the RFP (Request For Proposal) soliciting company police services to Strategic Security Corporation. My original intent was to stand before you tonight and seek your support in that process. However, CATS has denied that protest largely on the basis of lower pricing submitted by an awardee and staffing issues that Allied Universal faced during the current contract's iteration.

So, instead I'm here to share our experience and relevant information based on our unmatched experience in securing America's Transit Systems, in the hopes that you will use that information I offer to ask CATS some hard questions as to whether this award is indeed in the best interest of the ridership, the bus and train operators, and the general public, and how CATS expects the awardee to succeed.

One of the reasons CATS declined our protest, seemingly, relates the difficulty we've had in staffing police officer positions while servicing the contract. It's no secret to anyone that since 2020, police agencies across the country have been struggling to recruit officers. The combination of record numbers of retirements, a lack of people interested in policing, ballooning wages in the labor market since the pandemic, has created unprecedented problems with staffing. CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department) itself is no stranger to this fact. Their starting salary is \$52,000, which is \$25 an hour annualized, and they offer \$7,500 signing bonuses, state and county retirement benefits, 401Ks, and educational benefits and so on.

While recent unemployment reports indicate some relief on this front, it's unlikely the situation will improve in the immediate future, particularly given a recent survey from the police executive form, estimating that retirements will increase 47 percent this year above last year's historic numbers. Since 2020, and as recently as November 2022, Allied Universal has repeatedly engaged CATS leadership about staffing concerns, primarily based on wages. In November, we provided a 13-page report, providing in great detail, wage analysis from staffing multiple independent sources, showing CATS that in order to address the police staffing shortages, we need to do wage adjustments. At that time, the data showed the average payrate for a police officer in this market environment was at \$31.60 an hour. Also, on that analysis, we indicated that with our resources and our recruiting capacity, we could sufficiently operate with a \$25 wage until the rebid.

**Mayor Lyles** said I would ask each of you if you wouldn't mind just taking a seat close by. I'm going to ask Mr. Cagle to come and help us sort out what these issues are. Mr. Cagle, would you come to the podium? I see that we have a recommendation and I'm not quite sure what the question is.

**Brent Cagle, Assistant City Manager** said I'm not sure if I understand the question either, but good evening. My name is Brent Cagle. I'm the Interim CEO (Chief Executive Officer). Let me say this. There was a process conducted. It was an open RFP, so there was a competition on this, and clearly, there were many qualified firms that proposed, Allied being one of them. However, that being said, they were not selected. We, being the City of Charlotte, the panel that conducted the RFP evaluations, opted to select Strategic Security Corporation and Professional Security Services.

Now, two things to note about this. One is, it is increasing our spend on security services overall. Currently, we spend about \$7 million a year on security contracted services, and this will increase that by 50 percent, with another planned 50 percent increase in 2025. So, ultimately doubling our security resources. The other thing about the contract is, is it splits it into the two elements of security services. One is armed or, what we call corporate police, so they are armed security providers. The other, which is actually equally important, provided by Professional Security Services, are unarmed security guards. I will also say that Professional Security Services has previously served the City as an MBE subcontractor, but by splitting this contract, it gives them the opportunity to move into the prime contractor position, which I think is another benefit of this arrangement as we move forward.

Like I said, I don't want to cast dispersions on any of the proposals. We had a lot of great proposals, as RFPs, you would expect. Ultimately, the panel really felt like the best choice for the City, as we start to move forward with our security contract needs, was to split this contract and move forward with Strategic Security Corp and Professional Security Services.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said Mr. Cagle, just for clarification, because you just shared that one of the companies identified for this proposal that was recommended, is armed, the other is unarmed. I have a question regarding the armed. What exactly is this organization's jurisdiction and/or authority, just for clarification and for full transparency. I have concern, even though this is something that's been done for a while, having armed individuals out there and having a private military/law enforcement when we

have law enforcement. So, help me understand exactly what does that mean to our community?

Mr. Cagle said so, many of our armed personnel and David Moskowitz, our Safety and Security Coordinator, is here to help me with some of this. Many of our armed personnel are law enforcement officers, and they can assist us when needed when you need a higher level of enforcement as required along the line.

Ms. Mayfield said so, I'm not going to make an assumption. I will need a little bit more information. I'm not going to get it tonight prior to us having this discussion. It will be helpful for me to know that these former and/or retired law enforcement officers, to make sure that they are not individuals who may have had any challenges in other communities. What we don't need to see is what we've seen across the nation. Individuals, who were removed and/or fired or encouraged to move on in their communities because of their interaction with the residents, ending up here and being paid, and there being an incident with our residents where they might not feel protected and supported, especially when we do have Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department because of a joint collaboration that the City and the County did years ago.

It will be helpful to know also, Mr. Manager, the transparency level. What is the community's interaction, as far as, if something happens with the CMPD, we immediately need to report to the community. We have a civil service ward. We have other things. What is the mechanism that's in place if there were to be an incident with any of these individuals, to make sure that Council is aware as well as the community? Thank you, Mr. Cagle.

**Councilmember Winston** said so, Ms. Mayfield, my concern here is, is some of the questions that you pose. This is something that I pulled on multiple occasions throughout the years. It's one of those times where I advocate to put more resources into CMPD to deal with this issue of safety and security on our transit systems. For those of you that are not familiar, North Carolina law allows for corporate police forces. These are state sanctioned police agencies that are privately held that have the policing powers of police force within their defined jurisdiction. In this case, it would be on our transit lines. They have to pass the state certifications that all police departments have to do in order to operate.

Our CMPD, our local law enforcement entities, go far above and beyond our state regulations. Our local law enforcement are also accountable to us on a public body. Those corporate police forces are not accountable to anybody besides their business models. So, they would, in fact, be a contractor. They don't come and answer to the City Council or the County Commission or the Sheriff or the Chief of Police. So, that's where I've often had a problem with this. I also recognize there's a uniform feeling amongst just about all the stakeholders in this community that I've heard from, that we need to promote a stronger feeling of safety and security along our transit routes. That's for riders and that's for operators and staff as well.

I've also heard, over the years, a uniform feeling amongst stakeholders that our corporate police models are unsatisfactory for providing the sense of safety and security on our transit routes. I hear it from transit riders. To say that whatever's happening, and we've heard it from our bus operators as well, that whatever service we're employing isn't working. I've heard it from advocates, for those that work with people living unhoused, and dealing with mental health issues. That these corporate police, again, they have no fidelity to the conversations and the tactics and techniques that we have been exploring as a community. Where we are trying to operate from different first-response models. They're not subject to our Safe Charlotte policies and our initiatives, for instance.

I've talked to the courts. They often are dealing with people that come in contact with these corporate police forces on our transit routes, but they are taking up time and space and resources for our courts, because they often present evidence, police reports, that are unprosecutable. They're not dealing with the root cause of the problem.

The answer that I always hear is that we can't afford to deal with this from a CMPD budget. We don't have the amount of people. I would argue again, that even CMPD is saying that for some of these issues that we face, we should not be using some of the law enforcement efforts that these corporate police are going to utilize.

So, I don't trust that spending more money on a service that hasn't been shown to work, is the answer to providing a greater sense of safety and security on our transit system. I also don't think bringing in a contractor for policing, that removes a level of accountability in a system where we are struggling to deviate who is actually accountable for that system, is the way to go. So, again, I am going to vote against this, and my suggestion is that we work with our local law enforcement and CMPD and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff, to finally figure out how to provide a service that actually does ensure the safety and security that is necessary for a dependable transit system, both on our buses and in our transit centers and trains. Thank you.

**Councilmember Watlington** said I want to confirm something, because what Mr. Winston has just said in regard to the accountable piece is very important. So, I don't know if the correct person to ask is you, Mr. Cagle, or if it's to ask one of our previous representatives that was up here representing Professional Strategic Security. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said Mr. Sordi, please come to the podium, and Ms. Watlington would like to address a question.

Ms. Watlington said so, I just would like to dig into this conversation around authority and accountability. Who, specifically, are these officers? Can you speak to the accountability piece? Who do these corporate police officers report to and who are they accountable to in terms of their conduct?

Mr. Sordi said apparently, right now, as their process goes on after award, where we'd be sitting with the Security Manager for the CATS project, and these would all be steps that would be addressed within that post award. With the accountability piece, what is the progressive discipline model? What do we do when we come in contact with unhoused persons? What is the enforcement action that's to be done? In addition to that, I echo Mr. Wilson's sentiment that yes, there is a disparate level of training when it comes to different companies like that. Fortunately, we have been the stop gap in that, because of my past performance with, and my managerial team, that has well over probably 1,000 years of policing and military experience, more policing within urban economic areas and crime ridden areas, and so, we understand that.

I will tell you, as a former law enforcement officer, the greatest challenges I had to deal with were not only those challenges, were personal challenges. There were personal challenges coming home to my family after seeing a child stuffed into a microwave, where there was sexual assault that happened. So, these are all things that I take that I would never want my officers to ever feel again, and I take these things, and we put them into training sessions, and we have in-house training, service training, we have in-service training. They'll be training platforms where we'll try and work it out with the CATS Security and Management Team to conduct them on rider downtimes and actual platforms, so that there's familiarity, because the last things we want, is any type of negative contact with the public. Also, we do have a grievance and a tip-line, so that if anybody comes in, and we'd be more than welcome to share that information.

Ms. Watlington said I was going to ask you, in accompaniment with that, what is the connection or accountability for performance management?

Mr. Cagle said yes, so, as any contractor, we set the tone of how the contractor conducts their business on our behalf. Number one, we understand that our riders and our operators need to feel safe and secure when they're on the line, and part of that is having security contractors on board. We also understand that given the nature of this contract between the armed and the unarmed, there are about 220 personnel, about

50/50. We do work with CMPD, but we don't believe they have the resources to dedicate roughly a hundred officers simply to the transit line to our needs.

The other thing I would say is David Moskowitz, who is right over here, understands that dealing with the public, it's important to understand what their needs are. There are some members of the public that need mental health help. There are some members of the public who are unhoused, and they need a different approach. So, we are trying to approach this in many different ways. Yes, with armed security, yes with unarmed security, and also through other personnel who we call Ambassadors. Ambassadors are there to help with situations that don't require security. They are not security personnel, but they're there to help the rider, whatever their issues may be.

That was a pilot program that we started last year. It's been very successful. Together, these three programs, we think, will change what their belief is about how we secure the system and provide excellent customer service. I won't disagree with you sir. I'm sure that you have heard that in the past we may have struggled. We are working to change that, and to bring in the appropriate response where necessary and having all options on the table, so that we can address all those situations. There are situations that arise, where our customers or our operators, they need a corporate police response. They need a sworn response or an armed response. We want to avoid those, but they do occur.

Ms. Watlington said thank you, and just as one more followup question, and I see Mr. Ratliff in the building, so I don't know which one of you would prefer to answer. When it comes to your training, you mention a lot about your training and your standards. Is there a connection between your policies and standards and our state criminal justice? Like if you had to compare what our state agencies or our police officers are trained against versus what you're training, are they comparable, or is there a difference?

Mr. Sordi said correct. Like the gentleman said, the policies and standards are set by the state. They go through the training by the state, that's set forth by the state. Then it goes to each department throughout the state. If you go to Goldsboro, if you go to Asheville, wherever you go, Mecklenburg County, every entity will then add their own flavor, or add things that basically their constituents are facing, and that's exactly what we do here. We work with CATS personnel, with David Moskowitz, their Security Director, and say what are the struggles? What are the pain points that your ridership has felt? Work with everybody on the City Council, to say, where have you heard these grievances? What are the stop gaps? As the gentleman stated, about the Ambassador program, referral cards maybe to homeless outreach programs, or some type of synergistic relationship. These are things that are round table discussions, that we will have a monthly meeting on to kind of continuously comment.

There is no one-stop solution to policing in America. There is none. I would be a fool to sit here and say that we're going to come in and we're going to solve all the problems. We're not, but what I am telling you here is that I am the owner of the company, and I am here pledging my commitment, and I'm sitting here. I'm not 50,000 miles away someplace else. I'm here before you to say, I'm putting my reputation on the line, and my reputation stands because this is what we're here to do. We're here to do the best we possible can, and also to try and protect the riders and also to protect the officers as well. We also set up a program where our officers could have professional development and professional counseling, where our officers could then, as they experience these things, or they come in contact with people, how could they have done this better?

**Councilmember Driggs** said so, one, I appreciate that we are stepping our investment in security. I think the public is concerned after reports about safety on public transportation. So, all on board with that. There are actually two questions, I guess, here tonight. One of them was the selection of the contractors, which was contested, I believe, by one of the speakers. So, I would just say on that one, I support the process and the people who made those selections, and therefore, if that's the question, I'm in favor of going with the recommendation.

The other question is the issue of armed guards. Do we have any armed security now, Mr. Cagle?

Mr. Cagle said yes. This is not a change in how we approach security. This is splitting one contract that includes both into two contracts, but this is not a change in our approach. It is an increase in personnel and a splitting of the existing contract.

Mr. Driggs said so, the issues about armed security are well traveled as it were. How long have we had armed security?

Mr. Cagle said over 10 years.

Mr. Driggs said because, I thought some of the questions that were raised tonight were actually very valid, and I'm not sure I know the answers to them. Do they wear body cameras?

Mr. Cagle said do they wear body cameras? No, they do not, sir.

Mr. Driggs said so, I guess if we were doing this, and this is not the occasion to change our minds about doing this really, like that's a policy question and this is a contract question. I am, in response to the questions that were already asked by a couple of my colleagues, concerned about that situation where there is a lethal encounter between an armed security guard and somebody in the transit system, given the sensitivity about interactions between armed police officers.

Mr. Cagle said we can certainly look at that. I will also point out that on our vehicles, like rail and buses and at our stations, there are many, not just one or two, there are many security cameras across our system, onboard, around the vehicles, on the platforms. So, I don't disagree with you. It's something we can talk to the contractor about with body-worn cameras, but there are also many video devices across our system.

Mr. Driggs said so, if there were body-worn cameras, for example, would all the provisions and state law related to the video from those cameras in the event of an incident, be applicable? Would a judge then control the release of the video? How would all that work? Do we know?

Mr. Cagle said I do not know, sir.

Mayor Lyles said we would have to get some legal review, because that is definitely a legal process for us.

Mr. Driggs said, so, again, I believe tonight the question is a contract question for an existing service. So, in that sense, I'm prepared to support the recommendation. I would like, if possible, a memo from Legal clarifying what our understanding is currently about possible engagements of armed guards with members of the public.

Mayor Lyles said alright, Mr. Attorney, you've got that?

**Patrick Baker, City Attorney** said I do.

**Councilmember Graham** said my line of questioning is similar to Councilmember Driggs in reference to, one, understanding that there's a contract issue in front of us that we are hearing. Then, secondly, again, the comments of Councilmember Mayfield and Winston goes noticed. Ten years, so this is nothing new, right, in terms of armed guards on our transit lines? Similar practices throughout transit lines throughout the country were not unusual on this, right?

Mr. Cagle said yes sir, that is correct.

Mr. Graham said, and many have their own transit police that's different from their local municipalities?

Mr. Cagle said yes sir, that is correct.

Mr. Graham said okay, and have there been any major incidents in the last 10 years noteworthy of record where there was a major.

Mr. Cagle said an officer involved incident type of thing? No sir, no sir.

Mr. Graham said I think we ought to certainly dot i's and cross t's, in terms of close accountabilities as we move forward. Again, this is a continuing practice on a new one. I think having more officers makes more opportunities for something to happen. More people on the ground, more people doing the policing, involved in more encounters. Certainly, it goes without saying that, over the last couple of years, we've noticed a need for enhanced security, both in terms of those who are riding our transit or our buses, and those who work for our transit system. So, I'll be supporting it, but certainly would love to get that memo back from the Attorney and would love to have regular check-ins from staff and the providers, especially in training and notwithstanding the body cameras, those things that can enhance public safety and public accountability.

Mr. Cagle said yes, sir.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said so, I do know Professional Security Services, the MBE, and I know Lee is here. So, Mr. Ratliff, I have a couple of questions.

**Lee Ratliff, Professional Security Services** said good evening, everyone. How's everyone?

Mr. Mitchell said Lee, welcome. In a note we have here, it says we're going to increase the number of unarmed guards and provide a shift in security [INAUDIBLE] by increasing the number. So, can you explain your role? I think that's the part of the contract you were awarded, the unarmed guards?

Mr. Ratliff said that is correct. So, Professional Police Services and Professional Security Services have been in existence in this City and operating since 2000. So, on June the 1<sup>st</sup>, we will hit our 24<sup>th</sup> year. There's some questions that you had in regard to the company police. The question that you had, Council Watlington, is about accountability. Each company police agency has accountability to the State of North Carolina. It falls out of their Attorney General's office, and it's a company police administrator. Any officer that has a complaint rises to the level, have to answer to the company police administrator. Every law enforcement officer in the state of North Carolina falls up on the criminal justice and standards or either Sheriff standards.

So, those are the two indices that govern us. So, if an officer is misbehaving, there's a way you can file a complaint with the company police administrator, as well as you can go directly with criminal justice standards. They have their own set of investigators that will come in and investigate, just like the SBI (State Bureau of Investigation) investigate law enforcement, officer involved shootings, and things of that nature, they have the power to do that. So, I hope that answers your question. We just can't put policing out here on the streets, and not have the proper systems in place to make sure that we hold our officers, or all officers accountable. So, there is a mechanism for that.

As it relates to armed security, there is a standard, as set by North Carolina Private Protective Service Board. The security officers in the state of North Carolina, if they are armed, have to pass the same training that law enforcement passes in the state. One thing most people don't understand is, for armed security officers to be armed, they have to shoot the same course of fire as a police officer in the state. Their standards are even higher. Most law enforcement agencies, the minimum standard is a 70 percent accuracy with your firearm. Security officers have to shoot at 80 percent standard. The reason why I know this is because I am a firearms instructor, not only for law enforcement, but for security as well, and I've been doing that since I was with CMPD, which is almost 30 years ago, okay. So, I've been doing this quite a while.

As it relates to the armed security, Professional Police and Security Services has been providing armed security for the county for the last 14 years. We've seen a lot of companies come and go, but one thing is consistent, is that our company has been selected over and over again, and provide those levels of service. So, we've been doing it a while. So, yes, it is very important that we put the efforts into the training. It is very important that folks who are going to take on this role, focus on training, not just when to shoot, when not to shoot, the escalation. All of those come into same play. We train our officers to the exact same standards as CMPD. That's my background. That's what I know. My wife just retired after 30 years with CMPD as a captain in the busiest District in the City of Charlotte, which is the university division.

So, we know how to police, we know how to do it right, and we get compliments from everyone in all the places we go when we provide service. It is very important that we do this right. We are very committed to making sure that we focus on some of the things that Mr. Braxton said, is make sure don't have situations where officers overreact, and we get ourselves in a situation where we become at fault with the general public. We're here to serve the public. We believe in that commitment to the public. We believe in accountability to the public.

So, yes, it's very important that we put the right mechanisms in place in making sure that we have the proper training. So, every security officer that works for PSS (Protective Security Specialists), that sponsors on this contract, will be trained to the same standards as CMPD. We will do deescalate. Even if they're unarmed, they will still be trained in de-escalation training. We train to all the same things that we do at CMPD. Again, we've adopted that model, we've had it for years, and we do the same level of training. So, if someone says that the companies out here that's doing this work, I think someone asked, "What about officers that are bad actors, that have gotten in trouble in other agencies, and they end up in private police?" That does happen.

The thing about the state, and the thing that they've really done since the riots, is they really went back and looked at providing a data base that we have to submit names to, so that those bad actors, when they come up for certification, criminal justice and standards can deny that, which keeps those officers from being back on the street. So, there's mechanisms in place. Most people don't know that, but it is there, and the Governor has done a great job in putting those things in place. So, I'll say that to you guys, is that I don't want you to give up on company police, I don't want you to give up on private security, because there's a role we all play, but again, we have to know exactly what our role is, and we have to stay in our lane and do exactly what we're trained to do.

**Councilmember Anderson** said Lee, thank you, for that insight and input. Not only for the training and having the training be right aligned with CMPD training, so the caliber of the training is high, but also the training as it relates to de-escalation and sensitivity around how certain opportunities could potentially get hot really fast and get out of line. So, the fact that your staff is trained on that and aware of that, and that's a practice within your business, really makes this a very good opportunity. I would also say that for District 1, as we as a city continue to try and push public transit and transportation, to allow safe ways to commute to work, for home, and to play, I continue to hear that safety is an issue that looms in the minds of the constituents of District 1. They want to participate in public transportation, but some of them are just so fearful due to safety issues.

So, Mr. Cagle, your three-pronged approach of having armed guards, unarmed guards, and more importantly, Ambassadors, that can help navigate certain situations for our constituents and our rider community, I think is the right way to go. We need to increase safety. We need for constituents to really, truly believe that our public transportation network is safe overall. So, I support this contractual process. I agree with Mr. Driggs that we have a group, a body, that has gone through this process. I want to honor that process, but as it relates to the procedures that we've all been talking about, I think it's always great for us to revisit these procedures and sharpen our pencils around the practice, and have regular updates on it. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

**Councilmember Molina** said first of all, I want to echo my colleague's comments in saying that Mr. Cagle, first of all, I have to continue to commend you for taking on the hard work of taking over the CATS organization. That is not an easy job. I am absolutely grateful for you having the courage and the tenacity to take us from where we were to where we will go.

So, I think is a great first step for the people that we represent in Charlotte to say that we hear you, that we're listening to you, and that we want to make our CATS service the safest that we possibly can. I think that increased ridership, like my colleague was just saying, having someone feel safe using our CATS buses is something that we can deliver through the service, and not to mention our brave men and women that help us to protect our residents here. They have their own deficiencies. So, I don't know if you're able to even answer. Let's say hypothetically, this was something that we wanted to award them. Would we even have the capacity to sustain that right now in our current workforce in CMPD? I don't to make an abstract question. This is something that I can get the information for offline, but having the increased information around the training, that's similar to what we offer to our officers, is very heartening.

Mr. Ratliff, thank you so much for your words, because didn't he envelop that very well? I mean, the way that you enveloped that information was enough to really, if I was unsettled before you spoke, I think with your words, it kind of sealed. I trust the people that we've hired to do the jobs. We can't do it all. We make decisions provided the information that they give to us, and they all work very hard. This is a large organization, and in order for us to do it effectively, we have to trust their decision making. So, hearing you and the way that you enveloped that, really helped to frame what we can expect from your organization and from the subcontracting piece of this. So, thank you so much for your time. To your wife, thank you so much for your service, ma'am, and thank you also sir for your service to our community.

Mayor Lyles said I know, but every member of Council has had a chance to speak. So, am I to call the question?

Mr. Driggs said you called the question, and everybody has spoken.

Mr. Mitchell said, yes, if someone's making a motion to call a question.

Mr. Driggs said I hate to have a question about the question. So, are we saying we don't want any more discussion about this topic?

Unknown said correct.

Mr. Driggs said okay. Colleagues, I struggle when we cut off debate. I really do. I mean, we don't need to go until 11 o'clock tonight, but if there's healthy debate around the dais, I think we always should encourage. That's just my comment, that's all.

Substitute motion was made Councilmember Watlington and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to call the question.
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The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

**YEAS:** Councilmembers Ajmera, Graham, Anderson, Watlington, and Driggs.

**NAYS:** Councilmembers Molina, Mayfield, Winston, and Mitchell.

Mr. Baker said so, you actually need two-thirds to pass the motion. So, we have nine members, so two-thirds is six, and you don't have six votes. So, the motion fails.

Mr. Winston said Mr. Lee, Mr. Ratliff. As Mr. Ratliff makes his way down. Again, words matter. These are not people that we hire. These are people that we contract, and those are two very different terms. We are not hiring corporate police. We are contracting with

corporate police. Very, very, very different relationship that exists between contractors and employees. Our employees would work for us, but our contractors don't. So, Mr. Ratliff, I think you know very well, right, police training is not a static thing, it's a dynamic thing, something that changes from time to time. You made a big statement that your firm meets or exceeds CMPD training. How can you assure us of that?

Mr. Ratliff said, well, I spent 13 years with CMPD. I worked very closely with them. I know exactly how they train, and I want to be the best, because Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police is one of the best agencies in this country, and I model that. So, Chief Jennings and I went through rookie school together. We're very close. I make sure that our officers, when they introduce something, my wife was a Captain at CMPD, she brings it home, we evaluate it, and then we look at ways that we can implement some of those practices in our agency. That's what we do.

Mr. Winston said so, does your agency use CMPD, and our training facilities to train your staff?

Mr. Ratliff said no, CMPD does not train my staff, okay. What we do is we contract with other law enforcement agencies, through the community colleges. I don't have the budget that CMPD has, okay, but what I will tell you is that we find other ways to get it done, using the same level of standards. Now, some of the same instructors that we use in our organization, myself being an instructor and having been an instructor for a long time, we all go through the same re-cert training that all the instructors in the state of North Carolina have to go through. So, the standards, a lot of the training, is pretty much uniform throughout the state of North Carolina.

Mr. Winston said throughout the state of North Carolina, but I would again beg my colleagues to understand, what are the standards of our CMPD. They far exceed most, if not, every state standard. That's why many police departments from around the state contract with our CMPD to do their training, because you can't find the level of training that our CMPD provides pretty much anywhere in the state, because it far exceeds it. So, when we're saying that they're being held accountable to state administrators, please believe that in many, if not most or all of those cases, those standards are going to be below the standards that we set for our CMPD.

So, while it might sound good and delivery was great, which businesspeople are supposed to do to run successful businesses, I don't have any way to trust and verify that those standards that we contract will meet, let alone, exceed the standards that are set for our employees. Again, I would encourage us to not go forward with this contract, and use local law enforcement entities that we can hold accountable to help to provide the safety and security that is necessary to run a transit system. Ms. Ajmera.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said, yes, thank you. I was listening the whole time, so I did not miss anything. I just want to add a couple of things. First, I echo what Councilmember Anderson and Councilmember Molina said, that there is a concern among riders about safety, and I appreciate the work that Mr. Cagle is doing to address the concerns. We have heard loud and clear, in one of our public forums, that not just riders, but our operators, do not feel safe while operating our bus system, and we need to do everything in our power to protect our employees. So, I support the recommendations that's in front of us, and I also want to highlight and just appreciate the work Mr. Ratliff does, especially Mrs. Ratliff, for really showing how we can work collaboratively to protect our employees and our riders. This is not the time where we debate policy issues. I think this is a time where we really need to address the contract that is front of us. So, I'll be fully supporting it. Thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said Mr. Ratliff, I want to say thank you for the clarification. Mr. Cagle, I will echo my colleague's sentiments with you stepping in into this role. You have been playing catch up very well. I definitely have concerns when it comes to armed guards, even though I know this is something that we have done for a while. The fact, for me, that it is best practices across the nation isn't necessarily a selling point for me, because we're watching the privatization of law enforcement across the nation.

I will say that asking the question of staff, regarding have we had any incidences in our community that is very important for me to hear? For our City Attorney, it will be helpful for you to bring language back that has been requested sooner rather than later, because the request that's in front of us is for a multi-year approval for A and B, with giving the City Manager the ability to extend these particular contracts. I appreciate the fact that we have broken the contracts out and we now have a vendor who would have been a sub, now stepping into the opportunity to be a prime.

Yes, I have some concerns that I would like for us to address as a Council, but I will say for tonight's discussion, I appreciate the discussion. Although, I have concerns regarding the weapons piece specifically, I will be supporting my colleagues if they choose to move forward with this particular contract for A and B. I do want staff to bring back the information that we requested sooner rather than later, so that when we have this conversation again, it's not a brand-new conversation, we have it with full transparency.

The vote was taken on the original motion to approve parts A and B and recorded as follows:

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

NAYS: Councilmember Winston.

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## **BUSINESS**

### **ITEM NO. 12: EASTLAND PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

Motion was made by Councilmember Molina, and seconded by Councilmember Graham to (A) Adopt a resolution approving an interlocal agreement between the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County for the Eastland Redevelopment Infrastructure Reimbursement Agreement funded through incremental City and County property taxes, and (B) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute all documents necessary to complete the interlocal agreement.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said I just want to take this opportunity to highlight the work that Ms. Dodson and her team is doing to really collaborate with our County, because to build a catalyst on that site that we have promised and to build a destination point that we had promised to our residents on the east side, it is going to take City and County working together. So, I appreciate the work that's been done, and I look forward to seeing a destination point that is truly something that our residents will be proud of. Thank you.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said we've been having this conversation for a long time, and Eastland has gone through multiple representation on a District level, as well as At-Large level. So, I'm glad that we are finally moving forward with this interlocal agreement with the County, and look forward to seeing what comes before us regarding recommendations of this development. I would like to encourage staff to work with our partners. I actually had a meeting earlier today with one of the representatives with Target and learned of some of the things that they have been working on.

I have some concerns with how we're moving forward with conversations with some partners. There's not consistency in what information is being shared, as far as giving a week or two week's notice, or any updates or changes, not necessarily having clear direction of what it is that we're looking for. Yet, if a proposal was made, we have had a couple of proposals regarding this space, where once the proposals come to us, staff has said, "No that's not what I wanted," but hasn't clearly stated what it is that we are looking for. So, we've gotten a couple of proposals.

I want to make sure that now that we're getting steps and we have this interlocal agreement with the County, if this moves forward tonight, that there is clear direction of what the expectation is from the City, as well as our partner on the County, since we are in this together, of what we want to see at this site. To give that direction to our partners who are attempting to bring development in the area, especially when that development has a clear commitment to the community that is extremely diverse that's going to be benefiting the most from the impact of these years of discussions and millions of dollars of investment. Thank you.

**Councilmember Graham** said I just want to support the agenda item. Councilmember Molina and I had the opportunity to attend the Mecklenburg County Economic Development Committee earlier last month. Constant communication and conversation with them, I think, is a giant step in the right direction that keeps the initiative moving forward. Obviously, there's a lot happening at Eastland since the groundbreaking of last year and this continues to move the ball in the right direction.

**Councilmember Molina** said first of all, I think I'm echoing the sentiments of my colleagues here. As I've told the people who elected me to sit in this seat and serve them, I think it's clear that everyone on our Council feels a connection to the Eastland project. Those of us who are new, myself and Councilmember Anderson, we've even spoken about this. She's technically Eastside too, but I've lived there as well. So, I think we all feel connected to the outcome of Eastland.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to our County Commission. My counterpart, Commissioner Mark Jerrell, is absolutely committed to this, and he's been a great partner. We're in constant contact. We communicate regularly around what our citizens are communicating to us, and how we can amplify their voices in our respective roles. Tracy Todd, thank you for your work. Just to make sure that I lift up and acknowledge the concern of my colleague, in saying that if there is transparency that's said to be missing, I'm hoping that we can make sure that that's not a sentiment that we continue to hear. If there's questions, I want to make sure that people have the answers to their questions.

We have an impending meeting that people have constantly asked me about, and I don't know what to expect. The only thing I know what to expect is, what we'll have in front of us at that time. I have made a promise, and I'm sure all my colleagues are committed to the same promise, because it's not just me. It will be the body that decides how we move forward and when, but we'll decide on the highest and best use for the additional portion of that property. This CIP (Capital Investment Plan) is a great opportunity to make sure that the project continues to move on time and maintains its current budget. So, I'm grateful to our County partners, our City staff. Thank you for the work that you're doing, and I'm looking forward to supporting this item.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Pages 716A-716G.

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#### **ITEM NO. 13: LOW-INCOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY HOME REHABILITATION PILOT PROGRAM**

Motion was made by Councilmember Molina and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera to (A) Approve the use of up to \$1,000,000 from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for home rehabilitation services in support of a low-income energy efficiency home rehabilitation pilot program in partnership with Duke Energy, and (B) Authorize the City Manager or his designee to execute, amend and renew contracts and other documents as needed to complete this transaction.
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**Councilmember Ajmera** said yes, I just want to highlight this program that we have. This will be in partnership with Duke Energy to address energy burden on many families. You probably hear from several of our residents, at least I have heard throughout my tenure on the Council, where utility bills, especially electric bills, are over \$500, where it places a very high burden on families who live on a fixed income. This program will help those residents to stay in housing while continuing to make energy efficient repairs in partnership with Duke. While our contribution is a million dollars, Duke is contributing \$4 million to watch this program. So, we are really leveraging partnership to ensure that we are helping more families. So, I think this is a great partnership. I hope to continue to see more of this. I also want to highlight Sarah's work on this. Sarah has been at this, and to continue to ensure that we do not miss a beat on our SEAP goals. So, thank you sir.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

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#### **ITEM NO. 14: RECOMMENDED USES FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS**

Motion was made by Councilmember Molina, seconded by Councilmember Graham, and carried unanimously to (A) Approve the use of up to \$1,550,000 from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for small business and entrepreneurship support, as follows: - Up to \$750,000 for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion-focused early-stage entrepreneurship accelerator, - Up to \$800,000 for small business ecosystem strategy, (B) Approve the use of up to \$1,700,000 from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for Corridors of Opportunity programming, as follows: - Up to \$1,000,000 for commercial district organizational support, - Up to \$200,000 for a mobile symphony project by the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, - Up to \$500,000 to support permanent workspaces for local creatives, and (C) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute any necessary contracts and agreements related to these recommendations.

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#### **ITEM NO. 16: LAND ACQUISITION FOR CORRIDORS OF OPPORTUNITY REDEVELOPMENT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, and seconded by Councilmember Molina to (A) Adopt a resolution approving the conveyance of a Right of First Refusal for the real property located at 501 E. Trade Street (Parcel Identification Number 08005401) to Charlotte Arena Operations, LLC (Hornets); and (B) Authorize the City Manager or his designee to negotiate and execute all documents necessary to complete the transaction.

**Councilmember Driggs** said I will just say briefly, I appreciate the motives for this. I think it's very expensive, and I'm concerned about paying \$1 million an acre for land in that condition at that location. I just personally feel there are better solutions to this problem and better ways to spend that amount of money. So, I will not be supporting this.

**Marjorie Parker, 5131 Springview Road** said good evening, Madam Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and City Council. I am Marjorie Parker, President of the Hidden Valley Community Association. I would like to thank the Council for allowing me the opportunity to speak briefly. I also want to thank the Hidden Valley residents for coming out, for Sedgwick Dean of SAFE (Safety and Accountability For Everyone) for transporting us seniors to the Government Center. We are here to request that you vote for the approval of the purchasing of the Economy Inn and Budget Motel on Reagan Drive. We would like to

see this near empty motel purchased, secured and demolished. The Hidden Valley residents have endured the crime on Sugar Creek and Reagan Drive for decades.

In fact, because of our exasperation, we partnered with several churches and had a prayer march on MLK (Martin Luther King) day, January 16, 2023. So, we are waiting for God to work this out. On this property, we would like to see single-family townhomes, maybe a sprinkle in a grocery store, but right now, we want this motel gone. You would not believe what we have seen as seniors as we pass this property. Thank you very much for your time.

**Apryl Lewis, 8150 Runaway Bay Drive** said good evening, everyone. Today, I'm here basically with a curious lens and hopefully to influence decisions, with basically asking some questions that I hope you guys take into consideration. After hearing definitely, we have our senior members in that area, part of the questions that I have, where are the actual current residents of the hotel being housed as the transition is going to happen, and is it something that we're going to consider for future Corridors of Opportunities that are at risk for this same type of revitalization? I also wonder how housing solutions be created without causing displacements, hearing the frustrations from the community, and also understanding that there are several factors that need to be addressed with whatever is created in this area.

I also want to ask, does leadership consider what Charlotte can look like without a cycle of gentrification and corporate housing greed? I do hear the concerns of what's needed in that area, but I also do want to raise that this would be an area that would be primed for more gentrification, pushing out other residents that actually are trying to stay there, namely these seniors. I also want to ask, who are the community leaders being consulted and representing people living in the area? That is definitely a main concern of mine, and I'm trying to get the research on it, but if that information could be public, that would be great.

I also want to ask, how would disparities regarding criminal justice be addressed during this process? We also know that this area is ripe for a lot of issues with crime, but also what we bring there, even if it is housing, are we going to take into account how many individuals are actually affected, or are we not able to access housing because of criminal activity that doesn't increase activity just to survive? Would we also have housing developed within this area and other opportunity of corridors be open to individuals with criminal records? I personally feel like if we are addressing housing that has a main concern of being able to survive, we have to have access for these individuals with criminal records and other barriers that force them into hotels. I'm not just highlighting the crime, but also individuals that actually live in these hotels. I also wonder will disabled citizens and seniors have ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access to future proposals for this area. Since I don't live there, I don't want to say what's necessary, but I do also know disabled seniors and senior residents do need to be brought into this conversation.

Lastly, how will health disparities be addressed, specifically on mental health and drug usage? We do know the area and what happens there, but we're not taking into the mindset and who is actually working to change the mindset of the area and the people in the area, so we can actually have a long-lasting improvement and crime reduction while housing individuals. For me, these are just things that I hope that you bring into the discussion, when we think about what amount of money is going to be put into this area, it is necessary. It shouldn't be a question on why. It should be how, how effective will it be, and impactful. Thank you.

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you. Ms. Lewis, I just want you to know that all of those questions are so very pertinent, not just to this initial matter tonight. These are the questions that this Council asks, and try to really resolve on every affordable housing effort that we make every time we take an effort towards the Corridors of Opportunity. We are grateful for you to be able to articulate that and to keep those questions in front of us. I want you to know that this Council, by many actions for a number of years, that many of us have shared this opportunity. We are now able to actually take those

questions and keep them at the front of this discussion, so thank you very much. I wish it was something that you could just wave that wand and we'd have everything that we needed for our seniors and our children, and everybody that's working every day. Give us some time, let us continue to focus on what we can do, and just know that we need your support and continue to come down here and talk to us about it. Really appreciate you. Thank you.

**Councilmember Watlington** said so, the first thing I will say is when it comes to Corridors of Opportunity, you will find no bigger champion around this dais. Seriously, I'm very happy to see this Corridors of Opportunity program starting to branch out into implementation, and some of the other corridors. It's really awesome to see the collective effort. So, thank you to Monica, and to the whole Corridors team, for the work that you're doing there. It is definitely appreciated.

I did want to ask some specific questions to staff in light of what Ms. Lewis has asked, because like the Mayor said, these are questions that all of us have been asking as well, not only for this particular parcel, but as we think about some of the larger displacement events. So, I'd like to understand, and I see Ms. Dodson coming to the podium, so I will start with the first question, and I'll just tee up the second one so that Mr. Heath can be prepared. So, the second question is going to be about the displacement event procedures that we've got in place, and I'd like you to outline that please. Then, my first question is, Ms. Dodson, can you speak to the path forward for disposition of the property, or just give us the overall strategy here?

**Tracy Dodson, City Manager's Office** said yes. Thank you, Councilmember Watlington, and good evening, Council. So, in the Sugar Creek playbook, the number one thing in there is talks about the number of hotel rooms. So, we've taken a strategy of looking at all of the properties at the interchange that are hotels, and no two will be the same in terms of how we look at them. For this particular property, we can see an acquisition path, the relocation, and the numbers that we looked at of people who are actually living there was not that high in comparison to some of the other ones. Four, I think, of the ten were employees of the hotel as well.

So, we have been working closely in our team, which you know the Corridors team is across departments, working with crisis assistance. A lot of organizations, like Champion House of Care, Hearts For The Invisible, The Mayfield Memorial, CDC (Centers for Disease Control), Freedom Fighting communities, as well, to work through a displacement strategy for anybody who might need to be replaced. We also sent out notices last week, so that we had time to start working with residents and through crisis assistance on that. So, we're trying to be very thoughtful and not purchase, and then start thinking about it. That we've really been trying to think about it in conjunction with acquiring the property.

Ms. Watlington said and then, as it relates to the disposition, what's the plan? How is this going to be a catalytic project for this particular corridor? Because we've talked about buying this at a premium, and I did see that we have gotten it down to the appraisal price, so thank you for that, but set the stage. Help us understand why this parcel in this way, and what this is going to do for this corridor.

Ms. Dodson said so, the way that we had looked at it, and when we were able to get the property under contract, we did talk to a couple of community leaders to say, are we going down the right path? We've talked to other organizations that are out in the community as well. We didn't try to do this in a vacuum. We think in some of the conversations, that going for a for sale affordable product is a good approach. Now that this is public, we'll be having more community engagement around the longer-term strategy.

We also had some high-level conversations with some affordable housing developers to make sure this a place where the market would go. We think that for this particular property, that that is a win, because it is immediately adjacent to Hidden Valley, and providing some housing stock. We hear quite often the need for food and grocery, and

we can talk about that with the community. It is only four acres, but we can talk about that with the community. Again, this one just felt like it wants a majority of it to be housing, but we'll continue to talk to the community as well on that.

Ms. Watlington said thank you, Ms. Dodson. Did you have anything to add, Mr. Heath, as it relates to our strategy around displacement events?

**Shawn Heath, Director of Housing & Neighborhood Services** said thank you. I can be brief. I think that each displacement event is unique, but the two common ingredients are, having a quarterback agency on the ground that can facilitate the resources that are necessary to bring to bear, and then having some financial capacity in order to support that ecosystem. So, thankfully, Council, in the last few months, has appropriated some of the Federal Stimulus funds under the Emergency Rental Assistance program to specifically be available for displacement-related events. So, Crisis Assistance will serve as the quarterback agency for this particular scenario, working with agency partners and community organizations on the ground as necessary in order to work through that process.

**Councilmember Driggs** said just briefly, Ms. Parker, I'd like to commend you on making a short powerful statement. I've already indicated that I will not support it. My concern is simply, it's a good project, but I don't know that we can afford to do much of this, that where 200,000 acres in Charlotte, we're sanitizing four of them, and spending \$4 to \$5 million to do so. I would like to see us just get better bang for our buck. That's all I'll say. Thank you.

**Councilmember Graham** said thank you. First, let me thank the President of the Neighborhood Association and the neighbors for being here today, Ms. Henderson, Mr. Dean for making sure they got here safely. Thank you very much for your interest in this topic. The Corridors of Opportunity redevelopment, not only here on my District in Beatties Ford Road or Councilmember Watlington's District, covers six Corridors. We've been diligently working to get this thing kicked off, a year and a half ago, two years ago, in our District. It's really good to see that the planning efforts that went on for the last year or two, in other corridors, are now coming to fruition, and the step in the right direction in terms of acquiring this land.

Mr. Driggs, I don't think we can afford not to do it. This corner, I-85 and Sugar Creek, has been an eye sore for decades. I drive by it every day. I play tennis at Sugar Creek Park. I know the issues in reference that the neighborhood leaders are confronting with for decades, and I think this is a positive way to utilize the Corridors of Opportunity, which its intent was to be creative, think out of the box, work with neighborhood leaders and association, to provide the playbook and the direction that they want for their communities with a little help from the City.

So, this is not just a purchasing of the property and a tear down, but the building of a community with affordable homes and townhomes. So, the staff is on a pretty accelerated schedule, in terms of securing the property, helping those who are there, and I think there's about 11 or 12 individuals that may be impacted, making sure that they are safe and secure, demoing the property. Then, pending an RFP on the street for affordable housing very quickly, so the property won't be sitting there vacant and empty, and that the community can see positive action moving right away.

So, I'm very excited about what's about to happen over there. I'm meeting with a young lady, and you guys may know her, she opened up a salon on Sugar Creek utilizing City resources for the facility. They're excited about positive change. The church is doing an affordable housing project on the Corridor. Evoke Living is already there. So, positive change is coming to that community, and I think that's in the best interest of the residents and the seniors, the best interest of this community, and I look forward to supporting it.

**Councilmember Winston** said thank you. Anybody who knows Sugar Creek and 85, knows that the main problems there are those 12 to 13 motels. Charlotte is one of the

top cities in the nation for human trafficking, and a lot has to do with the way these motels are situated, particularly on Sugar Creek and 85, and many different exits along 85 and 77 throughout our City. I contend that we're not going to solve this problem, whether it be from a law enforcement perspective, or I agree with Mr. Driggs, by purchasing one of these hotels or motels at a time, it will have a marginal effect. That's why I've been actually pushing for the closing of the I-85 and Sugar Creek exit to change the way those motels operate wholesale and not one by one.

I also know, when staff brought us this opportunity and this potential purchase, I asked them to do two things. I asked them to not do this to the community, but with the community. So, part of that was engaging with the larger community around 85 and Sugar Creek, and I know folks in that community, if it was \$10 million for a hotel/motel, they'd say go ahead and do it and get rid of those, because as it's been said before, that's the issue. Nothing is going to change until we change that. I also asked staff to engage with the folks, specifically, that are doing work in the motels along Reagan Drive, that are doing work to work with the families that, honestly in some situations, depend on those places, and that need innovative approaches to transition out of the situation that they're in, and to the situations that they want to be.

There is good work that is going on there, and it's work that we should be investing in, and we haven't necessarily invested in to scale. I also know that it's the work of folks like that, that when things like this happen and they feel like sometimes they get done to them and not done with them, it hits them like a body blow. It's discouraging, and it feels like it's a missed opportunity for, again, the City or any entity like ours, to work with them and not just work on them.

So, I'm torn at this point in time, because I thought we were bringing both of those entities along and working with them, to come to a partnership forward here, and I don't think we've necessarily hit that mark. I know, again, it's a place where we have to do something, but I want to do something that continues to build on the good work that is being done and doesn't just provide the kind of generic kind of stamp of we've come here and done something that sometimes can feel like we're doing as a City. So, I'm having trouble reconciling with this after learning some new information on that. So, I don't know if I will be able to support this one tonight.

Mayor Lyles said if I can just have a moment. Thank you to all the members of Hidden Valley. The Corridors of Opportunity, that we have in this community, are because we didn't invest in 1970s. We had a wonderful neighborhood in Hidden Valley. We were respected. People worked every day. Everything was just like you would expect in any community that's flourishing in this City today. To say that that was taken away, it was because, by governmental action who put that interchange there, who made it possible to drive down those streets at that level, and who took care of the people in the community? So, to all of you I say, this is our downpayment for the things that we didn't do in the 1970s. We actually neglected and left to fail and said it's okay. Well, it's not okay.

So, I know that there might be a little bit of difficulty in how much the money is today, but we've got to start somewhere, and I say this is where it starts, and it starts with this vote tonight.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said thank you, Madam Mayor, and thank you for your comments; although, I have concerns with those comments, for the simple fact that anyone that's lived, you've lived in this City a long time, and any of us who has lived here over 30 years, we've seen what we've done. Freedom Drive and Berryhill was nothing but 24/7 prostitution for many years. What did law enforcement finally do after getting representation that actually fought for it? They started showing up. When I asked Ms. Dodson and staff what has been the law enforcement presence? Have we had one of the police towers there, and set up there for a period of time? Have we had law enforcement there? What she shared with me is this is not even one of our highest call case hotels. We know what Airport Inn looked like, and the constant 24/7 drug interaction, but law enforcement has a place in this, not private, CMPD.

My challenge is to pay a slum lord, who has created chaos in our community, over \$4 million for a property for them to just turn around and be able to go purchase something else. My challenge is we did not, when we were working with the community, come up with a plan six months ago, where we had constant law enforcement out there. Because just by that presence, that would've stopped some of this negative interaction that we were seeing on the ground. So, we can shake our heads and say no, my home is off of Freedom. I've lived through the 24/7 drug interaction, prostitution, and everything else. That was one of the main reasons that I ran for office back in 2011, because we did not have an investment over there. You know what happened many years later? Government came in and invested, and most of my neighbors aren't even there anymore. Most of my neighbors that were long-term renters, were not able to buy those homes, and those that did have homes are no longer there, because those homes are gone that were once \$30, \$40, \$50, \$60,000 where you might have some equity today. Those homes now have been rehabbed and remodeled for \$6-700,000.

As a community, we have had plenty of times of people that look like us that came to us and said, "Here's this great thing that we're going to do for the community," but what we don't tell you, is a lot of times, you're not going to be the person that benefits. You already see a number of new developments happening along Sugar Creek. How many of your family members have access to those new units, that we opened the door to be invested in the area? Yes, we can create some language that says, okay, we're going to pay for this using your tax dollars. We're going to use some of the funding that was raised to do the demolition. So, we're going to clear it. We can also put the language in place to say, here is who's going to get access to this. We have identified very specific developers that's going to develop something, whether it's single family, whether it's townhome ownership, that is going to do this specifically in partnership with the community, and not come in and try to rape the community, which we have already gone through.

That is my challenge. It's not just the fact of the funding, it's the fact that we have consistently lied to you for decades, and we are not the ones who benefit once all this new development comes in, once we see all this growth. If you don't currently own that home, the chances of you getting access to that new home is going to be very limited because then what do we say when that partner comes in? It's a waiting list, first come/first serve. How many of us have already been sitting on a list for more than two years? I had a resident call me on Easter, because she's has been sitting in a horrible situation for over two years, sitting on a wait list.

So, if we're going to be moving forward and have this conversation, then we need to be honest with y'all, and be transparent, and not just say what sounds good, because we owe you. Yes, we do owe you, but over the last two decades, we have not done everything that we can to protect you, because we could have put the language in on the front end.

What I'm saying, Ms. Dodson, as our Economic Development Director, the language should be in, in partnership with our City Attorney, to make sure that the protections are in place. That, if this is funded, if this is demolished, it is already identified which partners and what commitments to this community for who gets access to this new housing. To ensure, and I don't even if we can legally do this, that this individual who was a slum lord, that we're getting reading to pay over \$4 million for his trash business, isn't able to go out and buy another business in our community that, in another 10, 15 years, is going to put us in the exact same situation, where we're using tax dollars, because we allowed you. I say allow, because we did not have law enforcement there on a continuous basis with a clear plan, whether that plan is a sting, whether it's an operation, whatever cute code name we want to give it, so that they can't do this again later, and then we look to the community and say, we going use \$4 million, maybe \$6 million, of your tax dollars in order to get rid of this nuisance that we allowed to build and grow here, because if we had the enforcement there, that could have changed a lot of this conversation.

So, yes, it is very difficult for me to say, and my colleagues know this, and I have mentioned it to the Economic Development Director, and when she brought this to us two or three times, I asked some of these same questions. What are the commitments? What do we do with law enforcement? What you said to me is basically, "I don't have to give you an answer, because this is what I'm presenting to Council because there's enough of y'all that I believe that would vote for it, so, for the one and two who don't, I'm not concerned." As a community, I know you want something done, but to what extent? Without having clear commitments from us of what it's going to be once that's done, moves on. You should want to know that, as well, especially when we're getting ready to have a conversation, because we're going to have to look at what taxes are going to look like moving forward. Whether there's an increase or decrease, we know that there's going to be an impact.

You should demand more from us, when we're spending, allocating, identifying ways to spend and allocate, the tax dollars that you have contributed to, when you've already gone through so much this investment. I'm asking for you to push for investment that's actually going to benefit you outside of saying, yes, let's spend this money to just demolish this without knowing clearly what you're going to get in return. Don't let us do what we did to Brooklyn. Don't let us do what we did in South End. We could have put demands on housing affordability along the light rail. We didn't. It takes six votes.

Demand better of us, so that you can have better in your community. I don't live over there, but my mother-in-law does, and has been over there 40 years of her life. So, I'm over there quite often. So, I see what is happening, and it's the same thing that happened in Camp Greene, which was by and part, and what we know as Westwood Apartments, and we remember what Westwood was and what it got turned into. What I am asking you to do, is to consider, is that what you want to see happening now? Unless staff can give me a commitment right now of what this expectation is going to be, for who it's going to actually, what partners or the type of partners, are going to be the ones that we bring to the table for this redevelopment, whether it is townhomes or single family, I'm not going to be able to vote for this. So, Ms. Dodson, who are you having conversations with to make sure the community gets something that's going to benefit them?

Ms. Dodson said so, Councilmember Mayfield. We would have to go through an RFP process, which is what we've said that we wanted to do. We wanted to target it for affordable housing, which is also what we talked to the community about. We talked to some affordable housing developers to see, is it a site for affordable housing? Every indication that we have gotten to so far indicates that yes, this could be a for sale affordable housing project. Again, we have to go through a formal RFP process, which we are trying to expedite creating the RFP right now.

Ms. Mayfield said so, the last part that I'm going to add for you all, because some of you watched the meeting, some of you keep up with what we're talking about. Earlier today, on 267, we talked about Housing Trust Fund. Remember we came to you a number of years ago and asked for you to give us \$50 million. Since 2002, we have built over 11,000 units. That's over \$260 million. So, to hear that we're going to talk to some providers, we're going to encourage affordable, when what we receive as an average is five to seven units, and what is even affordable today, because my Downpayment Assistance Program that we support in the City is \$300,000 up to, for a new home or a rehab home, \$315,000. You can't even buy a home for that in Charlotte right now. So, demand more, because this is not the first time that I've asked us this question or anything similar to this question.

So, you've had time to identify some specific partners, because we've got historic West End partners that's already doing amazing work. So, even if you had come back and said, "You know what? We actually have talked to Historic West End. You know what? That's actually a small developer that specializes in building houses, specifically under a certain price point." As opposed to saying, "Well, maybe one of our big partners might, please sir, give me a unit or two." That right there says that there is not a true commitment. This is an allocation of funds, just to be able to say, look at what we did,

and we risk the chance of having the same conversation that we've had in Eastland for over a decade, from where we do just enough to make people feel like we're doing something to help them, knowing doggone well that there's no commitment from your team and this staff to move something to the next level.

Yes, that may be comical to you, but for me on this end watching it, living it, driving through it for over 30 years in this community, and seeing what could be done, and when we had leadership that got it done. Yes, this is frustrating for me, for the simple fact that all of these are my neighbors. You don't see these people on a daily basis.

Ms. Watlington said point of order.

Ms. Mayfield said there can be a point of order, but I'm still going share what I'm sharing, because where I have a concern, is when I asked a specific question of a staff person, and I could not get an answer to that question, that is a challenge.

Ms. Watlington said point of order. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I appreciate the question, absolutely, I respect your right to ask the questions, but can we maintain a level of respect and decorum?

Ms. Mayfield said there was nothing disrespectful or out of decorum in what I said.

Ms. Watlington said I would disagree.

Unknown said I would disagree.

Unknown said I would disagree as well.

Ms. Mayfield said, okay. Well, again, if y'all think that there was disrespect in me sharing my work experience with an individual and my lack of receiving information when I have asked about it, then that is a challenge that we're going to have to, not even agree to disagree on, your work experience has been very different from mine. So, when I have asked a question multiple times and I have not gotten an answer, then what I am saying is I am letting these community members know why I am going to have a challenge.

Ms. Watlington said point of order, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said let's take a five-minute break.

Ms. Mayfield said we don't need to take a five-minute break. Mayor, we're all adults sitting around this dais. Just as my colleagues have spoken, and I've listened, I am sharing that for me to move forward, I am asking you all to demand more of us. I am asking that if I ask a staff member to present something or give me a commitment, then they should be able to do that, opposed to saying, "Well, we're going to work with," Then, I gave you two different examples.

Mayor Lyles said Ms. Mayfield, there are rules around if you ask a staff member a question and they did not answer, you can get five other people to ask that question, and then there is an authority in our procedures to allow that question to be addressed and answered.

Ms. Mayfield said that question would be addressed and answered at a later date through a committee assignment, correct.

Mayor Lyles said we have some rules of procedure that allow for questions to be asked and answered, and I think that when we do it individually, or we have a collective to do it, it's a lot better around this dais. I think where we are today, is I understand that you have this great experience, and your self-experience, and you're speaking to this audience, but I think we need to do it with respect for the people that work here as we

proceed. So, would you like to go ahead and finish your remarks to the public and have those comments made?

Ms. Mayfield said I would ask you all to demand from us that we work to do better for you, and not just approve something without you having a clear understanding of what the expectation is, or even a timeline of when we plan on creating something good for you, opposed to just letting us say, this is going to be good for you, but you don't know when. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, Ms. Mayfield. I think that it's a lot to follow, and you can tell how much passion there is around this. So, well, you can tell how much this means to people and intensity of the comments.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said I had many friends over there on Hidden Valley Forest Dr. So, on a serious note, it has been a long time. On a serious note, thank you all for being here tonight to give us your vision, and Ms. Parker, thank you for those great words. Sometimes we don't get input from a community what they would like to see, or how they would like to vote. You all were very clear tonight, move forward, give us momentum, remove this blight. So, I will be supporting Dante Anderson as we move forward and continue the work we're trying to do to make Hidden Valley the community I remember in the 1970s.

Tracy and Monica, thank you. We put a lot of pressure about Corridor of Opportunity development. I have to thank Monica. She gave me a nice update. This has been tough. You have had three district reps for District 4, Councilmember Graham, Councilmember Johnson, and now you have Ms. Anderson. So, this stuff does not move quickly, but thank you for your patience. I hope you feel like it'll be a new day tomorrow, that this City Council really is going to invest in Hidden Valley. So, thank you.

**Councilmember Molina** said thank you, Madam Mayor. I want to echo the sentiments of my colleague here, Councilmember Mitchell. Hidden Valley neighbors, thank you for coming out today. It means a lot to hear your voice, from one Marjorie to another. I even read your comments today in QC Metro before I came, where they had interviewed you, and you lent your support to us supporting this. I knew before I sat down at the dais, your words impacted me in a way that I knew that I would be willing to support it, knowing that you live there day in and day out, you've seen things that I have not seen.

I know as important as it is to provide the tools necessary, I think everyone who runs for this office does it from a place of being willing to make an impact. As perfect and as imperfect as it is, I feel like each one of us do it. Even the ones that I know that have done it, even unsuccessfully, I see you, and I know you've done it for the same reason. You've done it because you intend to bring your experiences, however relevant specifically to the idea. Those experiences inform us to be able to make an impactful decision for people just like us, so that we can listen with empathy and understand where you come from when you take the time to drive down here and address us, so that we can hear you and we can see you. So, thank you for that.

Policy moves slow. Policy is a slow form of governing that takes often time. It's not fast. There's nothing about this process that can go fast. I can't speak for everyone, but me specifically, the reason why I feel confident in standing behind this, even understanding that there is a larger price tag, is understanding the potential impact for you and your neighbors, knowing that we can step in and with what little resources we have, because we have a finite budget.

What the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative has done, is provided an opportunity for private investors to come in and put their money with ours, and extend it exponentially, so that we can make an impact like this, because if this was something that we were doing on our own, we couldn't do it, right. We couldn't do this for any community. There are six communities across our City that we're going to do this. We're going to attempt this lift to impact those communities in a way that they haven't been impacted in decades, and this one is one of them.

So, I hope that you'll trust us, and know that as decision makers, we have you in mind. We see you, we hear you, and we'll be working with our Economic Development team to be their ears, because we have a direct connection to you. You're the ones who placed us in these seats with your votes. So, it's our jobs to listen to you, and to translate that to our team here at the City, so that we can elevate that for you. So, thank you for coming, we hear you, and I definitely will offer my support to this agenda item.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said when you are one of the last speakers, and next to last, a lot of things have been said. So, I don't want to repeat what has been said. I will highlight that when you come here and when you all voice your support for something, I know what that means to you, and I will do my part to listen when you tell us that, this what we want. I think it's part of the RFP process and community engagement, is for us to listen to you, so that we are not coming up with something the community may not support or appreciate. So, I think, when Ms. Dodson said that this will go through RFP process, community input, that means that you will be an important part of this development.

I really appreciate what our Mayor had to say. Because of historic disinvestment, as a Council, we have championed Corridors of Opportunities, and how we need to prioritize funding for that. Yes, when it comes to affordability, I know one of my colleagues raised a concern about how expensive this is. Well, let me say, we have figured out a way to make big projects happen. So, when there is a will, there is a way. I had a conversation earlier today with Ms. Anderson, and this is something that she has championed along the way. She shared with me the playbook that we have for 85 and Sugar Creek Opportunity Corridor, which is really reducing the number of hotel/motel rooms by 30 percent, and this step is in the right direction of part of that playbook, because CMPD has reported to us multiple times there is transactional crime happening at this motel at this location.

So, we need to do our part to ensure that we are addressing violent crime in the area. This proposal that we have will exactly do that. I know Ms. Lewis had raised concerns about displacement, and those are valid concerns, and I know Ms. Anderson will speak about that, but there is a plan in place to ensure that we are working with the Crisis Ministry, to house those 11 individuals. I appreciate the Mayor's Racial Equity Initiative, as Ms. Molina had mentioned. This is going to help us leverage private sector dollars, so that we can really make an impact. So, I will be supporting this. I hope that you will continue to hold us accountable throughout this process. Ms. Henderson and Mr. Dean, thank you so much for bringing all the neighbors here. We certainly appreciate that. I look forward to seeing how this development can truly be something that community and neighbors can be proud of. Thank you.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so, what I really want to do is, not necessarily for our friends from Hidden Valley, thank you so much for being out here, but mainly for you around the dais. I just want to talk a little bit about what the team has done, not just for the hotel purchase, but the Corridors of Opportunity in general. So, we tried to do something very, very different, and that was start off with these areas that we called hot spots, and it was crime related. Who wants to make an investment in a hot spot? So, then over time, we start to talk about priority areas. So, these areas would be different, that we would make investments in it. There are these terms called C-NIPs (Comprehensive Neighborhood Improvement Project) that predated me. I don't think they predated some of you, but they were infrastructure investments, and not necessarily economic development or jobs, or let's say, even transit.

So, a few years ago, we, I guess, birthed this concept of the Corridors of Opportunity to do things just like this, so that we aren't doing the same thing that we have done for decades. So, I think it's the one area in the City that is super cross collaboration. So, it's not just Tracy in ED (Economic Development), but we have Liz, when she was at C-DOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation), and we have folks from CMPD, and it is almost daily that these discussions go on. I think what's more important, is that each community has created a playbook. As kind of interesting, Ms. Mayfield, you were around for the first playbook, because we said let's just not have something that sits on

a shelf for decades, and we don't implement. Over the years, the Councils have been great, \$24 million in one year in Corridors, \$24 million in another year in Corridors.

So, I just wanted to make sure, because I have 8,400 folks that work with me, and I don't want them to take away tonight that we aren't trying to do something that's special for the community. Tracy, I appreciate everything that you've done to try pull us all together to do items like this. Not every Corridor is going to be purchasing hotels. I think Ms. Ajmera nailed it, and I'm sorry, I know Councilmember Anderson is saying "Jones, you're about to say the things I'm about to say," but taking 30 percent of these rooms away is part of that playbook. It's the number one priority in the playbook.

So, yes, there's a bunch of other things we can do. There's so many partners that are out there that would love for us to work with them. Some of our partners are on the front row tonight, and it's good to see you. I just don't want, again, the team to walk away from tonight feeling deflated, because we didn't do something right. I think we did exactly what was asked of us, maybe not as fast as you want, maybe not the path that you want, but I really appreciate the work that is going into this, and I think it's going to be reflected in the community. I just wanted to say that. Thank you, Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said I'd also like to thank all of you for sitting through something that was very difficult for all of us. We appreciate you and hope that you understand. I want to say to the staff, the work that you've done on this, as you've seen expressed, has been important to this community, the playbook, the research, the data, the sessions that we've had with you, and just having appreciation for that. I want to turn to Ms. Anderson to ask her to really express how this Council came forward with this idea representing the efforts that we've made for Hidden Valley.

**Councilmember Anderson** said I am so excited for this moment. Being a native Charlottean, born and raised here. I too, Mr. Mitchell, spent time in Hidden Valley when I was kid, and I wanted to live over there. The houses were awesome. I wanted my family to be able to have that access to purchase a home. Many of my Council members have said a lot of the positive things and the benefits, and you've heard some passion and some tensions here. You've also heard some focal points around price points and dollars. What I would offer up to all of us, is the opportunity cost of not investing in this corridor decades ago, has grown at a rate that is way more than \$4.2 million.

You can ask any of these Hidden Valley residents, and you have long-term residents, who have owned their homes and weathered the storm, and they continue to fight for their community, they continue to be advocates. My hat is always off to all of you. Ms. Parker, you and I spoke over the Easter weekend, but I want you to understand that. There is an opportunity cost to not investing, and to finding ways to rationalize away the right and our responsibility to act.

So, you all live there. You know what it's like when the sun goes down. You know what you deal with when you wake up in the morning, and the sun comes up in the aftermath every single night. We're not talking about other neighborhoods in the City, and I recognize that we have hotspots and pockets throughout the entire City, but we're not talking about Freedom Drive right now. We're not talking about other Camp Greene right now. We're talking about Sugar Creek, and we're talking about that corridor between Derita and North Tryon. We have the opportunity to act, and we have the responsibility to act, with a combination of public and private dollars to have a direct impact to that corridor, to the lives of the individuals who call that home, and quite frankly, to the individuals who are impacted through all of that transactional crime that occurs there.

It has a ripple effect in a positive manner that many of us can't even imagine. So, I appreciate the passion. I appreciate the arguments around why we shouldn't do this. To Mr. Graham's point, I don't understand how you could vote against this, if you really have understood the history of Charlotte, the history of this corridor, the importance of this historical neighborhood of Hidden Valley and Derita, and all of the other pockets of

neighborhoods along Sugar Creek. I can't rationalize why someone would vote no for this particular project.

Now, you've heard all the right answers around, there's a playbook. So, there's a plan. There's a strategic plan that all of you had input in, right. The community members had input, the business association and alliance along Sugar Creek has had input into this playbook. So, this isn't a push to the community. This really is a collaborative effort, and I want to thank Monica Holmes and Tracy Dodson and their teams for all of the heavy lifting they've done around this. Ms. Holmes has had numerous meetings with me around the strategic intent around our actions, because that was the most important thing for me for this corridor. I want it to be strategic around our approach to these motels.

There was a comment earlier around, some of these motels are used for affordable housing, and that's true. If you've ever been over there in that corridor, you can see constituents getting off the bus. They have on their uniforms, coming from work, and they use some of these motels as a stop gap for housing. These two properties are not that. These two properties are hotspots for violent transactional crime. It's a blight on the community. It directly abuts this historic neighborhood, and they have to deal with it every single day, and they've been doing it for decades.

So, I am so thrilled that my colleagues, who have said yes, and we've had lots of conversation around this outside of the dais, but I'm so thrilled that a group of my colleagues understand the historical impact that this corridor has lived through, and they see the positive impact of making this purchase, demolishing these buildings that are beyond disrepair, and bringing the opportunity for something positive in this community. It's long overdue, and I'm happy to be a part of the group that votes yes for this, and I'm happy to see what will come and how it will change. As one of my colleagues mentioned, we already see pockets of change in the corridor, and we still have lots to do. This is just one step of action in this playbook. There's others to come. So, I'm excited about that. I'm excited to see us move from a design and input phase of a Corridor of Opportunity to the phase of implementation. It's very important, and it's a very important milestone for us to achieve.

So, I just want to say thank you to all of you. This community is such an engaged community. You guys could take a different route. You could decide you want to be disenfranchised and not participate in the process and just allow things to occur, but you don't do that. It's not just one or two people, it is a group of residents, that every week you get out and you have that desire and drive to make your community better. I see it. I appreciate it. It's not easy to do. I know you have some battle scars and you get tired and you hear no a lot, but tonight I'm excited that you are going to hear yes. So, with that, Madam Mayor, I will say thank you for the time.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, and Watlington.

NAYS: Councilmembers Driggs, Mayfield, and Winston.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 717-719.

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The meeting was recessed at 8:53 p.m. and reconvened at 9:05 p.m.

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## **ITEM NO. 17: CONVEYANCE OF RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL TO HORNETS**

Motion was made by Councilmember Graham, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt a resolution approving the conveyance of a Right of First Refusal for the real property located at 501 E. Trade Street (Parcel Identification Number 08005401) to Charlotte Arena Operations, LLC (Hornets); and (B) Authorize the City Manager or his designee to negotiate and execute all documents necessary to complete the transaction.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 717-719.

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**ITEM NO. 18: SULLENBERGER AVIATION MUSEUM SUPPORT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to (A) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute agreements with the Sullenberger Aviation Museum, formally known as the Carolinas Aviation Museum, to support the re-opening of the museum in amounts not to exceed \$2,000,000 in total from the city's Tourism Fund, and (B) Adopt a budget ordinance appropriating \$2,000,000 from the Tourism Fund for support for the Sullenberger Aviation Museum.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 65, at Page(s) 489.

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**ITEM NO. 19: ACCEPT GRANT FOR HEAVY-DUTY ELECTRIC VEHICLE PURCHASE**

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Mayfield, and carried unanimously to (A) Accept a grant in the amount of \$485,045 from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality for purchasing a Heavy-Duty Class 8 Electric Truck, and (B) Adopt a budget ordinance appropriating \$485,045 from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to the General Capital Projects Fund.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 65, at Page(s) 490.

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**ITEM NO. 20: LAND ACQUISITION FOR CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Graham, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Approve the purchase of 2.27 acres of property located on Beam Road (parcel identification number 143-211-34) in the amount of \$415,000 from the heirs of Diane Faust, for expansion of CMPD training facilities, and (B) Authorize the City Manager or his designee to negotiate and execute any documents necessary to complete this transaction.

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**ITEM NO. 21: MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT FOR THE I-277 RAIL TRAIL BRIDGE PROJECT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Anderson, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a Municipal Agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to accept Surface Transportation Block Grant funds in the amount of \$1,903,000 for the I-

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277 Rail Trail Bridge project, and (B) Adopt a budget ordinance appropriating \$1,903,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant funds from NCDOT for construction to be used on the I-277 Rail Trail Bridge project.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 720.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 65, at Page(s) 491.

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**ITEM NO. 22: MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT FOR LANCASTER HIGHWAY AND PROVIDENCE ROAD WEST INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS**

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Anderson, and carried unanimously to Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a Municipal Agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation in the amount of \$2,500,000 for infrastructure upgrades associated with the Lancaster Highway and Providence Road West Intersection Improvements.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 721.

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**ITEM NO. 23: MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT FOR RELOCATION OF WATER AND SANITARY SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE**

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute a municipal agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation for construction of water and sanitary sewer line relocations, adjustments, and improvements, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to approve the reimbursement request for the actual cost of the utility construction.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 722.

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**NOMINATIONS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**Mayor Lyles** explained the rules and procedures of the appointment process.

**ITEM NO. 24: NOMINATIONS TO THE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The following nominations were made for two appointments for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending December 31, 2024:

- Josh Benner, nominated by Councilmember Ajmera
- Aaron Cook, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.
- Miguel Garcia, nominated by Councilmembers Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to appoint Aaron Cook and Miguel Garcia by acclamation.

Mr. Cook and Mr. Garcia were appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 25: NOMINATIONS TO THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a three-year term recommended by the Asian-American Chamber of Commerce beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026:

- Abhijit Shende, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Molina, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to appoint Abhijit Shende by acclamation.

Mr. Shende was appointed.

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a three-year term recommended by the Black Chamber of Commerce beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a three-year term recommended by the Certified SBE-Hispanic Contractors Association beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a partial term recommended by the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance beginning upon appointment and ending April 28, 2024, one appointment for a three-year term recommended by the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance beginning April 29, 2022, and ending April 28, 2025, and two appointments for a three-year term recommended by the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026:

- Catherine Morrison, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, and Winston.
- Christopher Moxley, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, and Winston.
- Robert Rolle, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to appoint Catherine Morrison and Robert Rolle and reappoint Christopher Moxley by acclamation.

Ms. Morrison and Mr. Rolle were appointed. Mr. Moxley was reappointed.

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a three-year term recommended by the Latin American Chamber of Commerce beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026:

- Richard Cuebas, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to reappoint Richard Cuebas by acclamation.

Mr. Cuebas was reappointed.

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a three-year term recommended by the Metrolina Native American Association beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026:

pti:pk

- Greg Bryant, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to appoint Greg Bryant by acclamation.

Mr. Bryant was appointed.

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a three-year term recommended by the National Association of Women Business Owners beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026:

- Marise Fernandes Kumbar, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to reappoint Marise Fernandes Kumbar by acclamation.

Ms. Fernandes Kumbar was reappointed.

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a three-year term beginning April 29, 2023, and ending April 28, 2026:

- Shenequa Thomas, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to reappoint Shenequa Thomas by acclamation.

Ms. Thomas was reappointed.

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#### **ITEM NO. 26: NOMINATIONS TO THE CHARLOTTE BUSINESS INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a two-year term recommended by the Hispanic Contactors Association of the Carolinas beginning March 1, 2022, and ending February 28, 2024.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

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#### **ITEM NO. 27: NOMINATIONS TO THE CHARLOTTE INTERNATIONAL CABINET**

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a partial term for an Airport Staff Member category representative beginning upon appointment and June 30, 2024.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a partial term for an International Business category representative beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2024:

- Aleksandra Degernes, nominated by Councilmember Ajmera.
- Chelvy Moe-Mackosso, nominated by Councilmembers Anderson, Driggs, and Molina.

This appointment will be considered at the next Business meeting.

pti:pk

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**ITEM NO. 28: NOMINATIONS TO THE CITIZENS REVIEW BOARD**

The following nominations were made for one appointment for partial term beginning upon appointment and ending July 31, 2024:

- Toye Allen, nominated by Councilmember Ajmera.
- Theresa Marascio, nominated by Councilmembers Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to appoint Theresa Marascio by acclamation.

Ms. Marascio was appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 29: NOMINATIONS TO THE CIVIL SERVICE BOARD**

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a three-year term beginning May 16, 2023, and ending May 15, 2026:

- Nicholas Peach, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to reappoint Nicholas Peach by acclamation.

Mr. Peach was reappointed.

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**ITEM NO. 30: NOMINATIONS TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a partial term for a Resident Owner of Hermitage Court beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2024.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

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**ITEM NO. 31: NOMINATIONS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANTS FUND**

The following nominations were made for One appointment for a three-year term for a Neighborhood Representative beginning April 16, 2023, and ending April 15, 2026:

- Destiny Crawford, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to appoint Destiny Crawford by acclamation.

Ms. Crawford was appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 32: NOMINATIONS TO THE PASSENGER VEHICLE FOR HIRE BOARD**

pti:pk

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a Hospitality / Tourism Industry category representative for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2024.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

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### **ITEM NO. 33: NOMINATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2025:

- Monifa Drayton, nominated by Councilmember Johnson.
- Alexandra Rios, nominated by Councilmembers Mayfield and Winston.
- Erin Shaw, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, and Molina.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to appoint Erin Shaw by acclamation.

Ms. Shaw was appointed.

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### **ITEM NO. 34: NOMINATIONS TO THE STORM WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a General Contractor category representative for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2025.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

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### **ITEM NO. 35: NOMINATIONS TO THE TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

There were no nominations made for one appointment for a Vanpool Rider category representative for a three-year term beginning February 1, 2022, and ending January 31, 2025.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

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### **ITEM NO. 36: NOMINATIONS TO THE WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

The following nominations were made for one recommendation to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners to be appointed for a three-year term beginning April 1, 2023, and ending February 28, 2026, and one recommendation to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners to be appointed for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending March 31, 2025:

- Martin Doss, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.
- Shelia Etheridge, nominated by Councilmember Ajmera.
- Michael Jacome, nominated by Councilmembers Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to reappoint Martin Doss and appoint Michael Jacome by acclamation.

Mr. Doss was reappointed. Mr. Jacome was appointed.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said I have a question, City Clerk. We have the City Manager's report, but since we've opened up our passport services here, the Clerk actually had an update for us. I want to find out moving forward if we can find a space in order to hear from our City Clerk. She presented it to us around the dais, but this is really great information that would be helpful for the community to know regarding our new passport office that's opened up.

**Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk** said I'm happy to provide the good news. The passport office opened on March the 7<sup>th</sup>, and since that time, we have executed 101 passport applications, and we're booked through mid-July. As of today, the amount of revenue that's been generated since March the 7<sup>th</sup>, is \$4,525. For the month of April, we anticipate 80 applications for passports. So, we are proud and pleased that we're off to a great start.

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#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

  
Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk, MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 3 Hours, 40 Minutes  
Minutes Completed: May 17, 2024