



Charlotte City Council
Housing, Safety & Community Committee
Summary
May 6, 2024

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

1. A Home For All Update (Information and Discussion)
2. Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Preservation Support Request (Informational)

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present:	Victoria Watlington (CMGC), LaWana Mayfield (CMGC), Dimple Ajmera (CMGC), Tiawana Brown (CMGC), Renee’ Johnson (CMGC)
Council Members Absent:	n/a
Other Council Members Present:	Malcom Graham (CMGC)
Staff Resources:	Shawn Heath, City Manager’s Office Warren Wooten, Housing & Neighborhood Services
Guests:	United Way: Laura Clark, Kathryn Firmin-Sellers, O’Shauna Hunter
Meeting Duration:	4:00 – 5:50 PM
Video available online:	https://youtu.be/qgePs0y6FdY?t=21740 https://youtu.be/L1MROx_BRao?t=17971

MEETING MATERIALS

All meeting materials are available online at <https://charlottenc.legistar.com>

1. Presentation: A Home For All
2. Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Preservation Support Request

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

City Council member Watlington called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

A Home For All (AHFA) Update

Shawn Heath provided background for the A Home For All initiative including the aspirational vision (homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring and everyone has access to affordable housing and the resources to sustain it) and the initiative’s four pillars including areas of possible alignment with city priorities. He shared specific information about five areas of alignment, possible city investments, and the role of City Council for each [critical home repair, emergency rental assistance (ERA), property provider recruitment, system navigation and emergency shelter]. For ERA, funding would be a collection of funders, not just the city. An organization would have an opportunity to apply to administer the funds through a competitive process, with decision-making participation from the city. Staff will only bring requests for council actions (RCAs) forward if it fits with city and council priorities. Mr. Heath shared that it is important to be careful that the big numbers that will be contemplated in the future do not put a chill on what we are trying to achieve now.

Laura Clark shared that the community’s collective efforts around the issue of housing and homelessness have not yielded the desired results, and the community continues to face significant challenges. Either we come together now to aggressively and creatively tackle the problem, or it will quickly be beyond our control. The plan was developed with 250 stakeholders including the city and Mecklenburg County, after which United Way (UW) was asked - at the request of Mecklenburg County, Center City Partners and corporate leaders, and with conversations with city leadership - to build the public-private partnership that’s going to be required to make it successful. UW needs to be empowered and trusted as the lead organization and have the necessary resources to implement the plan. There is an opportunity to make a meaningful

difference for our city. Private donors are waiting for the city and county to make meaningful investments. For ERA, an innovation may be more financial assistance, to get upstream, to help the individual from falling back into or again becoming at-risk of homelessness, more supportive services, etc. One goal for all the work will be to have a robust outcome metric framework to demonstrate effectiveness (e.g., fewer homeless people on the streets, more housing, more people housed, etc.). With the pilot programs, not over-promising is important until the learnings of the pilot are available. The role of the UW board is important, too – they are taking on increased responsibility. There will be future, bigger requests to support these initiatives once the pilots have provided learnings. Ms. Clark also shared that it is not the intent of UW to replace the support already going to critical non-profit community partners.

Kathryn Firmin-Sellers shared that UW is not and will not become a direct service provider. UW will only ask to receive funds when there is an innovation not currently available in the market to introduce. In this case, UW will run a competitive application process with the city at the table in the decision making. Through that competitive process a partner agency will be selected to design and implement the innovation, and residents seeking assistance will go to that selected agency. Organizations can apply to the competitive process if they are willing to implement a new innovation/implement change through a new design. Following a pilot, UW will return to the city with the learnings and Council will decide if it's something that needs to be continued in terms of city participation going forward. She also shared that UW is advocating for an increased housing bond that will serve the community in terms of housing production and continued to be fully administered by the city. UW is also advocating for Mecklenburg County and the towns to co-invest.

Highlights of what City Council members shared included:

- For non-profit agencies that the city supports it would be helpful to see on their websites who comprises their boards, to demonstrate that boards represent the diverse communities that they serve.
- Want to see performance measures to show how tax dollars are used.
- Council should be made aware of how partners are identified, and the performance measures for each partner.
- Independent audit reports should be required.
- Ensure that rent subsidy gaps are not taken advantage of by landlords, by charging any rent amount that they want and expecting the city/the program to fill that gap.
- A broader approach is valuable, beyond city and Mecklenburg.
- Make sure that organizations that are doing transformational work receive funding.
- Have a very clear and transparent process, so it's not just larger organizations receiving funding, or a "who's-who."
- Important to be forthright that this is a big initiative and is going to cost a lot, and the cost of not doing it is much larger.
- City spent a year with 250 other stakeholders putting together the blueprint for this; it is an opportunity to collaborate, and we will regret it if we don't do something quickly.
- Don't want to get locked into very specific numbers, but instead have a general breakdown.
- Funding pilot programs does not mean that the city continues to fund beyond the pilot; every budget cycle is an opportunity to re-evaluate.
- Concern about current residents, but those that move here still deserve the same reach and care.
- Workplace-giving is down, and it feels like it is being replaced by public funds/taxes.

MOTION AND VOTE. Council member Mayfield made a motion to affirm \$300,000 of PAYGO to combine with other partners to deploy incentives to expand the pool of qualified rehab contractors, with an emphasis on MBE participation. Council member Ajmera seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

United Way will return at a future committee meeting with the details of the innovations for each pilot proposal.

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Preservation Support Request

Warren Wooten provided an overview of a new NOAH support request. City Council will be considering a \$1 million allocation of Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) funding at their May 13, 2024, business meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will occur June 3, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:50 pm.