

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Action Review on Monday, May 13, 2024, 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, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Lawana Mayfield, and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember James Mitchell

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmember Tiawana Brown, Marjorie Molina, and Renee Johnson

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**Mayor Lyles** said so, I want to call the Council meeting to order. This is our May 13, 2024, meeting, and we're going to begin with introductions.

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

**Mayor Lyles** said so, we have Consent Agenda Items No. 29 through 59, and I wondered if there was a comment that anyone would like to have on any of the items? Ms. Mayfield, what would be your comment items?

**Councilmember Mayfield** said that's a very good question, because I did not pull it up.

**Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget** said yes, ma'am, and if it's the ones you were referring to before the meeting, it's number 34 and 46.

Mayor Lyles said 34 and 46, okay, we'll come back to that. Then, is there any consent item that anyone would like to have a separate vote? Alright, I don't see anyone.

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**CONSENT AGENDA**

**ITEM NO. 2: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 29 THROUGH 59 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 Ajmera, seconded by Councilmember Mayfield, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented with the exception of Item No. 34, and Item No. 46 which were pulled for a separate vote.

The following items were approved:

**Item No. 29: Police Crime Laboratory Equipment, Supplies, and Services**

(A) Approve the purchase of DNA equipment, supplies, and services by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with Life Technologies Corporation for the purchase of DNA equipment, supplies, and services for a term of three years, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 30: Replacement Protective Bomb Suit Ensemble**

(A) Approve the purchase of a protective bomb suit ensemble by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with Med-Eng for the purchase of a protective bomb suite ensemble for the term of one year, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to four, one-year renewal terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 31: Air Fill Station Equipment**

(A) Approve the purchase of air-fill station equipment by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with Safe Air Systems, for Bauer Unitized Air System equipment, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 32: Fire Boat Engine Equipment and Repairs**

(A) Approve a contract for proprietary Fire Boat engine equipment and on-call repairs by sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with Marinemax, for Fire Boat engine equipment and on-call repairs for a term of one year, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to one, one-year term, with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 33: Fire Emergency Medical Supplies**

(A) Approve unit price contracts for the purchase of Fire Emergency Medical Supplies for a term of three years to the following: Bound Tree Medical, LLC, The Glove Box, Inc., 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.

**Summary of Bids**

The complete Summary of Bids is available in the City Clerk's Office.

**Item No. 35: Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Econolite Control Products, Inc. for the purchase of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons for a term of three years, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Summary of Bids**

Econolite Control Products, Inc.	\$487,050.00
Utilicom Supply Associates	\$639,465.00

**Item No. 36: Capital Investment Plan Cost Estimating and Analysis Services**

(A) Approve unit price contracts with the following companies for Cost Estimating and Analysis Services for an initial term of three years: American Engineering Associates-Southeast PA, Michael Baker International, Inc., OCMI, Inc., Transystems Corporation, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for one, two-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

**Item No. 37: Commercial Fitness Equipment**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Carolina Fitness Equipment LLC for the purchase of Commercial Fitness Equipment 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.

**Summary of Bids**

Prosource Fitness Equipment*	\$ 19,158.29
Carolina Fitness Equipment	\$ 344,380.00
Freedom Fitness Equipment	\$ 374,250.25
Centurion Partners Health	\$ 495,939.85
Rep Fitness	\$ 520,020.00
Fitness Superstore	\$ 596,812.25
Ardent Fitness	\$ 649,025.00
Wellness Solutions	\$ 658,437.66
Sanford Federal	\$1,441,600.00

\*Did not meet bid specifications.

**Item No. 38: Construct Cross Charlotte Trail - Craighead Road to Tryon Street**

Approve a contract in the amount of \$2,543,728 to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder OnSite Development, LLC for the Cross Charlotte Trail - Craighead Road to Tryon Street project.

**Summary of Bids**

OnSite Development, LLC	\$2,543,728.00
DOT Construction	\$2,795,431.51
Ground Thunder Construction, Inc.	\$2,800,485.05
Zoladz Construction Co., Inc.	\$2,834,230.58
Blythe Development Company	\$2,910,154.50
Nassiri Development	\$2,958,183.25
United of Carolinas, Inc.	\$2,997,947.21
Sealand Contractors Corp.	\$3,393,281.65

**Item No. 39: Professional Planning and Design Services for Various Storm Water Services Projects**

(A) Approve a contract for up to \$1,200,000 with Armstrong Glen, PC for planning and design services for the Collective Culverts #2 Storm Drainage Improvement Project, (B) Approve a contract for up to \$1,300,000 with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. for planning and design services for the Bonnybrook Storm Drainage Improvement Project, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

**Item No. 40: Professional Design Services for Various Storm Water Services Projects**

(A) Approve a contract for up to \$1,000,000 with ESP Associates, Inc. for design services for the Westmere Storm Drainage Improvement Project, (B) Approve a contract for up to \$650,000 with STV Engineers, Inc. for design services for the East 35th Storm Drainage Improvement Project, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

**Item No. 41: Interlocal Agreement for Mallard Creek Sanitary Sewer and Cross Charlotte Trail**

(A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute an interlocal agreement with Mecklenburg County for the shared cost for purchasing land associated with the Cross Charlotte Trail and the Mallard Creek Sanitary Sewer projects, and (B) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to approve the reimbursement request for the actual cost of the property acquisitions.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 179-180.

**Item No. 42: Underground Boring Tools and Pipe Splitters**

(A) Approve the purchase of underground boring tools and pipe splitters by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with TT Technologies, Inc. for the purchase of underground boring tools and pipe splitters for the term of five years, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 43: CATS Fare Collection System Modules, Equipment, and Services**

(A) Approve the purchase of Fare Box System Modules and Equipment by the sole source exemption, (B) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Genfare-SPX for the purchase of Fare Box System and Equipment for the term of five years, (C) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Genfare-SPX for cloud application services for a term of five years, (D) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to two, two-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved, and (E) 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. 44: Cooperative Purchasing Contract for Commuter Bus Purchase**

(A) Approve the purchase of Commuter Buses from a cooperative contract, (B) Approve unit price contracts with the following vendors for the purchase of heavy-duty Commuter Buses for a term of one-year under the State of Washington Cooperative Master Contract #06719: New Flyer of American Inc., Motor Coach Industries, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to extend the contract for additional terms while the cooperative contract is in effect, at prices and terms that are the same or more favorable than those offered under the cooperative contact.

**Item No. 45: Cooperative Purchasing Contract for Mobile Fueling**

(A) Approve the purchase of mobile fueling services from a cooperative contract, (B) Approve a unit price contract with Mansfield Oil for the purchase of fueling services for paratransit cutaway buses for a term of three years under Sourcewell Contract #121522-MNF, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to extend the contract for additional terms if the cooperative contract is in effect, at prices and terms that are the same or more favorable than those offered under the cooperative contact.

**Item No. 47: Set a Public Hearing on River Point Area Voluntary Annexation**

Adopt a resolution setting a public hearing for June 10, 2024, for River Point Area voluntary annexation petition.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 181-182.

**Item No. 48: Adopt a Resolution to Close a Portion of Alleyway Between Scott Avenue and Fountain View Street**  
Adopt a Resolution to Close a Portion of Alleyway Between Scott Avenue and Fountain View Street.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 183-193.

**Item No. 49: Resolution of Intent to Abandon a Portion of Alleyway parallel to Ashley Road**

(A) Adopt a Resolution of Intent to abandon a Portion of Alleyway parallel to Ashley Road, and (B) Set a Public Hearing for June 10, 2024.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 194-195.

**Item No. 50: Resolution of Intent to Abandon a Portion of Right-of-Way off Johoy Drive**

(A) Adopt a Resolution of Intent to abandon a Portion of right-of-way off Johoy Drive, and (B) Set a Public Hearing for June 10, 2024.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 196-197.

**Item No. 51: Resolution of Intent to Abandon a Portion of Opened Right-of-Way off Coker Avenue**

(A) Adopt a Resolution of Intent to abandon a Portion of Opened Right-of-Way off Coker Avenue, and (B) Set a Public Hearing for June 10, 2024.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 198-199.

**Item No. 52: Refund of Property Taxes**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the refund of property taxes assessed through clerical or assessment error in the amount of \$1,113,466.41.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 200-211.

**PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS**

**Item No. 53: Property Transactions - Cross Charlotte Trail Segment 10, Parcel # 6**  
Acquisition of 8,983 square feet (0.206 acres) Permanent Greenway Easement and 26,648 square feet (0.612 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 11020 Morningstar Place Drive from PS NC I, LP for \$27,100 for Cross Charlotte Trail Segment 10, Parcel # 6.

**Item No. 54: Property Transactions - Cross Charlotte Trail Segment 10, Parcel # 9**  
Resolution of Condemnation of 41,324 square feet (0.949 acres) Permanent Greenway Easement and 35,904 square feet (0.824 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 236 Pavilion Boulevard from Pavilion Partners for \$26,100 for Cross Charlotte Trail Segment 10, Parcel # 9.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 212.

**Item No. 55: Property Transactions - Cross Charlotte Trail Segment 11, Parcel # 1**  
Resolution of Condemnation of 7,122 square feet (0.163 acres) Permanent Greenway Easement and 8,359 square feet (0.192 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at Pavilion Boulevard from Pavilion Partners for \$13,600 for Cross Charlotte Trail Segment 11, Parcel # 1.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 213.

**Item No. 56: Property Transactions - Regional Solids Conveyance Phase 1A, Parcels # 1, 2, & 3**  
Acquisition of 122,851 square feet (2.820 acres) Sanitary Sewer Easement and 9,648 square feet (0.221 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 0 Whitewater Center Parkway from U.S. National Whitewater Center, Inc. for \$126,009 for Regional Solids Conveyance Phase 1A, Parcels # 1, 2, & 3.

**Item No. 57: Property Transactions - Severn-Tyndale Ave Storm Drainage Improvement Project, Parcel # 21**  
Acquisition of 2,029 square feet (0.047 acres) Storm Drainage Easement at 3815 Severn Avenue from Matthew D Carfaro for \$22,969 for Severn-Tyndale Ave SDIP, Parcel # 21.

**Item No. 58: Property Transactions - Severn-Tyndale Ave Storm Drainage Improvement Project, Parcel # 22**  
Acquisition of 2,098 square feet (0.048 acres) Storm Drainage Easement at 3809 Severn Avenue from Otavio Barbon and Jessica L. Barbon for \$21,047 for Severn-Tyndale Ave SDIP, Parcel # 22.

**Item No. 59: Property Transactions - Severn-Tyndale Ave Storm Drainage Improvement Project, Parcel # 23**  
Acquisition of 2,167 square feet (0.050 acres) Storm Drainage Easement at 3801 Severn Avenue from Steven Kris Ely for \$25,718 for Severn-Tyndale Ave SDIP, Parcel # 23.

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**ITEM NO. 34: UNSPECIFIED DEMOLITION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

Mayor Lyles said I believe that we have some comment from the Budget Office. Marie has done some work on it, so I'll turn it over to Marie.

Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget said thank you, and as Ms. Mayfield requested, and I believe it's a general comment for both of them, just how do we specify when we have multiple vendors listed for an action? Is there any written process for how we determined which vendors to use or to ensure that all the vendors get used? For the specifics on 34, which is demolition, Housing provided the information that there were nine awards last year, and what happens with those is they get a notification to bid on the jobs when one comes available.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said thank you, Marie, for the clarification. The reason I asked this question is, mid last week at an Economic Development community event, I ran into two different vendors that have been previously approved through one of our General Services and/or identified for an opportunity for contracts, and they've been registered with the City since 2018, but have yet to receive an actual contract. So, I wanted to find out what process, and this is actually the same question for 46, what is the process that we actually have in place? If not, Manager, can we create a process that actually, when we as a Council approve these, I did not know until Ms. Harris submitted this, that even though we identified these four organizations in A, and we have the CBI (Charlotte Business INClusion) goals identified, I didn't know that there was an additional step that these same companies have to turn around and reapply again, and then we go with lowest responsive bidder.

**Councilmember Molina arrived at 5:18 p.m.**

So, when we're approving, say example these four, my assumption would've been that out of those four, the expectation is, at some point all of them would have had the opportunity to actually do the work and actually receive contractual funds, as well as those that are in our CBI program, at some point during the life of this particular approval, they are utilized, versus knowing that some have gone through the process, they're registered with the City, they were listed, but they've never actually been contacted. So, I wanted to find out if we don't have an actual process in place, moving forward, Manager, if your team can actually create a process so that we have an equitable process?

Mayor Lyles said alright, I think the staff has a comment.

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am. Just to add a little flavor. So, specific to the demolition ones, they bid them out. It depends on what it is. Like, the one you had a question about, 46, they do actually rotate vendors, but to Ms. Mayfield's point, there's nothing in writing that requires that, but that is the current process that they use, they do rotate vendors, but for the demolition they bid it out.

Mayor Lyles said I think Ms. Mayfield has a good point, that we can have a policy in writing. I'd also think that we ought to collect the data, how many times did we call and perhaps they already had work, and they didn't have the ability to do both projects at the same time. So, I think keeping a record around that would be very helpful. So, it's like they were contacted, they said yes, or they said no, and that might be very helpful to us as well.

Ms. Mayfield said and Madam Mayor, thank you for that comment. Even when you look at the response for 34, and we look at the dollar amounts that are in here, there's a considerable difference, as far as the contractual ability that they were able to tap into. We have, again, some cases where it's not that the vendor wasn't able to perform the work, that vendor name was submitted and utilized, the contract was awarded, but then that vendor was never contacted again. So, when we're looking at both, as you were saying, those that might not have had the capacity while we're growing capacity, but also, who hasn't been contacted, so that we can make sure that we're creating an opportunity. If we have 1,600 vendors in our system, knowing that 1,480 of them are actually being utilized, will be a great win for the City.

Mayor Lyles said I do this and think about this, because my brothers do this business and this kind of work, and so a lot of times, it just depends on where they're situated and what they're able to accomplish and do. So, I think that we need to keep records, because we have to prove that we're doing the work that needs to be able to have good data for. So, thank you very much, Ms. Mayfield and Ms. Harris. Mr. Jones, do you have any further comment?

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said no, I agree. Those are some of the things that we need to track so that we can report back to Council, absolutely.

Ms. Harris said and, excuse me, but if any Council members ever hear that, it'd be great to know the details too. I mean, that's in addition to what you're mentioning. If you hear that, let us know and we can look into the specific cases. Thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said and Madam Mayor, it was same for number 34 and 46. Forty-six was just asking pretty much the same question a different way. How do we ensure all the consultants listed for contracts actually get the work from the City, and is there a rotation to ensure that all that are listed are actually utilized? So, those two can be the combined question. Thank you.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, and carried unanimously to (A) Approve contracts with the following companies for Unspecified Demolition and Environmental Services for an initial term of three years: Double D Construction Services, Inc. (WBE), Jones Grading and Fencing, Inc. (MBE), NEO Corporation, W.C. Black and Sons, Inc. (SBE), and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to two, one-year renewal terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

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#### **ITEM NO. 46: TRANSIT TECHNICAL AND PLANNING ASSISTANCE CONSULTANT SERVICES**

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, and carried unanimously to (A) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute unit price contracts with the following companies for professional transit technical and planning assistance services for an initial term of three years: Gensler Architecture Design & Planning PC, Hatch Associates Consultants Inc., HNTB North Carolina PC, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc., Kittelson & Associates, Inc., Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc., STV Engineers Inc., TY Lin International, VHB Engineering NC PC, WSP USA Inc., and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for one, two-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

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

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said thank you, Mayor and members of Council. Tonight, we have two items in the Action Review. One is the Center City MSD (Municipal Service District) update, and we have Michael Smith with us tonight. Then, tonight we also have an opportunity for the committee report outs, because the committees occurred last Monday, but we didn't have a report out. So, I believe we've given enough time for both Michael, as well as an opportunity for a committee report out. So, Mayor, unless there are any questions of me, Michael, it's your show.

#### **ITEM NO. 4: ACTION REVIEW ITEMS**

**Councilmember Brown arrived at 5:24 p.m.**

**Michael Smith, Charlotte Center City Partners** said Madam Mayor, Council, pleasure to be back with you. Thank you for the opportunity. Alright, so I thought what we would do is, we'd take a quick look at the work of FY (Fiscal Year) 2024, some highlights, and then a flash into next year, but beginning with who we are. So, this is our team. We're organized as a C4, and we activate strategies and actions that ensure that our Center City is welcoming and equitable, economically vibrant, culturally rich, and beloved place for all. We lead with research and urban planning, economic and community

development, marketing, communications, programming, and events. We also manage the Ambassador Program of Deployed Uniformed Ambassadors that work as first responders to the homeless, but also as a force multiplier for CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department). We also have two related entities, that are 501(c)(3)s, that we do a lot of our work with the City with, the Market at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and also the Community Trust. Through the Community Trust, we run programs like the Innovation Fund, which we did in partnership both privately and with the City as a partner, and then through the market, it's programs like HIVE (Hub for Inclusivity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship), which was a small business incubator, which had incredible participation of minority-owned small businesses. Nineteen diverse businesses were in the first cohort, we'll begin the second in the fall, but I want to dive in a little bit into a little bit of our work. So, we're a mission-based organization. This is our credo. This is what we believe is an organization acting with integrity, a commitment to justice and equity, and approaching all we do with passion, innovation, tenacity, and excellence.

Where we serve. These are the four MSD districts. There are three within Uptown and then South End, and also includes Midtown. We are governed through a Board of Directors, really a great group and we're grateful to have Councilman Malcolm Graham, Tracy Dodson, Marcus Jones, just as a few that serve on the Board and help lead our organization. As far as the way that we guide our work, we have a number of ways that we receive input from our partners and from our neighborhoods, from hosting listening sessions around homelessness and public safety, which we did in partnership with the City of Charlotte, to the community development part of our team that attends all of our Center City and South End Neighborhood Association meetings, and then from the board. We bring that to the board in the form of a program of work, and we're pleased to be able to have that governance.

As you're aware, these have been really hard times for downtowns throughout North America, real headwinds, from stress testing of pandemic lockdowns, to altered workplace rhythms, development costs. So, we're at this period where things are being stress tested, and we are going to need to come together with shared vision and collective action to either take a step ahead of our competitive set or run the risk of falling behind. When you look, though, to what's occurred during this last development cycle, I love this image. Since 2010, what's in blue has been developed in Uptown and South End, really thoughtful, good development.

**Councilmember Johnson arrived at 5:29 p.m.**

If you look at the way that that pattern occurs, it is in response to public investment and public policy, because it stimulates and it shapes private investment and it expands the tax base. If you look at every other color that's on there, those are things that are either announced, under construction, or planned. This continues to be an important part of our local economy, but we're at an interesting point, because while we can share that, it's going through a real period of transition. Our Center City is maturing as a destination, and we've got great data on the way people are using our Center City. This has always been an aspiration of ours. The greatest places are complete places. They're not just one thing, and this allows our Center City to be used by more of our residents. There were 320 days of sporting events in 2023. If you look at the diversity of other uses from Bank of America Stadium to the Spectrum Center to Truist Field, you add in our cultural venues, music venues, and then things like Charlotte SHOUT and Lovin' Life that was just here, you're starting to see the way our Center City is evolving, and this list, the 10 most vibrant days in Uptown, and you see how many of them were connected to our stadiums and our arenas, and the way they're beginning to be used differently.

Also, as we look kind of beyond the current waves, there are some things that we're particularly encouraged by. Things like the Gateway Station, the new main Public Library, the Momentum of South End, and then there's 10 mega sites that have been assembled and this is the context for the vibrancy of the coming decades, from the 55 acres of the Iron District, to what's going on in The Pearl, to what's going on around Gateway and North Tryon. The North Tryon Tech hub is one that I shared with you last



year. We made really good progress this year. There'll be some announcements coming out from UNC (University of North Carolina) Charlotte, about the way they'll be using their downtown campus in a really evolved way that is very consistent with what we hope the North Tryon Tech Hub can become, which is this intersection of academics, entrepreneurship, and corporate innovation. We think those three coming together in this great assemblage by Levine Properties, the land that's owned by Mecklenburg County, that it's an opportunity to create a flywheel for jobs and for ideas, but these results can't be taken for granted. As we think about it, we think we owe the next generation the momentum that has been earned for us, and we've got to double down on a winning strategy that includes things like public safety. Thank you for the leadership that you guys provide. CMPD just can't be a better partner. We're grateful to Chief Jennings, to DA (District Attorney) Merriweather. Enhanced public infrastructure, compelling experiences, bold investments, and rapid transit, thank you for everything that you're considering. What we have enjoyed is a reflection of the leadership that's come from this dais. Bold investment, enhancing perception, and driving economic vitality, we think these are some of the things that are going to make a difference. Taking a quick look at our program of work. We lead with research and analysis. We are grateful for the partnership that we enjoy with your team, and Economic Development led by Tracy. Tracy, thank you for the partnership.

Planning and development. Everything we do tries to be based on the input that we get for long-term planning cycles. We're operating under the 2040 Master Plan for our Center City, which we co-developed with the City and which you guys adopted. We continue to see great progress on elements that are in that plan. We're proud of the work that was recommended in A Home For All strategy, and thank you for considering the continued partnership as you do through your planning process. We're working with the City on the reimagining of Tryon Street. From a mobility standpoint, we've got incredible partnership there, working closely with CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) and Economic Development on things like Gateway Station and the CTC (Charlotte Transportation Center), and then with Engineering on the Rail Trail Bridge, which we hope to make some progress on this summer in selecting partners.

In community development, great urban centers are expressed through their neighborhoods, and we're fortunate to have incredible Center City neighborhoods, not just within Uptown, but those first couple of rings of [inaudible]. Our Community Development team is working closely with them. Our ambassadors are working closely as well. We're excited about an evolution of our Ambassador program that will begin on June 1, 2024, where they'll be moving if hospitality and safety were on a continuum, and we are right now more on the hospitality side. We're going to move them to the middle. You'll see a difference in the way they're trained, the way they're hired, the way they're compensated. We look forward to that evolution.

On the public safety side, Shawn Heath from your team is serving on a working group around public safety that includes our Chief and DA Merriweather, and some really great partners, and this is work that's been going on monthly for the last three months, and we're excited about some of the recommendations that are coming out of that working group. We formed a similar working group around marketing and communications. We found that there's a perception gap between reality and the way both Uptown and Midtown are being perceived, and we're excited about the Corporate CMOs (Chief Marketing Officers) and Senior Marketing Executives that have agreed to be a part of this working team. We've retained Wray Ward to help us with some thoughts on how best to approach this, and you'll see some of that work coming out this summer.

From a programs and events standpoint, thank you for the partnership that we enjoy. We continue to have a team that's very passionate about programming free, quality events that bring our community together. It was a particularly good year. Thank you for the support of Charlotte SHOUT. There were 642,000 unique visits to SHOUT activities this year, and that money is invested in local arts. We have seen a difference across the three years of the restoring of Charlotte SHOUT of the quality of submissions. It is Economic Development work, and it's quality of life for our community. We're proud to

be a part of it. Just to remind you, it is art, food, music, and ideas, and it's across 17 days, which is three weekends. We also produce the Thanksgiving Eve Parade, Camden Commons, New Year's Eve, Shop Small Saturday, just to name a few, and all of that is done in partnership with you all. I don't know if you want to spend time on Budget, or if you're good. I brought it with me, because we've done it in the past. I'm glad to answer questions you have. I'm trying to be careful of your time. I know you guys have a big night tonight.

**Councilmember Graham** said Mike, thank you and your staff for all the work you've done on behalf of those who work, live, and play in Uptown Charlotte. As you mentioned, I do serve on the Board, and I've enjoyed the service there representing to City Council. I just want to kind of point out a couple of bullets that I think are worth emphasizing yet again, as it relates to ensuring that Uptown Charlotte is a place where people feel safe and secure. The latest crime stats have demonstrated that crime is down actually in Uptown Charlotte by seven percent, notwithstanding the perception is that there's still work to be done in reference to crime and public safety. So, I can concur that that working group has been working really, really hard for the last several months doing what is necessary to provide the type of group thinking necessary to ensure that the community knows that Uptown Charlotte is safe. We continue to work on issues related to the unhoused and homelessness in Uptown Charlotte, and notwithstanding the fact that we placed an ordinance in place on behalf of the citizens of Uptown. One of the things that Mike did not mention is Uptown is also a neighborhood. People live there. So, we have to take that into consideration in terms of a wide variety of things that we're doing, and I think that's really important that we underscore that Uptown's also a neighborhood. People live there.

Thirdly, we're still working in reference to the proliferation of office buildings that stand empty and trying to problem solve that. The answer is not all government. We can't do it all, because there are vacant buildings throughout the City, University City, Uptown, Ballantyne, etc., but it is an issue that we have accepted that we have to do a lot more work on. Going back to Uptown being also a neighborhood, there's a number of large-scale events that we invite, that we want, but they also bring consequences to those who live there as well. So, there's an equal balance between securing Uptown as a place where people play, but not at the expense of people living there. So, I think the organization has struck a great balance between that, and I look forward to playing more in Uptown. I was there last night for the Kim Waters Jazz event at Booth Playhouse and dinner afterwards for Mother's Day, and so certainly I play there as well.

North Tryon redevelopment, I'm excited about that and what we're doing there. The Gateway Station, you spoke about the stadiums and events there, which drive economic activity, both at Bank of America Stadium, as well as the Arena. One question I get over and over and over again, and maybe you can or cannot answer it is, shopping in Uptown, how can we highlight the shopping experience in Uptown? Do you have any news for us, how we can really create Uptown as a shopping destination? I'll leave that as the question, but also thank you for your work. Thank you for all that you do to support an Uptown where people can feel proud of.

Mr. Smith said Councilman and Board member, thank you, and thanks for highlighting those. I was trying to move through so much, and I loved your assessment of that. Your question about retail. We do aspire to have more destination retail in Uptown, and I think there's no better example to learn from than the way it matured in South End, and single units of retail don't work. It has to be a part of an ecosystem, and in South End there were a couple breakthroughs. It was EDENS Redevelopment of Atherton, and it was Asana's assemblage of almost 400,000 square feet of older buildings that they adaptively reused, which preserved some of our beautiful older buildings and allowed South End to move from neighborhood retail to destination retail. There's opportunities to do that within Uptown. What held Uptown retail back for the longest time was a lack of space. We would hear it over and over again that there wasn't space created. That's becoming less of a problem, because you're seeing so many new developments responding to planning requirements to create retail space along the ground plan. We need it to act more like a system and we need to have some of those breakthrough

moments. Asana has done a nice job in some of the locations like, at the base of the Ally Center. When you're there, you'll notice the way the retail works together, the way it's curated. We need more of that, and we need it to interplay. They'll be more opportunities as Uptown becomes more of a Central Activity District. Right now, it's a Central Business District, but 320 nights of sports activities, more arts, more culture, more dining, creates environments that are more apt to be able to support the sales per square foot that's required to have active retail.

**Councilmember Anderson** said Michael, thank you for the presentation. You know I share Uptown representation with Mr. Graham, and so really excited about all of the things that you have going on throughout the entire Uptown area throughout all Four Wards. Specifically, I'd like for you to, if you could, just expound a little bit on the North Tryon Tech Hub, and say a little bit more about what that's about, and then how that could potentially match up pretty well with the reimagining of Tryon Street?

Mr. Smith said awesome, seriously, thank you. It's one of my favorite topics to talk about. Any time we get to be innovative and there is an opportunity that we think the market just has not discovered. In partnership with the City and the County in 2016, we created a North Tryon Vision Plan for 50 blocks, and this was a partnership between Center City Partners and the Foundation For The Carolinas, really a great group. One of the core recommendations under it was to create a new economic underpinning for that part of Uptown. We need to continually be feeding a field for tomorrow's industries, because industries get disrupted, and if we don't have new crop growing, we'll be disrupted economically and from a tax standpoint. We have great concentration of ownership. We already have Transit System with the Blue Line with two stops within the district, Silver Line is intended to meet there, those two crossing there, I jokingly refer to as the Queen's Cross, kind of like King's Cross in London. We think it's a big opportunity. We've got our University there, we've got culture districts, and we've got Corporate Headquarters. So, the North Tryon Tech Hub has representation of the Chief Technology Officers from our major employers, Tracy serves on it, on behalf of the City. We've got developers, Chancellor Gaber serves on it, and we think this is an opportunity to just enhance the University's direct connection to our major employment hub, and just build upon what they have with the Dubois Center and the Dubois Campus. The first move has been by the University, that's planning on having 1,000 additional students at that campus starting in the fall each day. They're thinking about the way they're going to redesign the way that campus is used, and there's a little bit more that I'll allow them to share, but we're doing some important work on entrepreneurship. Juan Garzon, from the City team, is serving on that committee on behalf of the City. It's a good group, where EY has been a really good partner, granting us the Wave Center with curated innovation sessions.

A group of us went down to visit the Tech Square in Atlanta with Georgia Tech, and just came away incredibly inspired. We do not want to repeat what they have. We think there's an opportunity for Charlotte to do something different in the Charlotte way. We've got this great entrepreneurial community that we think will benefit from having a hub and more support. We're excited to do it. With regard to the reimagining Tryon Street, that was one of the recommendations of the 2040 Vision Plan. We are working with the Planning Department and with Economic Development at the City on what that would mean. The last time that we reimagined Tryon Street was in 1983, and it was implemented in 1984. The way that we use ground level has changed so much. I mean think of Ride Share, think of the delivery services that we use now, and we want Tryon Street to continue to be more pedestrian friendly. One of the projects we're beginning this with is McColl Park, and that's been a great partnership with the City. We've been very successful in private fundraising, and we've gotten a lot of great community feedback on how to do it. We think that will be an important early move as we reimagine.

Ms. Anderson said excellent. I really think that the two really go hand in hand, because we want Tryon to be an inviting place and space for all of our visitors, but connected with the technology hub and the millennials that will be attracted into that space, I think there's some synergy there that hopefully you all are playing on and thinking about

strategically how those things can enhance each other. I'm very much looking forward to hearing continued progress on the Tech Hub.

Mr. Smith said thank you so much, Councilwoman.

Ms. Anderson said thank you.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said thank you for the presentation, but I have some actual questions for you. So, with thinking about the presentation, what I didn't hear, of which you may already have the numbers and your team may be working on it, just for time constraint we didn't focus on it here. It will be helpful to get an idea of what the plan is for the vacant space, office space, the reimagining. I get we're doing the reimagining of Tryon, but the reimagining of the buildings that have not necessarily transitioned back to full-time occupancy, to give if you're able to, a snapshot of what those conversations are looking like.

Mr. Smith said absolutely. So, in the fall we conducted a design competition around Vintage Office, and Charlotte has not been spared from the challenges of our buildings that are really older than 1990, and there's been a number of them that have gone back to the lender and that's a step in the wrong direction. What we find right now is, new has never been newer and old has never been older. As employers are trying to get their employees back to the office. When their leases expire, they are acting on their option to move into buildings, often taking a smaller footprint, paying more in rent, so they can create environments that are attractive to their workforce coming back. They're competing with the commute, trying to create commute-worthy places. Now, the challenge with that is buildings are often built in quadrants. Remember in the 2010s, all of a sudden South Tryon and Brooklyn Village Way was just the hottest street. There was I think \$3 billion worth of development on that street. Well, the same thing happened four decades ago, but it was along North Tryon, and it was along College Street, so there's pockets, and the concern is that those pockets can be a challenge to our tax base and to public safety. I will tell you that if we think market forces will take care of this, we will not like the results. We're going to have to be very intentional about the way we respond collectively to those places. I would also say that we don't need to address it all, we need to be strategic about where are spots that we know it's going to enhance this district. It's going to maintain the safety. There's some belief that if we do that, that we're bailing out the owners, and when the building goes back to the lenders, the owner's out of the picture. So, now what you're doing is, we're trying to create an environment that new money comes into our community and invests in us and expands the tax base and protects some of it.

Ms. Mayfield said so, in the more expansive conversation, I think for me it would be helpful when we look at that tax base and look at the MSD, what you're seeing, as far as the beginning numbers. If there is a decline, to start getting some of those ideas out, whether it's creating a different partnership with our banking partners, which a number of those leaders are on a number of our Boards within Uptown, so they could possibly see the benefit of public/private partnership versus a hard ask from the private sector. Also, I just want to put into the universe a consideration. When we're talking about the reimagining of Tryon and it being more walkable. Councilmember Graham and I had a brief conversation, not about this earlier, but thinking about parking in Uptown. Somewhere along the line, we forget that our workers utilize that parking Uptown. So, it's not just people that are coming in to spend money, it's those servers that are at the restaurants. It's the workers that are working, Spectrum or Bank of America or whatever. They can afford coming in at 5:00 p.m., paying that \$1.12, \$1.27, for that one hour, because parking is free after 6:00 p.m. When we're looking at trying to push them into parking decks, it could get to a place where it's costing them more to come into Uptown than that \$10, \$12 to \$13 an hour they're making for four or five hours. Once upon a time many years ago, and the Manager and I had this conversation multiple times, when we approved a lot of these developments, there were clear commitments and understanding of community parking as a community asset. A lot of that parking over the years has either been redesignated for restaurants with their VIP parking, or we have red bags over them, during different events we make it inaccessible and we

don't think about, not just the residents that live here that want to enjoy Uptown, but that potentially could cause a financial burden, and we're not thinking about those workers that are receiving a less than living wage pay, and how much it costs them to have to try to find parking in Uptown, and the number of people that are going to start calling out, because it's just not financially feasible. So, when we talk about reimagining, it always seems like a good conversation and exciting conversation about walkability and accessibility. I just would like for you all to consider the impact of those who don't have the luxury of taking public transportation, because it's not convenient for them, and making sure that we still have on-street parking options that are realistic, not just for those who are visiting Uptown, whether it's a staycation or you're coming in, but also let's not forget that our workers are in there.

You have on the slide, mobility slide 14, when you briefly mentioned the Charlotte Gateway Station and CTC. So, again, could be a deeper conversation later. This is a conversation that we've been having in the City for many years. I actually, and Mr. Manager, ran into one of our State Representatives at a community event last weekend, weekend before last, who shared by pulling me aside, asking what we are doing with this, and the allocation and support that was there from a while ago. So, it would be great if we can get a clear update of what that looks like, because that was a very detailed conversation, that he was kind of animated when pulling me aside to share with that. Mainly looking at our bus, train, Gateway, that conversation, I guess they feel like, even though we still have it top of mind, fingers crossed, for some it feels like it is not at top of mind, so I was glad to see this in here. I would gladly schedule a meeting to come in so we can go into more detail, but I think that will be helpful so that we know that it is on the radar, but amazing work. I truly enjoyed the most recent groundbreaking that we had in Uptown right on the corner of South Boulevard and West/East right there. Beautiful building that I'm quite sure you're going to fill up very quickly, because there is no bad view whatever floor you're on, and Dr. Watlington was able to make it out. That space is wraparound panoramic views for every floor going all the way up, so I'm quite sure that it's not going to be difficult to sell that. I just want to make sure we're also having a real conversation about older buildings and looking at how we can partner and what real partnership looks like to help reimagine it. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mr. Smith said thank you, Council woman.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said some of my questions have already been addressed around vacancy and programming. I certainly appreciate the collaboration here. Thanks to your leadership Michael in addressing homelessness and safety concerns in Uptown. I appreciate how there is traction back to Uptown with large events, whether it be sporting events or Charlotte SHOUT or Thanksgiving Parade. I'd like to continue to see more of that, because that supports businesses Uptown as we bring some of these large events. I did not hear any update on how things are coming along with redevelopment of Epicenter?

Mr. Smith said yes, so the Epicenter just did some re-tenanting. They've brought new companies in, and for the month of May 2024, they've brought back a Friday after work event that they're really excited about. They're putting DJs and bands on the top level, working to restore the vibrancy there. It is still controlled by Deutsche Bank on behalf of the bondholders. So, they have not sold it yet. That is their longer-term plan, is to stabilize the asset and be able to sell it to restore the value for their bondholders.

Ms. Ajmera said when I remember Uptown, specifically the Epicenter, how it was between 2012 to 2017 timeframe versus now, there is a large vacancy rate. I know there are efforts underway to bring traction, but I haven't seen much progress. So, are you at all involved in their overall vision plan to stabilize this asset?

Mr. Smith said yes, we continue to meet with them when their principles are in town representing Deutsche Bank, and we continue to be of council to them. It's owned as a private asset. I think some of the things that the City is considering, like the CTC strategy, are very accretive to what the private owners are trying to do here, and I encourage the continued consideration of that. As nightlife restores, and as Uptown

moves more to a Central Activity District, I think there's more opportunities for the Epicenter, which is now referred to as Queen City Corridors.

Ms. Ajmera said Queen City Corridors. Alright, well we'll see more corridors getting occupied. That's all I have. Thank you.

Mr. Smith said thank you.

**Councilmember Watlington** said thank you. Just a couple of things. I think, as I'm listening to this, what I'm very much interested in, because I know that we keep talking about South End and kind of thinking about how South End has been able to be vibrant. I think about what's different about South End as a visitor versus Uptown, because we've talked a good bit about vacancies and what do we do with the buildings, I'm wondering how you're envisioning what our focus is, not just for you, Michael, but as we think collectively from the public sector, should our focus be on anything above the first 40 feet? Because if we're talking about a neighborhood or we're talking about destination retail, those are the things that are really public facing versus some of the things that are more market based, in terms of who's in that building for a very specific purpose. So, I'm curious to hear about how we're approaching that or how we're prioritizing that, because when we think about some of the things that we struggle with, whether it's safety or whether it's visitors, those kinds of things, it really feels like it's much more about what's happening at the street level versus what's going on in the skies.

Mr. Smith said so, it's really hard to decouple the two, because these buildings are owned as one asset. If it is in default and it's owned by a bank. If it goes from bank to being municipally owned, and that's a worst-case scenario, and I hope knock on wood, that we'll see none of that or very little, then the bottom 40 feet has the same cancer as the next eight floors or 40 floors. There's going to be some opportunities for adapting. There's going to be some that need to be demolished. Then there's going to be some that the market can reinvest and restore it as office and just modernized. We have some right now that the demolition cost is more than the value of the land. So, you have some buildings that get that stuck. This is going to be an ongoing, very complicated, very technical planning process and discussion. The more that we can come up, though, with a policy that is easily understood by the market, because what we want is, we want private capital to see Charlotte as a place that cares about this, so that it comes here and invests and expands the tax base, and really does that public/private partnership. I think we're better served if we have like one tool, so that when they come to town, they don't think each project has to negotiate like a new deal every time.

Ms. Watlington said yes. I'd be interested in discussing this some more, just because certainly there's obviously work to do when it comes to the market and investment and what we're doing in the buildings. I think that is a little bit separate and apart, though, I definitely understand what you're saying, that the asset can't be decoupled. When it comes to our focus and what we're trying to create, I don't know how much of what we're doing here, and particularly through the MSD, really can impact that piece. So, I want to dig into that a little bit more, because as I think about what makes South End attractive for visitors, and when we really talk about destination retail, and maybe my question is, what exactly are you saying is destination retail? Whoever is in the building, from a tenant standpoint, for me it doesn't make it anymore attractive to come to Uptown if I'm still paying \$20, I've got to ride around a parking garage forever to find somewhere to park, and what's here is a restaurant, when I can go to South End and go to a restaurant and Escape Room and Puttery, or whatever else, on an impromptu kind of basis. I think that's the piece that we're still missing when it comes to making Uptown attractive, especially given all of the hurdles that you kind of have to go through just to get here and get settled. Thank you.

**Councilmember Molina** said I'll be quick. Hello Michael. Thank you for being here with us tonight and thank you for the presentation. I've got a question about the hub. I heard you say hub. Can you give me like cliff notes on what the hub is actually going to be?

Mr. Smith said the North Tryon Tech Hub?

Ms. Molina said yes.

Mr. Smith said yes, so we went to Atlanta. We were really inspired by what Georgia Tech, the City of Atlanta, and of the State of Georgia have done. They actually run the State's Economic Development Office out of this hub. It's that important to them. They think it's that transformative for their economy. We had UNC Charlotte, and some great Economic Development leaders from our City that were with us. We came back inspired, and that began a process that started about 18 months ago. We think this intersection of academics, entrepreneurship, and corporate innovation, so think our Chief Technology Officers really leaning in, think about UNC Charlotte really making this a hub for them, and our entrepreneurial community, being able to get to a spot where they can more easily tap into the supply chain of our major employers, to more easily tap into the talent that's coming out of UNC Charlotte at both the undergraduate and the graduate level. A lot of what we're going to try to pull to the campus with those extra 1,000 students a day, is graduate students in Computer Science.

Ms. Molina said okay, and that was my next question, and it kind of would piggyback off of that. Who would be, I guess, the recipients of this resource? Because I know that we have the Corridors of Opportunity and each of them have hubs that are specific to different opportunities throughout the City, and I wonder what would be our appetite to really add this resource into that ecosystem? This is a conversation for another day, but I'm really just taking the opportunity to put it out into the atmosphere. Because as we continue with the Corridors of Opportunities, and trying to connect our residents to resources, information and technology is one of the fastest growing industries in the nation. So, if this is going to be one that's specifically targeting that particular job, with respect to opportunities, I'd love to talk to you offline and we discuss if there's opportunities too, because I know for an example, the hub that is in East Charlotte, it's really being spearheaded by the Latin American Chamber of Commerce. There is a diverse set of stakeholders, and they have their own corporate interest in bringing that hub to that particular corridor, and we have corridors like that, I'm sure you're aware, across the City. So, what I imagine that ecosystem looking like to some degree is, if we have let's say a human walk in and they're not able to get the resources at that particular hub, then we would in effect refer them to something within our ecosystem where we can properly serve that human and get them on a track to where they can start towards upward economic mobility. I mean I don't want to put you on the spot, but is that something that has been entertained as a conversation or do you think there will be an appetite and willingness?

Mr. Smith said so, what I would share is, Atlanta has 22 Innovation Districts. So, as we started to create the second one, there were questions of, "Hold on, we've got The Pearl, what are we doing?" Well, I mean Atlanta has an organization that does nothing but to pull together those 22 Innovation Districts, and these are creating some of tomorrow's jobs, which I think will feed other submarkets like Corridors of Opportunity, as we develop entrepreneurial companies and fast growth businesses that are looking to get to some of the talent of our market.

Ms. Molina said no, I love that. Thank you for sharing that. Mr. Manager, 22 Innovation Districts, I'd love to kind of talk about that offline how we can broaden our ecosystem. I think that's a great idea.

Mayor Lyles said I'm going to thank Michael for the information and follow-up that will take place. We also need to have a Council Committee update. Now, I know that everyone doesn't have to give a report, but I wanted to make sure that we had the report from the Transportation and Development Committee. So, Mr. Driggs, would you address that for us?

**Councilmember Driggs** said at our committee meeting, we got a report from CATS about the outcome of the FTA's (Federal Transit Administration) reviews of CATS financial operations. You'll remember, we actually agreed with the FTA to move up their

review in light of some of the operating difficulties that we had there. They hired an accounting firm, and I'll just read, the conclusion of the accounting firm was, "In our opinion, management's assertion that the City of Charlotte has maintained effective internal control over its compliance with FTA financial management system requirements, during the period July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2023, is fairly stated in all material respects, based on the criteria established by the FTA as set forth in Section six of the report." It's a clean report. They did note some significant deficiencies, as they were called, which were basically documents that were not produced in a timely fashion. That was the essence of it, administrative, so very good job by CATS, congratulations to them.

The second item at our meeting was a report from Alyson Craig and Planning. I think the main thing I want to highlight here, talking about the modification of the conservation option, and you remember, we've already been told there are problems about the conservation option that is being used by developers to submit by-right plans that don't actually align with the intent of the conservation option, and 90 percent of the plans that are being submitted by-right, are availing themselves of this feature. It's essentially a loophole. The staff have prepared language changes in order to close the loophole. Again, we were told about that, I mentioned it last week. Now, the interesting thing here is that the Zoning Committee took this up and decided to defer any action on it. They did not act on it. So, that leaves us with a question of whether or not we go back to the Zoning Committee or do we proceed in order to get this done in the timeframe that the staff envisions. There's a whole long line of big development that's lined up, so this is time sensitive. The unanimous opinion of the members of the committee, who are myself, Ms. Molina as Vice Chair, Mr. Graham, Ms. Johnson and Dr. Watlington, it wasn't a vote, but our unanimous view was that we should move ahead with our vote on May 20, 2024, and go ahead and put those changes into effect in order to close that loophole. That will be followed the next month by a compact development option that will offer higher density solutions in response to the industry suggestion, that our base UDO (Unified Development Ordinance), because of all of its requirements, points to a higher cost housing solution than the one we want. They can't develop low-cost housing, meeting all of our requirements, because of the utilization. So, the plan is, we vote next Monday. Now, Ms. Craig is here to answer questions. She did actually have some slides, but in view of the time, I would suggest that without objection, everybody is on notice. If you need to know more, call me or her, but our goal is to get this done next Monday.

Ms. Watlington said my question, and I was there, so it's really just for the benefit of the public for those who were a part of the previous meeting before, is there any way to just hit the top lines of what the key issues coming out of the charrette were and what the mitigation is? It doesn't have to be in detail, but just if people are following along.

Mr. Driggs said yes. In essence, to boil it down, what was going on was, plans were being submitted that had very crammed development, and they were counting the open space on individual lots towards the requirement for open space in the conservation option, but the conservation option intended was, you would have a community area that was open and that would allow smaller lots around the edge. So, the language did not express the prohibited, what these plans have been proposing, but that is not what we had in mind. It was never intended that 90 percent of the plans that were submitted would avail themselves of the conservation option. So, we need to kind of close that, but at the same time, as I was saying in an earlier meeting, close that door, open another door, and that is the following month we will act on the compact option, which does provide through the front door instead of the back door, a way to do a higher density development, aim at the price point that we have mind, and not abuse the UDO.

Ms. Watlington said thank you.

Ms. Molina said just really quickly, Madam Mayor and Mr. Chair if you will, I just want to point out for my colleagues that weren't at the meeting, the reason why there was such consensus was that Ms. Craig pointed out the number of units that we would actually be able to stop with making that decision possibly next month, absent any that would come



in before we would make that decision. The decision would actually be effective immediately, right Ms. Craig? There were about 5,000, Mr. Chair, in the pipeline?

Mr. Driggs said there were a lot of units, even within that month, that would move through before we acted. Ms. Molina, if you don't mind, I want to mention the Chair of the Zoning Committee was actually at our committee meeting and responded to some questions we had as to what their issues were. When we heard those, I think the feeling of our committee members was that they didn't constitute a reason, and I don't believe Mr. Welton even thought they constituted a reason for us to not take this action. They made an observation that they thought the staff was kind of overmanaging the development of these sites. We couldn't really relate to that. So, it was all very friendly and fine, and I got the impression from the Chair that it was okay with them if we went ahead.

Ms. Molina said okay, and that's all I have.

Mayor Lyles said alright. Is there another committee that would like to provide an update, and I'm going to say this with all the sensitivity of like less than 20 minutes to get downstairs, we will be having at least two hours of Budget comments. So, I'm going to suggest that we do one hour, then come back and maybe do another, figure out where we are, maybe another hour and a half, so that everybody can get a break between. We're going to have two minutes per person to speak, and I think that the Clerk, or at least they know that there is the ability to speak at this level. So, I think we have over 70 people to speak tonight, and I want to make sure that we all get there. So, we are supposed to start at 6:30 p.m., it's 6:18 p.m. So, if we can go downstairs and actually start. We still have to do the regular announcements and things like that. So, it would be helpful if we move quickly, got into our seat, and had six people sitting there, so that we could begin the meeting.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, speaking of the Budget, I just wanted to give a quick update on City Staff Financing, because there is referendum action on our agenda tonight. So, there are four upcoming financing transactions that are currently planned. This was something that was already approved by full Council in the past. So, tonight you will see we are considering Water Bonds and Revenue Bond anticipation. There is General Obligation bond refunding, and that's part of the refinancing. So, as part of the General Obligation bond process tonight, we will be voting on approving a resolution to apply to LGC, which is the Local Government Commission. That's the first step in our process to have a \$400 million bond referendum on November 5, 2024. Second, I can wait. I just wanted to make sure if anyone had any questions on the City's debt financing.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, if we can get downstairs, it's 6:20 p.m. now, so we can get started at 6:30 p.m.

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

No closed session occurred.

\* \* \* \* \*

The meeting was recessed at 6:20 p.m. to move to the Meeting Chamber for the regularly scheduled Business Meeting.

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The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina reconvened for a Business Meeting on Monday, May 13, 2024, at 6:28 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, Marjorie Molina, and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember James Mitchell

\* \* \* \* \*

### INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Councilmember Watlington gave the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by all.

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**Mayor Lyles** said I want to thank all of you who are in the chamber today and also thank those that are watching us on the City's YouTube channel or however they choose to watch this opportunity. Today, we are going to have our Budget meeting, that we ask all of you to be able to comment on what the Manager's recommended Budget is, so that Council members will have the opportunity to hear from the public before any decisions are made on this Budget or any changes or recommendations. So, this is an important time for us, because we really want to hear from our community. I know that our Budget team has had listening sessions, and I hope several of you have participated in it, but it's nothing like coming down and talking to the Council members, that's a great thing to be able to do in this country. We are going to probably have about two hours of comments. The comments that you have, when you come down to speak, will be limited to two minutes, and I hope that we'll all respect each other, so that we can get those two minutes in, and everybody can be heard.

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### AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

**Mayor Lyles** said before we begin, we are going to have a few announcements of some things that I think we all recognize as being important. So, we have two proclamations today.

#### ITEM NO. 6: PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY

**Councilmember Ajmera** read the following proclamation:

As a mother of two young children, I certainly appreciate and recognize the hard work child care providers do, and this is very timely for Mother's Day, so here we go.

**WHEREAS**, Child Care Aware of America, and other organizations nationwide, are recognizing child care providers on this day; and

**WHEREAS**, child care has provided a safe, nurturing place for the enrichment and development of millions of children nationwide, and is a vital force in our economy; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated how indispensable child care providers, are for the well being and economic security of Charlotte, young children, families and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, child care programs, which are mostly small businesses run and staffed predominantly by woman, continue to recover from the health and financial hardships stemming from the pandemic to meet the needs of more families; and

**WHEREAS**, Charlotte recognizes that child care has been, and continues to be, a lifetime for families, communities and the economy; and

**WHEREAS**, the future depends on the quality of the early childhood experiences provided to young children today. Support for high quality child care represents a worthy commitment to our children's future.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Vi Alexander Lyles, Mayor of Charlotte, do hereby proclaim May 10, 2024, as

**“CHILD CARE PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY”**

in Charlotte, and urge all citizens to recognize child care providers for their important work.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much, Ms. Ajmera. If you have a child care provider, treat them kindly this week.

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**ITEM NO. 7: NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**

**Councilmember Brown** read the following proclamation:

Mental health is near and dear to me, especially for second chance and people that have spent time in incarceration. So, mental health is a big deal to me, so thank you for doing this.

**WHEREAS**, one in five adults, and one in five youth experience mental health conditions each year. Fifty percent of all lifetime mental health conditions, again, by the age of 14, and 75 percent by age 24; and

**WHEREAS**, mental health treatment, therapy, medication, and self-care have made recovery a reality for most people experiencing a mental health condition. People with mental health issues deserve help; and

**WHEREAS**, together we can realize our shared vision of a nation where anyone affected by mental health, no matter their background, no matter their background, no matter their background, culture, ethnicity or identity can get the appropriate support, quality of care to live healthy fulfilling lives; and

**WHEREAS**, good mental health is critical to wellbeing of our families, communities, schools, and business of all cultures and backgrounds, greater public awareness about mental health and can change negative attitudes and behaviors and cultures towards people with mental health conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, we must do better as a community, a culture, and a society, and join together to increase awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce stigma and discrimination, and promote appropriate and accessible services for all people, no matter their background, race, or gender, who are living with mental health conditions.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, we, Mayor Vi Alexander Lyles, Mayor of Charlotte, and George Dunlap, Chair of Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim May 24, 2024 as

**“NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH”**

in Charlotte Mecklenburg County, and commend its observance to all citizens.

**Mayor Lyles** said I have one other topic that I think most of us probably remember, over the last two weeks, the tragic incident that we had for four law enforcement officers

who lost their lives as a part of trying to make sure that we had an opportunity to be safe. You know, in my faith, there is this song that says, "We call the roll up yonder." So, I would like to ask you to take a moment of silence as I recognize the members that have been called to be on the roll. Joshua Eyer of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department; Thomas Weeks of the U.S. Marshall service; William Alden Elliott of the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction; and Sam Poloche, whose funeral was today, of the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction. Now, in the days and weeks following, messages and support of condolences have been received at a remarkable rate. Across this country, people have sent notes and letters and comments and reflections. So, I want to read just a brief one who came as a part of a statement from a city in Oregon. "The City of Woodburn will honor those who lost their lives with a moment of silence during our next Council meeting. To the friends, families, and anyone who feels this tremendous loss in and beyond Charlotte, you are in our thoughts," and this is signed by the Mayor, Frank Lonergan, Mayor of the town of Woodburn. Now, he sent that note, because they had their own tragedy in December of 2008, where two law enforcement officers and others were injured. So, I want all of us to be thankful today. I want to thank, particularly, our community who stood by, and with, the families of those who were lost and those who were injured. In the coming weeks and months, let's not forget them. Let's make sure that we are still supportive, that we do not remember what happened without remembering that they gave the greatest sacrifice. This upcoming week is Police Week, and if you know an officer, be kind. Give them some way of acknowledging that they are important to us in our community. So, thank you everyone for this opportunity to speak about something that I think has really changed the way that we see what we do in this community, and knowing that we can do it well.

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## PUBLIC HEARING

### ITEM NO. 9: PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025 OPERATING BUDGET AND FISCAL YEARS 2025-2029 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Mayor Lyles declared the hearing open.

Harmoni Moorer, 1235 East Boulevard, Suite E PMB said hello everyone, my name is Harmoni Moorer. I am also the founder the Little Listeners, a Youth Violence Prevention outreach organization. I am also a supporter of The People's Budget. This creates an opportunity for various organizations to work together to service our community's needs. Now, let me just say this, youths need to participate in the Budget process, because they will inherent a Charlotte based on decisions made now. Following up with Councilwoman Tiawana's town hall, it's apparent that youth need to take a role in ending juvenile gun violence, and the Youth Violence Prevention Center model allows [inaudible] to contribute to the [inaudible] process. If the City of Charlotte wants the youth of Charlotte to consider careers with the City, they need to make the jobs attractive to us by paying all City employees a decent wage and have good benefits, like being able to retire well. Remember that the crown is displayed on their uniform. Treat them like they represent the Queen City. Today's youth deserve to be able to afford to live in Charlotte, and that's both in apartments and our own houses. Please make sure we have the opportunity to live here, that also means different types of housing. All of us aren't looking for a house with a picket fence. Many of us want to live where we work. We want to walk to the store. Please consider all of the suggestions in The People's Budget, because we are the people.

Mayor Lyles said I do believe your grandmother is very happy.

Sandra De los Santos, 5014 Split Oak Drive said my name is Sandra de los. I am married, I have eight children. I arrived in Charlotte 17 years ago, and for seven years I have lived in a house that has always had a water leak. For five years, it didn't get any worse. Two years ago, the house began to get worse due to mold, and humidity every time the water came in. I had to extract the water because the company I rented from,

Amherst, was called but never came, and we always had to do it ourselves. We stopped working. Sometimes we slept under the water. I had to throw out a lot of furniture. The company made me buy insurance which they would say is not true. I started off paying \$1,235 five years ago. Two years ago, I paid rent \$1,750. They want to renew my contract, but they raised my rent to \$1,915, but they don't want to make repairs that I need. I had to buy a refrigerator and a microwave, and they only replaced the stove after all these years. Tenants like me need more support and we need better protections, because my story is not the only one.

Mayor Lyles said alright. I tell you what we're going to do. We will have this translated and sent to every member of the Council, so that they will be able to read it, and we have an interpretation of it for all of us. Thank you very much.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said yes, so, as part of the Equity Committee, Councilmember Johnson, Winston, and I served on, we had specifically anticipated this kind of situation. That's why we would have an interpreter, not afterwards, but at the same time, so that we can get the remarks.

Mayor Lyles said I understand that, but that didn't happen, and we did not know that. So, it's something that I was not aware of. So, we'll have to have that interpreted and sent to every one of the Council members. Alright.

Ms. Ajmera said so, can you make sure this doesn't happen in the future.

Mayor Lyles said I would hope to.

**Judy Seldin-Cohen, 229 North Church Street** said I am Judy Seldin-Cohen, part of the coalition proposing The People's Budget. Thank you, City Manager, for increasing the Housing Bond to \$100 million in the proposed Budget. This increase is essential to support the lowest paid workers in our growing City, including those households earning under 30 percent of the Area Median Income. To maximize the impact of this larger Housing Bond, The People's Budget proposes that \$25 million be targeted for homeownership in areas at risk of displacement. The NEST (Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization) Commission is also requesting \$25 million towards anti-displacement. Like the NEST Commission, The People's Budget supports ADUs, Accessory Dwelling Units. ADUs provide a source of income for homeowners at risk of displacement, while adding lower cost housing into the City's inventory. We also propose that the City focus on smaller scale contractors to build these ADUs, contractors who typically do not have access to public funds. The People's Budget also supports the NEST Commission's focus on repairs, essential to keeping aging homeowners in their homes. In addition to ADUs and repairs, we support using the Housing Bond to acquire land and properties for the West Side Community Land Trust. Land trusts preserve long-term affordability and enable appreciation to be shared equitably between homeowners and the community that made their homeownership possible. Thank you all for your support, and the \$100 million Housing Bond. We look forward to working with the Housing and Safety Committee to develop the policy for allocating these proceeds.

**Kass Ottley, 1015 Mt Holly-Huntersville Road** said I want to just say something just quickly if I can before my time starts. I requested an interpreter, and I'm little upset that one wasn't provided.

Mayor Lyles said I am as well, so thank you for letting us know.

Ms. Ottley said okay, so I'd like to say I'm happy to be here, and I'd like to thank the City for listening to the City workers in the past and increasing the minimum wage and looking at all of the things that the City workers were talking about, but two and a half years ago we were here with a study from Economic Policy Institute, which said that a worker that had a family of two, needed to be making at least \$26 to thrive and live in the City of Charlotte, and while we're looking \$23 for a minimum wage, we are still pressing for \$25, because City workers have been trying to play catchup for years. The last two years have been great as far as increases, but 10 years before that, City

workers were not making any money, they were not making a living wage. We still have City workers that can't afford to live in the City. We still have City workers that are struggling. These workers keep the City clean; they make the City beautiful; they make sure that essential workers can do their job. We're looking at growth in the City of about 120 people that move here daily, which makes their job even harder, because that means that that is generating more trash and more things that they have to deal with, but on the other side it's also bringing more revenue to the City. So, we're asking for a six percent raise for City workers. We're asking for a \$25 minimum wage. We're also asking for a four percent contribution to their 401K, because for years, I think about 18 years, City workers have not had an increase, while police and fire do yearly, and we want people to be able to afford to retire. We have City workers that are retired, they can't even retire, they still have to work. So, we want to make sure that people are taken care of in the City, because when we lift up City workers, we lift up everyone in the City. Thank you.

**Carol Hardison, 500-A Spratt Street** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, Mayor Pro Tem Anderson, and City Council. I'm Carol Hardison. I'm the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of Crisis Assistance Ministry, and I'm here tonight to talk about The People's Budget. We need a City where all can live, work and play without the fear of an eviction, and live, work, and play safely. At Crisis Assistance Ministry, one of the services that we provide is rental and utility assistance. So far this year, 44 City workers have come to Crisis Assistance Ministry, because they cannot afford to live in the City. Sixty-seven percent of the income of the average person that comes to Crisis Assistance for the rental and utility assistance, is going to their housing. Dollars alone won't solve this problem. Whether the person comes for our one-month assistance program or whether they come for our three-month upstream rental assistance program, whether they're one of our 56 partner agencies that we distributed a million dollars to last year, the fact is you can't close that gap with dollars alone, and that's why we support The People's Budget. The People's Budget represents coordination, not duplication. It represents collaboration, not competition. We need people to be able to live, work and play affordably in this community. We're advocating for The People's Budget, and we appreciate your service and your hard work. Thank you.

**Shawn Dalrymple 3011 Timber Hollow Drive** said good evening, Madam Mayor, City Council members. My name is Shawn Dalrymple. I work at Atrium Hospital. I stand in support of The People's Budget. I am known as the forgotten ones. I live like most people, paycheck to paycheck, one check away from asking for assistance again. I represent the live experience. I had to go to Crisis Assistance Ministry to help with my utilities and my rent, which helped quite a lot. I stand before you as a single parent with a son and a grandson, who I do not want them to look at me less than, because all they see is me struggling financially, but yet having a job. I support The People's Budget, because it will bring affordable housing in Charlotte, and also help with those who are employed struggling with wages that do not support the household. Thank you for listening.

**Krystin Lasprilla, 11626 Scottish Kilt Court** said thank you. Council, thank you for your time. My name is Krystin Lasprilla and I've been a Ballantyne resident for the past 14 years. Thank you for your time. I'm joined today with my husband and my daughter, Alex and Camden. We wanted to talk to you today about our local animal shelter in Mecklenburg County. Our family fell into fostering after we heard the call to help. Many of you may have heard that call recently too, that the shelter was overrun, and our dogs were at risk. We waited a couple of hours in the lobby to meet and choose what we thought would be a week-long visitor to our home. We were very wrong about that, that's a long-term visitor that we now have in our home, and we absolutely love the dog that we're fostering. As much as we love what we do, it's clear that the system is broken, and the burden falls heavily on those, several of them are here, that are working to try and mend it. Volunteering for an underfunded shelter is a rollercoaster of emotions. The highs of finding homes for these animals are eclipsed quickly by the lows of realizing the systemic issues at play. The shelter staff, whom I deeply admire, are resilient in the face of constant trauma, yet the toll that it takes on them is palpable. Whenever I'm at the shelter, I don't miss the opportunity to speak to one my favorite

staff members, and he shares how his work over the past decade has left him, "Exhausted and disheartened," those were his words. The cycle of hope and heartbreak is relentless, but it's a cycle we can't afford to turn away from. We are thrilled as a shelter community to hear that 10 new Animal Care and Control staff member positions had been proposed for the future, yet today the shelter's resources are stretched thin, and the bar for responsible pet guardianship remains dismally low.

**Eric Zaverl, 1100 South Mint Street, Suite 208** said good evening, Mayor, City Council. My name is Eric Zaverl, and I'm here on behalf of Sustain Charlotte, and I also have three other organizations with me supporting bicycle funding, and I hope you were able to see the petition that we sent you recently. We urge you to increase the bicycle program funding from \$4 million to \$10 million a year. This investment will not only enhance our City's infrastructure, but also foster a sense of community and progress, making it possible to build 10 miles of All Ages and Abilities bike lanes and facilities every year, to complete the 100 plus miles of the Priority Bike Network that was passed with the Strategic Mobility Plan, and we can do it before 2040. We can do it with certainty and expediency, that other possible solutions, or current solutions we're using, will not accomplish. We are thrilled to see the Vision Zero and the Sidewalk program restored, and we would ask strongly to consider increasing the funding for the bike program as an important mobility option that will benefit residents and help fight the climate crisis. Now, this is an important piece. Pay attention now, please. The Connected Bicycle Network makes bicycling a viable mode for transportation, but we're not there yet. People aren't going to choose to ride a bicycle if it isn't safe and convenient, and to truly move us forward to the 50-50 mode share goal, outlined in the Strategic Mobility Plan, we must take a bold and comprehensive approach. We are making specific requests for dedicated funding to build the Bicycle Priority Network, and this is not just another program. It has the power to transform the City's mobility future. We cannot rely solely on other programs, or of the private sector, or of segmented nature of the strategic investment area. Thank you very much for having me.

**Rodney McGill, 2201 Caronia Street** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, City Manager and the Council. First of all, I support The People's Budget, and I wanted to read two quick things from CMPD, one from the beginning of this year. It says the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department said the City saw a rise in violent crimes with juvenile suspects in 2023. CMPD says shootings involving a person under the age of 18 as a suspect increased by 33 percent in 2023, while shootings involving a juvenile victim increased by 18 percent. The second thing I want to read is also from CMPD, and it says that juvenile crime continues to be a major concern for the CMPD, with a rise in auto theft and shootings into occupied property. This is from April 15, 2024. Thus far, in 2024, juvenile suspects have been responsible for 21 total shootings and 17 shooting into occupied property. The 17 juvenile-related shooting into occupied properties have impacted 74 total victims. What I wanted to say to ya'll today is that the alternatives to violence can't begin at 18 and up. We've got to get these youth before they get 18. Once they get 18, if any of you've got children, you know it's pretty much a wrap. So, if you're serious about preventing this youth violence from rising from 2023, 33 percent, 2024 already 42 percent, you've got to do some proactive things. We saw what prevention, what the interpreter did today. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, you heard it before. I urge all of ya'll to support The People's Budget, and right now we have 120 children and we've got a place for 60 of them. If it was any influence, ya'll had for us to put those other 60 children and keep them off the street.

**Dana Mariani, 3518 Rhett Butler Place** said good evening. My name is Dana Mariani, and I live in District 7. On February 6, 2024, my neighborhood, Providence Plantation, held an HOA (Homeowner Association) meeting at St. Nektarios. Ed, you spoke and heard concerns about developers plans. The meeting was held in part, because a duplex or a triplex may be built, which would change the look and feel of our established single-family home neighborhood. As the meeting unfolded, I kept thinking about a book I read called, "Sorting Out The New South City," by Thomas Hanchett. Through this book, I learned about Brooklyn, which was bulldozed between 1960 and 1977. Providence Plantation started to be built in 1966, and our HOA was incorporated in July of 1977. Brooklyn was bulldozed with inadequate redress, if any, but 50 years later, we

had the resources, connections, and the ability to create a game plan to “protect” our established neighborhood. The diverging set of political commitments of these decisions illustrate just how complicated our current discourse on housing and land use is all these years later. That we live in, and alongside, such a history, is no one’s fault in this room today, but it is our responsibility to rectify. Additionally, I recently looked at a map that shows Housing Trust Fund developments in the City by district, and I want to highlight that District 7 has at least 54 families that use Housing Choice Vouchers per the 2022 census tract. So, this issue of affordable housing affects District 7, and all the deserving districts in the City. It is important to maintain the integrity of all neighborhoods in Charlotte and using the \$25 million of the recommended \$100 million bond issue to create paths to homeownership for vulnerable citizens, is one way to achieve this goal. Thank you very much.

**Glenn Holladay, 506 Belton Street** said good evening. My name is Glenn Holladay. I’m a retired Pediatrician here in Charlotte, a 44-year resident, and I live in District 1. I’m here tonight as a member of Faith and Justice Group at Providence Presbyterian Church, and as a member of the Redress Movement. I come before you in wholehearted support of the bond package that will include \$100 million for the Housing Trust Fund. It is my understanding that \$75 million will go towards affordable rental housing, money desperately needed. We advocate that \$25 million indeed go towards homeownership programs. It cannot be overstated how important that would be. I encourage you to work with organizations, such as West Side Community Land Trust and the mission of increased homeownership. There are tremendous disparities of generational wealth in our beloved City. Disparities between mostly white and mostly black and brown, not always, but the disparities are often staggering, and they almost always started with homeownership or a lack thereof. Many of the reasons can be traced directly back to past government policies, federal, state, and local. Think about urban renewal, think about redlining. We convene here tonight in this beautiful Government Center on land that was the Brooklyn neighborhood, an entire community that was erased by urban renewal. So, let us as citizens who surely care for one another, put forth good faith efforts to lift up those less fortunate and those who have been wronged, and let it start with housing.

**Angelia James, 1218 Edgewood Road** said hello. My name is Angelia James. Greetings, Mayor and other Councilman, Councilman Graham. I am with the Redress Movement who empowers people like me to take direct action to repair the harm caused by intentional racial segregation. Redress’ starting point is housing injustice. I understand that you have apportioned \$100 million for the Housing Trust Fund. Thank you, I like that. We are requesting, the Redress Movement, along with the West Side Land Trust, \$25 million of that \$100 million to go towards homeownership programs for low wealth people. Homeownership, let that marinate, homeownership, value, pride, self-worth, wealth to thrive, not just to survive, not to be sick from the air pollution and noise of the cars. Currently, the largest portion of Housing Trust Fund developments are clustered near I-85, I-77, and Independence Boulevard. These areas pose the greatest health risks to families. A pathway to homeownership developments should have access to a quiet, clean neighborhood with healthcare offices nearby and grocery stores, just like the rest of the City. Rental opportunities could be a pathway as well, but not solely. Look, I see you, you see me. It is not much of a degree of separation from me and you. Thank you.

**Emily Hartner, 7132 Eagles Nest Lane, Huntersville** said Mayor Lyles and City Council members, thank you so much for the work that you do on behalf of our City. My name is Pastor Emily Hartner. I’m the Pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in the Plaza Midwood neighborhood in District 1, so thank you for your representation. As you are aware, affordable housing is a great need in Charlotte. The issue has reached the doorsteps of our own congregation, where we operate a small food pantry that attracts mostly homeless individuals. We also have a homeless person who is currently sleeping on our property and has been sleeping there for about two years now. We are happy to support him, but of course, it is not an ideal situation. Also, asking him to leave our property is also not ideal. He is not someone who would be suitable for a shelter, and there is nowhere for him to go. I am in full support of The People’s Budget on behalf of



the Redress Movement, and specifically, the \$100 million portion for the Housing Trust Fund. Of course, housing for currently homeless individuals is not the only issue in this. Housing costs have risen everywhere in our City. People are consistently being priced out of our beautiful City. So, while I am in favor of things like Housing First opportunities, I am also in support of the \$25 million portion of this bond supporting pathways to homeownership. Partners like the West Side Community Land Trust would enable the City to encourage generational and community wealth through homeownership and not only rentals. Raising the Housing Trust Fund bond from \$50 million, as it was in 2022, to the \$100 million in the current Budget, would only increase the City's debt load by less than one percent, and would provide people like our neighbors, the one that we are helping right now, provide him with stability in his life. It would subsidize the rising cost of construction, so that we can treat the most vulnerable among us with dignity and respect.

**Anne Wood, 10132 Berkeley Forest Lane** said good evening. My name is Anne Wood. I have lived in Charlotte for 36 years in the same house. I'm in District 7. Housing has never been a problem for me and my family. When I was asked to speak to you tonight on behalf of the Redress Movement, I had no idea how I would begin. On Tuesday, May 7, 2024, I happened to hear Charlotte Talks on WFAE. Mayor Lyles and City Manager Jones were the guests, and they were discussing the City Budget and the hearings about it. So, I'm going to quote Mayor Lyles to begin my statement. She said, "If we're going to continue to grow and people are going to continue to move here, we have to have a place for them to live." She went on to say that "City Manager Jones is recommending \$100 million for a bond referendum for affordable housing." That is what the Redress Movement is also asking. A Housing Fund of \$100 million will help cover the rising costs of construction. I would hope that affordable housing can be built in higher opportunity areas, such as the area in the southern part of the county where I live. Having affordable housing there will give more housing choices and reduce economic and racial segregation in Charlotte. Twenty-five million dollars of the bond measure should go toward homeownership, where generational wealth can begin and economic opportunities for the community will increase. We're asking that the whole community of Charlotte have the chance to vote on this bond referendum in the fall. Helping to solve the affordable housing problem in this City can stave off other issues that many face in their lives. Charlotte has been a thriving place for me and my family. For many who can't afford to live here, but want to participate in the educational and occupational opportunities that Charlotte offers, the cost of renting or purchasing a home is out of reach.

**Janie Navarro, 6028 McDaniel Lane** said hello, my name is Janie Navarro. I'm 21 years old and I've lived in Charlotte my entire life. I'm here on behalf of my community, Charlotte Hills Mobile Home Park owned by Riverstone Communities, an out of state corporate landlord. I'm here to share consistent issues occurring in my area, those being when Latino tenants request their title after finishing paying their mortgage. They're being told that they can't have their title, because they don't have an NT (Northern Territory) driver's license, and were also being fined unreasonably and given violations, to which when we can't fulfill, are being told to vacate in five days, even though the North Carolina law says we have 60 for a move. I'd like for the City of Charlotte to take action and support The People's Budget, as well address the issues corporate landlords cause our most vulnerable communities. We need tenant protections and investment in community owned homes, so communities like mine can get out of predatory landlord living situations. Thank you.

**Jessica Moreno, 314 South Chestnut Street, Gastonia** said Jessica Moreno. Hi, I'd like to acknowledge the hundreds and thousands of lives that we have lost due to our communities not having a home, due to eviction, due to displacement, due to corporate greed, and the takeover of housing by corporate landlords, due to weak protections for renters. I'd like to acknowledge that this is not a new issue, and it's getting worse. It is getting worse, and we can tell by Sandra, ya'll didn't understand her, but she's dealing with corporate landlord issues as well, high rents, predatory practices, like Janie and her community. I'm a housing justice organizer with Action NC. I've been working on housing since my community, Oak Haven Mobile Home Park, was displaced in 2017.

Now, I live in Gastonia, and I work in Charlotte, yay. Since 2017, I've seen the same cycle of displacement. We believe the solution is investment in Green Social Housing, like the Community Land Trust, so we support The People's Budget request and encourage an investment in the West Side Community Land Trust. We also ask that you consider in the future for investment to corporate or collaborative housing, which would be a perfect solution for communities like Janie, a mobile home park that they can get together and buy their community. It's been done before in other parts of the state. For communities here in Charlotte, we organize housing that is democratically owned and operated. That is the solution that we ask for. Thank you.

**Maegan Mack, 9201 University City Boulevard** said hello, Council members and City Staff. My name is Maegan Mack, and I'm a doctoral student at UNCC (University of North Carolina Charlotte). Today, I am here to advocate for Green Social Housing, or shared equity housing models that are permanently affordable, democratically operated and socially equitable. These nonprofit community-led housing models are a third sector of housing. This alternative is needed because the way that we are doing housing is not working. In 2024, we were in the middle of corporate takeover of housing across the state, and it's estimated that if trends continue, that publically traded corporations will own 40 percent of rental properties in the U.S. by 2030. Investing in shared equity models is a mechanism to push back against this takeover of our housing. There are three models of social housing, Community Land Trust, housing cooperatives, and deed-restricted land covenants. These models remove the profit motive out of the equation and have a demonstrated ability to provide sustainable and affordable housing. They retain the subsidy dollars invested by embedding them directly into the property and use resale restrictions to ensure that the property remains affordable to households with limited means for perpetuity. The main barrier to its development is upfront capital. A solution to overcome this barrier is funding, a revolving low-interest loan account, only available to nonprofit mission-aligned organizations. It is revolving, because payments on the loan go directly back into the account and are available for the next project, and recoverable funding streams that can capitalize future projects could be a game changer. I am here to beg you, Council members, to please invest in social housing models, like the local Community Land Trust. Nonprofit community-operated housing is a third way of doing housing that requires community dollars to take shape. By using common sense public finance solutions, we can make developing affordable housing more affordable and help to increase shared equity housing in our community. Thank you for your time.

**Liz Clasen-Kelly, 6935 Woodstock Drive** said good evening, Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and members of City Council. I'm Liz Clasen-Kelly, leader of Roof Above, one of this community's key partners, and working with people in a housing crisis and working to end homelessness every day. I was here just a few months ago when this Council passed the recriminalization of certain City ordinances, and I really appreciated during that meeting, and throughout the conversations, City staff and members of this Council alike, spoke of the need for wholistic solutions. Investment in those wholistic solutions, some of that started right away with investments in public restrooms and expanded street outreach, but we really think this Budget is an opportunity to further those wholistic solutions. So, we're pleased with so much of what is in the City's Manager's Budget, especially the \$100 million Housing Trust Fund. I personally love that. I think it was about 15 years ago, I stood at this dais first advocating for Housing Trust Fund. Frankly, it's necessary to have it at \$100 million based on the expenses of building and preserving housing today, but we think there are unique opportunities to expand specialized emergency shelter, as well as homeownership opportunities to build wealth for families that you've heard about tonight. So, we're thrilled to see the expansion of the CARES (Community Assistance Response and Engagement Support) team. We think that's a critical response, that social work response to 911 calls, and I believe, if I understand correctly, there's also support for Roof Above Day Services Center, formerly Urban Ministry Center. So, we're thrilled with all of this. We believe deeply at Roof Above, and we believe our work shows, that the whole community wins when we invest in human potential. We think this community does a great job leveraging private and public funding. We think, during COVID and through ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds, we've seen great new grassroots groups, groups like Block Love and Heal

Charlotte. So, you'll see in The People's Budget support for both grassroots groups and more established groups, and we are grateful for any investment in human potential that this Council provides.

**Kaedon Grinnell, 1216 North Tryon Street** said good evening, Mayor Lyles and distinguished Council members. My name is Kaedon Grinnell, and I'm here today representing Roof Above, as a member of the leadership team overseeing programming for the organization. Each day, our Day Services Center opens its doors to the most vulnerable members of our community and serves as a beacon of hope in our community's fight against homelessness in Mecklenburg County. Operating 365 days a year, our Day Services Center is more than just a building. It's a critical lifeline for those that we serve. Each day, we serve upwards of 250 lunches out of our kitchen, providing not just nutrition, but a moment of normalcy and dignity. In the last four months, 466 neighbors have utilized our laundry services and 594 enjoyed the basic comfort of a shower. In that same span, our dedicated team of service providers have provided critical assistance in vital document retrieval, rental assistance, have connected our neighbors to medical and mental health support, and transportation assistance for hundreds of our neighbors. Our mailroom sorts through and distributes hundreds of pieces of mail each day, giving our neighbors a stable and reliable home address, from which to connect employment searches, entitlements applications, and much more. Equally importantly, 113 neighbors have avoided eviction, moved into housing, or been connected to housing, thanks to the tireless efforts of our staff, community partners and the volunteers, who all play a critical role in our pursuit to end homelessness. Please remember that each number I mentioned represents a life, a person whose circumstances are being transformed through community effort and compassion. We want to thank you for your support and want you to know that your investment is an investment in the health and safety of our community. Together, we can continue these vital services, we can continue to make a tangible difference, and we can continue to uphold the dignity of every neighbor that comes through our doors.

**Rory Pegram, 6000 Crosswood Court** said good evening, Council, Mayor. My name is Rory Pegram, and I work for Solid Waste, City of Charlotte. I just want to speak on behalf of The Struggle is Real. I've been speaking for the last three years on this podium about the struggle of the wages that we're getting, and we're just hoping that the Council would really look into this \$25 an hour, because I'm living paycheck to paycheck. I went from living in a hotel to now I'm living with a roommate. I'm trying to get a house. I love my job. I love working for the City. I work Uptown. So, when you're Uptown and you see how clean it looks, I'm one of the ones that do that, and I get a lot of remarks and compliments from people from out of town saying how beautiful Uptown looks, and then they talk to me, and when they find out what I make, they get sad, and it saddens me, because I come with a lot of energy, and they're sad, because we should be making more for what we do. We do a lot for the City. I just ask that you all really take in consideration this \$25 an hour, so we can eat. I want a steak every now and then. I want to go on vacation, but I've got to budget my money, because the paycheck isn't what it should be, but I'm thankful for what ya'll have done, or giving us the raises that we got. I'm appreciative. I'm thankful for it, and I'm going to work hard each and every day and go to work each and every day, but I want to be compensated for what I do, for what we do. We're the second fastest growing city in the country, so that's going to make more work on me, more responsibilities on me. I want to be able to go home on Friday looking at my check saying thank you, not what am I going to do, who's not going to get paid, take from Peter, pay for Paul. I don't want to live like that, because I love my job, like I said. I want to retire from the City, and I want the 401K to be incorporated for the long term.

**Deborah Phillips, 2738 North Graham** said my name is Deborah Phillips. I want to thank The People's Budget. I think this was a setup, because it's no secret that my husband works for the City of Charlotte, and even though I came to advocate for myself, I tell people all the time, we can't afford to live in the City of Charlotte. I just started being able to pay myself. Thank God for those that have advocated, so that we can have a Budget, but you all, being out on those City streets during 2020, and it was just us and Solid Waste at a time that the City was on a lockdown, and then moving people

from Tent City into motel spaces, and seeing City employees, I'm talking about everyday City employees, Solid Waste people, and they aren't paying me ya'll to say this, listen they're not. Seeing them in that motel space, and I said motel, not hotel, and then when I see them show up at our free grocery events, I love them and I don't think anything different, because I count everybody family, but it's hard out here. Me and my family found ourselves homeless in 2021, living in a motel, because as you all know, corporate buyers, they're buying properties sight unseen, and we were just trying to buy a house, hoping to work with DreamKey Partners, and the houses we were looking at that were once \$250,000, which is about what we could afford, are now \$400,000 to \$450,000. I cannot afford to live in the City of Charlotte, and I work in the City advocating for our houseless neighbors every single day and it's exhausting. We try our best to help those that we can, and I can sit up here and spew numbers all day long, but these are lives at stake y'all. These are lives that need to eat. These are families that live overdraft to overdraft. I hear paycheck to paycheck, but the young brother said, "When you're robbing Peter to pay Paul," you're doing that overdraft thing, and we've got to get people into housing. We've got to create safe spaces for people that come in, even if they are working for the City. They need to come in and not be considered a number. They need to be considered an individual and look like it's such, and not be judged, stigmatized or prejudged or any of that, for their situation.

**Greg Jarrell, 2910 Parkway Avenue** said Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem and Council members, Reverend Greg Jarrell, the senior campaign organizer for the Redress Movement here in Charlotte. I thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm a 20-year resident of the Enderly Park neighborhood, now in District 2, with Councilmember Graham, and I'm thinking of a couple of neighbors tonight while I'm speaking in support of The People's Budget, and in particular, the Housing Trust Fund portion of that. One is the niece who recently moved after a long, long struggle into an apartment supported through Housing Trust Fund dollars. She said to me, "I just feel so relieved," and I'm struck that there are so many people around our City who need relief and more. I'm also thinking of a neighbor, Frank, probably known to a number of you, who was one of the first people to purchase a home through the West Side Community Land Trust. The morning after he bought a house on Tuckaseegee Road, at 60 years old, the first time he's been able to own a home, I called him just to check in, and he said, "I felt like a hero waking up in my own bed." He felt like a hero, because it was so hard, and it was so hard, because of a history of policy that has disenfranchised and displaced people across our City, especially black people, and always poor people. So, this Housing Trust Fund needs your passage, it needs to get onto the ballot, so that the rest of the City can pass it, and it needs provisions for affordable homeownership, so that Frank is not one of a few, but instead Frank is one of many, many across our City, who now have staying power, who cannot be uprooted easily by the power of policy or by the power of vulture capitalists, but instead is able to pass a home onto his children to the next generation, to build personal and community wealth. Thank you for your time tonight and thank you for your support of this funding.

**Corbin Smith, 1908 Archdale Drive** said thank you very much, Madam Mayor and members of Council. My name is Corbin Smith. I'm a Certified Public Accountant and District 6 voter. I'm here to speak in support of the bike lane proposal to increase the funding to \$10 million. One of the things that I wanted to mention is that for the Capital Improvements Plan with transportation initiatives in general, you have a list of assets with construction costs, and it's common I find to stop the conversation there. What I wanted to express is, these are not just assets, they're commitments. You're saying that if these things break, you're going to fix them, and when they reach the end of their useful lives, you will go ahead and replace them, and pay the staff or whoever maintains control of them, as well as their pensions. When we plot those costs annually, we might find that things that look cost effective at first, might not be, and it's in that vein that I want to talk about the proposals before you tonight for cycling infrastructure. There is a vast difference in the amount of maintenance requirements for bicycles with respect to their infrastructure than there is for road infrastructure. I did some very rough, admittedly, figures, and the assumptions I used I think were quite conservative, but based on the numbers that I've run, if we convert even a percentage of the vehicle miles traveled in Charlotte from car to, either not driving them, or to bicycle, we can save

somewhere between \$800,000 to \$600,000 a year. Plot that out over the 25 to 30-year useful life of the investments, in which we're talking about, and we can realize some savings from these things. Now, I'm happy to share the figures and assumptions that I used. As I said, I think they're very conservative, but moreover, I'd like to encourage the Council to ask questions like these, and others like them, to take a look at the annual cost to carry that infrastructure, as opposed to just the construction costs. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak today.

**Michelle Frenzel, 2201 Hastings Drive** said good evening. I'm Michelle Frenzel speaking on behalf of OneMECK, a coalition of housing providers, service providers, and community advocates, who support diverse neighborhoods and affordable housing for all residents. Tonight, we are here as part of the coalition endorsing The People's Budget. One of the best quotes I've heard, that sums up our current housing crisis, was from James Bradley Lee III, who is probably here tonight. He said, "Can't afford to live in Charlotte, can't afford to leave." I think everyone in this room sincerely wants to change that cycle. City Manager, Jones, we thank you for your demonstrated support of the critical \$100 million Housing Bond in the proposed City Budget. A robust housing fund is key to the wholistic solution Charlotte's housing crisis demands. Why? Construction costs continue to rise, so is the increasing funding critical to sustaining Charlotte's progress and the creation of affordable housing. Housing Trust Fund dollars are critical to obtaining additional funding from federal government and nonprofit organizations. Additional funding from the City will help us leverage these funding sources. There is strong public support for affordable housing. About 70 percent of voters consistently approve the bond referendum for the Housing Trust Fund. Charlotte is a vibrant, growing city, and can well afford the additional bond issuance. Doubling of the current Housing Trust Fund allocation will incur less than one percent additional debt for the City. We respectfully request a People First Budget that provides stability, dignity, justice, and as a result, better outcomes for everyone. Simply put, we want affordable housing options, so that everyone that makes Charlotte, Charlotte, can afford to live, survive and thrive here. Thank you.

**Ben Mallicote, 3205 North McDowell Street** said good evening. My name is Ben Mallicote, and I live in District 1. I'm here tonight with the Redress Movement to speak in support of The People's Budget and to thank you for the portions of that Budget that have made it into the proposal, particularly the \$100 million Housing Trust Fund, and as we've learned tonight, support for Roof Above Day Services Center. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. I'm here tonight as one of about 16 members of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Dilworth seated up here in the choir loft. We are here tonight, as are other faith leaders, because we know that a budget is a moral document that reflects the values and priorities of its community. So, we say, in as clear a voice as we know how, our values demand that every person has a decent place to live, and that every person experiencing homelessness be extended the same care that we would want for our children, our parents, for ourselves. In support of that, I would say two things to you. The first is very simple. We want you to spend our money on these things. We are willing to pay for them. We're not shy about saying it tonight, and if our friends and neighbors disagree, we won't be shy about saying it to them either. Pass this Budget, and we will have your backs in this community. The second is this. The faith communities that are represented here tonight are not asking you to do anything that we're not willing to do ourselves. For our part, Covenant has raised and invested millions of dollars in support of affordable housing. We've taken on projects that frankly scared us to death, because of their size and scope, and we are not remotely alone in pulling that oar. Your city's faith communities, your civic organizations and nonprofits, have been bold in pursuing a solution to this affordable housing crisis. Thank you for being bold with us.

**Fred Robinson, 14505 Greenpoint Lane, Huntersville** said good evening, Mayor Lyles and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson and City Manager Jones and the rest of the City Council. My name is Fred Robinson. I'm a theologian, and I wear several other hats, of which I don't need to get in, but I'm primarily tonight a member of the Redress Movement in Charlotte. So, why my presence tonight? Well, I'm here to show up, stand up, and speak up for justice. If it were not for injustice, man would not know what justice

is. I'm here to address the issues, voice concerns, and champion ideas that can bring about positive change. The primary concerns are essential to the bond attainment and bond projects that are important to this community. The Charlotte that we enjoy today, is due in large part, to the investments that were made in the past. The City we will enjoy in the future will come from investments we make today. Meeting Charlotte's infrastructure and housing needs are vital to our regional health and sustaining our reputation as a great place to live, work, and play. Those Housing Trust Funds would provide flexibility for our City of Charlotte and the County of Mecklenburg governments to meet local needs, including emergency rent assistance, addressing the housing and health needs of people experiencing homelessness, and building and preserving affordable housing. Thank you.

**Courtney Shudak, 1921 Chatham Avenue** said good evening. My name is Courtney Shudak. Thank you for your service and time being here today. I live in District 1 and I work in bank finance. I am here today, though, joining my friends from Covenant Presbyterian Church, and speaking on behalf of the Redress Movement. My comments come from the lens of my faith as well as my understanding of economics and finance and what is practical for the City. I support the \$100 million Housing Trust Fund included in today's People's Budget proposal, which will help to cover the rising costs of housing and construction by doubling the amount of the City's past housing bonds, and for that, thank you. I know, and more importantly each of you know, that stable housing is a key factor in reducing individual's reliance on a wide array of City services. It's a key ingredient in flourishing for individuals and families in our City. In the relationships that I've been able to build with our unhoused neighbors, through Room in the Inn Ministries, I have repeatedly seen this to be true in their stories. The last time that I had the opportunity to spend time with Room in the Inn, was the week before Easter, and the week before the services stopped for the winter season. I met a neighbor named Rachel, who shared with me about many of the traumas that she experienced directly related to her lack of housing and the fact that she was periodically living within a car when she even had the car. So, I think of Rachel when I share with you today my support for HTF (Housing Trust Fund). While it is exciting to see the City's leadership increase investment in housing affordability, my experience in finance tells me that the way in which we direct this investment also matters. To build generational wealth and to help families, more Charlotteans need a pathway to homeownership, not just rental opportunities. As many have said before me, 25 percent is directed.

**Holly Flom, 2134 Mt. Isle Harbor Drive** said hi. Good evening, Council. My name is Holly Flom. Some people know me as Holly Hayes, and I'll get to that in a minute. I stand before you, not just as a 30-year resident of Charlotte, but as a passionate advocate for the animals in our community. I'm from District 2, by the way. In my role as a shelter volunteer and foster, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by our underfunded municipal shelter. As a radio personality here in Charlotte, I have shared these challenges with my audience on the air and social media, and I will continue to make the public very aware. For the 2025 Budget, you're proposing 10 new staff positions for Animal Services. That's a good start, but it's not enough. I'm here to ask you to take action on two critical requests that we have been begging for for over a year. First, to make Animal Services an independent city department providing it with autonomy and resources to effectively carry out its mission. Second, to allocate funding for a new adequately designed shelter that could accommodate the growing needs of our City and our community. The shelter was built 31 years ago when the population here was 440,000. We are now at what, a million. Thank you to Councilmember Brown for visiting our shelter and for responding to my email, very promptly by the way, and I look forward to seeing the rest of you there as well. Please do what's right and properly structure and fund Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Care and Control. Thank you.

**James Burke, 8810 Oakham Street, Huntersville** said good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. I've had the opportunity to speak in front of you before, and I appreciate it really much. I volunteer at the animal shelter, and I'm going to reiterate part of what you just heard. We want to thank you collectively for what you've done and the \$610,000 that is appropriated in the Budget for the 10 new positions. We appreciate that very much. Unfortunately, that is not enough. As was

mentioned, we need a new shelter. Charlotte is the 14<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest growing city in the country, and projections between now and the next census in 2030, are that Charlotte will be the fastest growing large city in the country. Obviously, these statistics speak to the fact that we need a new shelter. The one we have is antiquated. It does not take care of the needs of the community. It does not take care of the needs of the animals that we are charged with taking care of. While we appreciate everything that the Council has done, we look forward to your efforts to move forward with a new shelter. We also look forward to the opportunity to be an autonomous city department. It is time that we are no longer under CMPD. As I understand it, the Chief would prefer we not be, our Director would prefer we not be. So, if those two division leaders would prefer to be autonomous, it would seem to make sense that we should be autonomous. I will close with this. Proverbs 31:8 says, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute." Thank you.

**Cassandra Lillie, 3042 Matthews Indian Trail Road, Matthews** said good evening, everyone. My name is Cassandra Lillie, and thank you again for the Budget for a new vet and staff at the shelter. Like it was said, it's a start. I'm a veterinarian, and I currently work for the Humane Society of Union County. We see so many stray and sheltered fosters in our little clinic. Luckily, euthanasia doesn't happen often due to the caring hearts, and likely the fact that we're a smaller county. I would love for you to quickly imagine something with me. Imagine you're in the shelter and a healthy dog happily runs up to you as you approach the dog run with a leash. They think you're about to take them for a walk, but they don't know what you're really about to do. You're about to leash them up and take them to the back. They're on a leash wagging their tail, prancing as they walk with you. Eventually, you bring them behind a door, and someone holds them tightly as they are jabbed with a needle full of sedative. Slowly they start to collapse. This is not the outing they expected. They are basically paralyzed or dissociated. Now, imagine you're the vet who has to look at this healthy animal, not the first one you've ever seen, but hundredth or thousandth, and you have to suppress your emotions, because this must be done. You pull up another syringe of drugs and prepare to say goodbye. The injection goes into the healthy animal's vein, and you see the dog's chest stop expanding and contracting. You place your stethoscope on their chest and listen to the heartbeat slow and then stop. This once happy, healthy companion animal is now dead and must be cremated, all of this, because there is no room at the shelter. There are no funds to help advertise and advocate for those abandoned pets. These are some of the reasons that Friends of CMAS (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Services) has started this campaign for the shelter to have its own funding. We don't want healthy animals or compassionate veterinarians and other shelter workers having to be a part of this routine. We don't want this routine at all, and with your help we may never have to imagine this scenario again. Thank you.

**Caitlin Martin, 4047 Whipple Place** said Council, thank you for your time. My name is Caitlin Martin, and for the past two and a half years, I've dedicated myself to volunteering and fostering for the animal shelter. I've seen firsthand the [inaudible] by the animals, the staff and the public who often cannot get the help that they need. Before moving to Charlotte, I volunteered at another open admission municipal shelter, and the difference and conditions are stark. There, I felt staff, volunteers, and animals fared much better, because they were provided with adequate funding. I genuinely enjoyed being there, caring for the animals and helping the public. While I love being able to give back, the other sadness that I witness at our City animal shelter keeps me up at night. While we appreciate the City Manager's recommendation for additional staff, it's not enough. We still urgently need animal services to be an independent city department, and we need a new shelter that is designed for our growing city. This year alone, and less than five months in, 300 animals have been euthanized due to the lack of resources that we have. When the Budget was proposed, the City Manager titled Charlotte as a wonderful place to work, and indeed it is for many City employees, but as you have heard tonight, it does feel that many have been forgotten and this does include animal services. I encourage you to consider the importance of animal services, not just for the animals, but for the wellbeing of our City as a whole. Please make animal services an independent city department and fund a new shelter. Thank you.

**Sierra Mascilak, 5532 Alpine Lane** said I'm Sierra Mascilak. Nearly 300 dogs. Did you guys hear that? In five months, nearly 300 dogs. That's how many were euthanized this year alone due to lack of resources and space, and that number would be a hell of a lot higher if it weren't for all my fellow volunteers and foster parents who continuously step up, because our city continues to fail this department and fail these animals. If animals' lives don't matter to you, does the wellbeing of your City's employees matter to you? Can you even begin to imagine the jobs of the staff members that have to pick which dogs lose their lives, or the jobs of those who have to retrieve the dog from the kennel, watching them wag their tail excitedly, thinking they finally get to go play outside after possibly days of being cooped up, having to walk that dog down the hallway and onto the vet table, where they will have to look into the eyes of this unconditionally loving animal, trying to make them understand that it wasn't their fault? I feel more terrible for the staff that has to work in this environment, than I do the dogs losing their lives, and that says a lot, because I would do anything for these dogs. At least the dogs get to go somewhere hopefully better. Staff has to keep living this nightmare week after week after week. I've watched this cycle of trauma happen at the shelter for the past three years I volunteered there. We need a new shelter. We outgrew that shelter years ago, and this is beyond overdue. We need animal services to be designated as an independent city department. Although, we appreciate that the City is proposing to add 10 new staff positions for animal services, that is not enough. By the way, sitting here listening to all these other people talk, everything is directly correlated. Unaffordable housing means that people are having to drop their dogs off at the shelter's doors, because they have nowhere else to go. Please take action. Until then, we will continue to be here every single month, just like we have been for the past year. Thank you.

**Katie Ferraioli, 2724 Holt Street** said good evening. My name is Katie Ferraioli, and I'm a constituent living in District 1, and will be moving to District 6 in two weeks. I have worked in public health and behavioral health services since moving here in 2015. I currently volunteer extensively with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Care and Control, and I serve as a board member for the nonprofit Friends of CMAS, which seeks to support ACC (Animal Care and Control) and its lifesaving work. I want to start by thanking Council for the 10 new positions for ACC. This is an excellent starting point in providing necessary personnel, but it is not enough. For over a year, we have been here at every single meeting asking for the following two items. Number one, we need a new shelter. The shelter was built over 30 years ago and is no longer capable of supporting the population of the county. Expansion of the airport in that area will add noise pollution, harmful to both workers and animals alike. Number two, Animal Care and Control must become an independent city department. This will reduce red tape and ensure that the staff there can easily make recommendations and requests directly to the City Manager. I have spoken here before about the relationship between animal support services and mental health. This issue is so closely tied to the items like homelessness, food insecurity, healthcare infrastructure, and other items I know are top of mind to Council. I run the social media account for the Friends of CMAS nonprofit, and I am inundated daily by requests for help from families in need throughout the county. While at the shelter, I see staff and volunteers doing all within their power to save lives, but we are facing odds that are currently insurmountable due to lack of resources. City workers are tasked with walking dogs down the hallway to be euthanized and then shoveling their remains into the incinerators. The trauma of this work is undeniable, and yet staff and community members continue to show up in ways I find remarkable. Staff and volunteers are exhausted. We show up, but it is now your turn to support them. Previously, I voted for Mayor Lyles and Councilmember Anderson. I want to specifically thank Councilmember Anderson for your clear dedication to animal welfare. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said we're going to take a 10-minute break, so that everybody can regroup, and we'll be back after that. Thank you very much.

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The meeting was recessed at 7:56 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:08 p.m.



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**Mike Murphy, 307 Meadowbrook Road** said [inaudible] and back when I started, there weren't any bike lanes in Charlotte. Over the years, as the bike infrastructure has developed and the miles of bike lanes have increased, it's gotten easier and easier, but despite the greater connectivity and safety provided by the Charlotte Bicycle Plan, I think it's still a challenge for the average bike rider to ride recreationally in our City, especially if your destination is not Uptown. The good news is that within the last couple of years, a relatively direct route has opened up to the UNC campus from the NoDa neighborhood, which has good connectivity to the rest of northeast Charlotte. The new greenways at Eastway Recreation Center and Toby Creek have made this possible, and it will continue to improve when they extend the Toby Creek greenway to Orr Road and the Hidden Valley neighborhood. This new connectivity of the University to Charlotte, is an example of the success and the potential of the Charlotte Bicycle Plan. I believe that further development of bicycle infrastructure will encourage more people to get out of their cars, which are often stalled in traffic, and discover the rewards as I did of combining commuting and exercise. Thank you very much.

**Gerry Kingsley, 912 Anderson Street** said hi, my name is Gerry Kingsley, and I'm here also to advocate for the Sustain Charlotte's proposal to increase the funding for the bicycle program to \$10 million annually. I am advocating on behalf of two distinct groups. So, it's not just a small subset of people that are advocating for this. I represent the NoDa Neighborhood and Business Association. At our last neighborhood meeting, we brought this up for a vote, and the members voted to engage in this advocacy. The vote was unanimously in favor of supporting this Budget. We're a neighborhood of thousands of Charlotte residents, your constituents and voters. I also represent the Sierra Club, I'm on the North Carolina Chapters Executive Committee, where I serve as Vice Chair, and I also Chair the Central Piedmont Group, which is housed locally here in Charlotte. We also had a vote and voted to advocate for this. So, you'll be getting the letters from both of these groups on our behalf. Again, the same with the NoDa NBA (Neighborhood and Business Association), the Sierra Club has thousands of members in Charlotte. I guess the point that I want to make here that I would leave you with is that the advocacy and the enthusiasm for bicycle facilities, and the request to spend additional dollars on these facilities, is very widespread and comes from a very diverse set of people with different backgrounds. So, I urge you to add the fundings to this Budget. Just as an aside, I started commuting here, I moved here 25 years ago in District 4, and I did the opposite commute of the previous speaker. I commuted from University City into Uptown. Now, I've moved into NoDa, and I have a much shorter and easier commute, and I got an e-bike, which is a game changer, so I would urge that as well. I appreciate the change that has occurred over the last 25 years, so very thankful for that, but we're so close to the finish line, let's not stop now. Thank you very much.

**Steven Weyland, 3048 Cool Bridge Circle, Fort Mill, South Carolina** said hello, Mayor Lyles. Thank you very much, Council members. Thank you for the time. I am here on behalf of Sustain Charlotte, however, not from a transportation sense, but as an advocate for mental health support, as a business owner, a Duke Certified Health and Wellness Coach, also a part-time worker in the bicycle and hiking outfitter industry, and an avid cyclist who utilizes the roads and greenways in and around Charlotte, from my own mental health, and as a commuter. I have boots on the ground experience of interacting with many individuals desperately wanting to turn their lives around, not from handouts, but by positive lifestyle changes. One of the most economical ways to do this, is by providing more accessibility to the greenways through continued support of bike lanes. As those wanting to build self-esteem by taking ownership of healthy choices, individuals, many studies find, these choices can break vicious cycles into more virtuous cycles. I commend the City for the past efforts, but strongly urge robust funding to support these efforts. Thank you.

**Frank Devine, 3315 North Davidson Street** said hi, good evening. My name is Frank Devine. I'm currently serving as the Chair of Charlotte's Bicycle Advisory Committee, mouthful, that's why we always just call it the BACRES I'm here tonight to ask that the City properly fund the bicycle program to the tune of \$20 million per bond cycle. This is

not a new request. We sent a letter to City Manager and City Council on March 27, 2024, asking for such, and that's the same amount Sustain Charlotte is advocating for. Just some back-of-the-napkin math, the way we got to that \$20 million is, we're committed to build 10 miles of All Ages and Abilities bike lanes in the City of Charlotte per year, that was initially passed in 2017. Since that time, Charlotte's done it once, and that was just painted by [inaudible] that's not necessarily protected or something you'd feel comfortable riding with a kid, that's just a bike lane. So, if you want to get serious about our 2040 Mobility Plan and actually closing the gap of 100 miles to go, we need to actually fund 10 miles per year of all ages and abilities. That's what it's going to take. We hear everybody talking about the Budget concerns they have. Think how much of a relief it is going from two cars to one or even one car to going to car free in the City of Charlotte. That's another \$10,000, \$20,000 a year that people could have back. Then, if we look at it, bike lanes make streets safer for everybody. So, when it comes to Vision Zero, which we're going the wrong direction, if you haven't noticed. We're seeing more deaths on the road. Bike lanes make it safer for everybody, whether you're driving, walking, rollerblading, however you choose to get around. Bike lanes are the one piece of infrastructure that makes it safer for everybody. With that being said, we're still choosing to spend 25 percent more on road widening projects in the City of Charlotte per year. If one more lane was a legitimate solution, the cities of Atlanta and Los Angeles would be lovely to drive in. I assure you they're not. So, when it comes down to, we have a limited budget, we have the largest transportation bond ever proposed in the City of Charlotte, and you're keeping bike program funding flat. With the inflation, you're basically spending less on bikes, with the biggest transportation bond you've ever had. Thank you.

**Makayla Binter, 5045 Nestling Spring Street** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, City Manager Jones and City Council people. My name is Makayla Binter and I'm speaking in support of, and the necessity for, continued arts and culture funding in Charlotte. As a local artist and full-time nonprofit employee of Charlotte is Creative, I am a product of the power that is funding the arts. In 2020, I began my journey of becoming a full-time artist, and with the continued support funding and amplification of My Creative Community, I have received my first mural and my first grant from Charlotte is Creative, my first event funded and supported by Davita Galloway, and participated in my first group show, Local/Street, curated by Carla Aaron-Lopez, at the Mint Museum. It was my first experience in a museum, and it was not my last. Within the last four years, I've had my work in several museums, Uptown painted and installed works around Charlotte, organized events for the Mint, and along Beatties Ford Road, across our City developed relationships with entities like Park and Rec, the Carolina Panthers, the Charlotte Hornets, our local arts, institutions and organizations, and I did not do it by myself. Funding our arts community is funding artists like myself. It is a creative community, both institutional, grassroots, that have provided the framework for our creative culture in Charlotte to develop into an eclectic fabric of experiences, ages, occupations, and abilities that make our city better. Arts funding provides experiences and opportunities to our greater city and aid in the expression of what it is to be a Charlottean. In funding our arts, you are funding our culture. We are the food, the art, the live music, the bars, the breweries, the photo ops, and theatre. Everyone is creative, because Charlotte is creative, and everyone benefits from the funding of arts and culture in Charlotte. Thank you.

**Clayton Sealey, 3501 Benard Avenue** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, Council and City Staff. I'm Clayton Sealey, the Mint Museum's Marketing Director, and a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commissioner. I'm stepping in today for Todd, our CEO, as well as Ruby Britt-Height, our Director of Community Relations and a Co-Leader of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility at the Mint Museum, where she's been for 16 years. She's a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Arts Commission and helped open this building that we're in today, as a City staffer. These are her words, and I echo them wholeheartedly, "As a leader of The Mint's Community Program, I thank you for supporting our efforts and welcoming hundreds of thousands of students, visitors, and families." Our educational programs include tours, where students engage deeply with art, practicing mindfulness and creativity. We provide a vital third place, a safe and welcoming space, for all visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Our

STAR (Student Artist) Gallery showcases student artwork from around the City, giving young artists a platform to celebrate their talents. This Sunday, we host the 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District High School Art Competition finalists. We'd love for you to join us. During COVID-19, we created over 20,000 free art kits for families and continue to deliver joy to students and families today. Our Grier Heights Youth Arts Program celebrates 20 years this fall, and has very personally impacted 500 students through art, history, creative classes, fostering self-awareness and community pride. We host the Annual African Brazilian Festival with UNC Charlotte, providing cultural advanced education. Our by-monthly Mint 2 Move Cultural Dance Night unites hundreds through dance. Art is a catalyst for positive change. Your support helps us sustain impactful art education, fostering Charlotte's growth, and we bring an estimated \$50 million of economic impact.

**James Meena, 1600 Elizabeth Avenue** said good evening. I'm James Meena. I'm the Director and Principal Conductor of Opera Carolina. I have been in this community 25 years, and one of the wonderful things that drew me to move, well, escape from Cleveland to Charlotte, was the fact that this cultural community is a cultural community. You may have noticed I was sitting up with my colleagues Doug Singleton and Todd Herman, and I've seen my friends, Catherine Horne and Terri White. That is unusual, just as Charlotte is unusual. We are unusual, because we work together for the benefit of the entire community, and art is not a luxury, it's a necessity if we want to have a complete community. So, on behalf of the 70,000 plus young people and adults and artists who Opera Carolina interfaces with every year, we completely support this marvelous Budget, because in our thinking, this Budget is not about either/or. It is about the wholistic health of this community, and I thank you for your service and I thank my colleagues, and I thank, as a citizen, all the wonderful people who have been here advocating for those things that they believe in. Thank you so very much.

**Tim Miner, 5639 Rebel Drive** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, City Manager Jones and honorable members of the City Council. I'm Tim Miner, Co-Founder of Charlotte is Creative. A few months ago, it was my honor to be here with my colleagues from the Mint Museum and our mutual partner, Carla Aaron-Lopez, to thank you for supporting the Infusion Fund and the Opportunity Fund, whose monies made it possible to execute the Local/Street installation at The Mint Uptown, featuring the work of nearly 100 creatives. That exhibition was significant, because it featured the original work of local visual artists on the walls of The Mint, but also because it was designed to help them find new markets and build their businesses, their businesses. Like Carla, our work at Charlotte is Creative, is to help emerging and under-resourced creators and makers, see themselves as businesses and be supported as small business owners. They are creative entrepreneurs, and when you invest in the arts, you are investing in jobs. That's an idea that The Mint has championed too, and I urge you to approve the \$11 million in the proposed arts funding in your packets tonight. Over the years, The Mint has made considerable efforts to partner with dozens of artists like Carla, Davita Galloway, Irisol Gonzalez, [INAUDIBLE], and organizations like Charlotte is Creative, BlkMrkt Charlotte, and so many others, to elevate the work of local creatives. They didn't have to do that, but they looked beyond their own walls and shared resources with others for a mutual benefit, and they did this, because it was good for everyone. It lifted everyone. I hope that the proposed funds will also expand into arts organizations and cultural organizations like the Museum of History, who've not received operational funding like that before, and that those funds continue to create opportunities for independent creatives. Our city's creatives and cultural nonprofits are building Charlotte's reputation as a destination for innovation and art, as well as business. Companies move here, grow here, hire here, but getting them here is only half the battle, keeping their employees and keeping them happy here, and arts and culture play a pivotal role in that. They come here looking for a culture of culture, and that takes money. Thank you very much.

**Ayisha Cravotta, 2035 Shenandoah Avenue** said good evening, my name is Ayisha McMillan Cravotta, and I'm the Academy Director at Charlotte Ballet. I moved to Charlotte in 2002 from Houston, Texas, to work as an artist for North Carolina Dance Theatre. Even after I retired from the stage in 2007, I've remained on staff at Charlotte

Ballet, and for 22 years have enjoyed a front-row perspective on the powerful impact of arts and culture throughout my adopted home City of Charlotte. As the Academy Director at Charlotte Ballet, I see our students from all over the City thrive in the midst of their arts, education and training. The ballet operates in communities throughout the City, in K12 school programs, and in recreation centers throughout the City, as we partner with the County. Over the course of a year, Charlotte Ballet underwrites over one-quarter of a million dollars in scholarships for our students. It's been my joy to see our students go on to work as Artists around the globe. Whether they become professional dancers, choreographers, or physical therapists, or emergency medical technicians, wherever our graduates of the ballet go, they represent Charlotte and the wealth of support and opportunity they received here. In the art sector, that is workforce development. Charlotte's arts and culture sector earns this investment, and we thank you so much for this, and we return it to our community every day in the form of education, jobs like mine, and nationally recognized identity. Thank you for your time today. Thank you so much for your investment.

**Catherine Horne, 301 North Tryon Street** said good evening. I'm Catherine Horne, President and CEO of Discovery Place, and as well as the Charlotte Museum of Nature. Madam Mayor, Mr. City Manager, members of Council, thank you so much for this opportunity to speak to you this evening. I am speaking in support of this very generous commitment that City Council and the City Administration has committed in the Budget for this coming year to help stabilize and utilize the work of the arts and science sector. I believe I might be the lone science representative this evening, and of course, we are largely outnumbered by our arts friends, in terms of institutions, but let me tell you that no one serves the large number of Charlotteans and tourists to Charlotte quite like Discovery Place does, with more than three-quarters of a million visitors each year, and that includes half of those being adults, tax paying citizens, as well as the youth who are seeking to find their futures. We are so thrilled that we are able to, in many ways, help them find a passion in science, technology, engineering and math. Nowhere is that more close to my heart and the hearts of our team, than in the youth development programs that we provide to CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) through afterschool programs, as well as, of course, the programs that they have during the school day through outreach and field trips. That work helps students find their futures, and we want them to find them in Uptown Charlotte, and that is one of the greatest things about bringing young people, whether it be on field trips or with family settings, to come to the center of our City and see the magic that unfolds and helps them see in their futures. Thank you.

**Carla Aaron-Lopez, 1409 Fugue Court** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, City Manager, Mr. Jones, and all of City Council. We just recently spoke with each other and now here we are again, and based on today's conversations, I would like to start off with this statement. Art is not a hobby, art is my job, and I'm here to continue my advocacy on behalf of my continued partnership with The Mint Museum. The Mint Museum and Charlotte is Creative gave me the opportunity to conquer a fear, and I titled it Local/Street, and yes, I have given over 100 artists an opportunity to extend their careers, but based on the conversations I've heard last night, I must let you know that I am a native of Charlotte. I am a CMS Teacher, and I cannot afford to live anywhere in Charlotte. I am no different than the service workers before me, yet I have no intention of moving away from home. For three years, my partnerships with The Mint Museum, Charlotte is Creative, BlkMrkt Charlotte and Dupp & Swat, we have become the cultural producers and the culture identifiers for those out of town. People do not come to Charlotte to visit banks. Who does that? Banks don't have visitor shops with little knick-knacks and things to cherish the memories of their experiences. People do come for our sports teams, and before they walk into BOA (Bank of America), before they go to Spectrum, before they attend Charlotte FC (Football Clubs) Clubs, they are walking downtown, contributing to our local economies and participating in the exhibitions we are pulling off on the ground. We are creating Charlotte's identity on the ground, adding to what old Black Charlotte has created as a native. I would appreciate you to think wisely and vote properly, unanimously, in support of The Mint Museum. I am King Carla signing off. Good night.

**Davita Galloway, 1824 Statesville Avenue, Suite 105** said thank you, Council, Davita Galloway. I'm an entrepreneur creating and providing opportunities for other artsy folk via Dupp & Swat and Hugh House by any means, and I do mean by any means. When asked to express support for The Mint Museum and arts funding, my reply was simply, "Whatever you need." You see, I felt happily and dutifully obligated to return what has been provided, and honestly given to me, throughout our years in collaborating, whatever I needed. In working with The Mint Museum, I continuously feel seen, heard, humanized and provided opportunity, space and platform to dream, create and continue to make impacts in community, no matter how crazy or far-fetched the idea. When I say community, yes, I mean black people, but I also mean all artists, creators, art enthusiasts and novices. You see, we've had quite a few firsts at The Mint. Take the Kiki Ball one on one, for example, where there was record-breaking numbers in attendance, and the queer community was celebrated and given space to safely and genuinely express themselves, too bad that can't be seen everywhere in Charlotte, or take adornMINT, my current exhibit at The Mint Museum, where 11 of the 13 exhibiting artists are newbies, new to the exhibition work, clearly not in creating and arting. They, just like so many, needed the chance, opportunity, and space. The Mint Museum provided them that. When I say community, yes, I mean black people. I also mean individuals of every race and ethnicity, as well as every socioeconomic status. When I say community, I mean everyone, because art is for everyone. When you enter the Uptown location, that's what you see highlighted in bold color. Art is for everyone, and it's not to check a box or to look cool, it's their why and their how, and it's how lives are being changed, it's how my life was changed. My name is Davita Galloway. Thank you.

**Kevin Patterson, 7600 Edgeworth Court** said good afternoon. I think I'll go first and then follow up with Cyndee, if you don't mind. Mayor Lyles, Mayor Pro Tem, Council persons, and of course, City Manager, I'm Kevin Patterson. As you all know, along with my sister there, Cyndee Patterson, we were appointed as Co-Chair of the Arts and Culture Advisory Board that you put in place. I'm not going to bore you with the cultural plan that you've already seen. You know what's on the table in terms of the \$11 million. First of all, I'm not an artist, so I'm going to say that straight. I'm at awe when I hear the artists, see the artists, see their passion, and see the things that they do. Obviously, I want you to support these dollars, but I want to take it from a different perspective, so if you just give me a couple of minutes to do that. We heard about affordable housing needs. We've heard about other needs in this community. They are all very, very important. One of the things I love about this arts campaign, is it can change the trajectory of Charlotte, and what I mean by that, from an economic development point, the monies that you put in the arts will more than tenfold return to you in terms of economic development. What I mean by that, and it was mentioned earlier, it'll bring corporations, they will stay here when they have their employees see an opportunity to enjoy this community that they may not have known before. You will see downtown businesses thrive when the arts community thrives. You have buildings that the City pays for when they're full of artists. It's not just the artists that are there, but it is citizens throughout this community. When you look at the cultural plan and look at the diversity elements within the plan, it talks about making arts and culture for everybody, and when you do that, you make a difference in this community.

**Cyndee Patterson, 1401 Scotland Avenue** said thanks, Kevin. Thank you all for having us. First, I want to thank the City Manager and the Mayor and the Council for appointing this group of people. We've been together for three years. We started in the fall of 2021 to do a strategic plan, and also, through increased funding by both the City and the private sector, we were able to have more money into the system, substantial increases, particularly to, what we call Alala groups, and others. We've been able to somewhat stabilize the arts in Charlotte and open the door for the kind of things that Carla and Jen are going to speak to about, and others, because that was a little touch and go, but we have significantly increased the funding to that, and to grassroots organizations. I can't thank the committee that worked on this enough. It's been a long haul, a bit of a slog. There are eight recommendations in the report, you've seen it, but the first three are critical. Funding, to get us to a place where the arts are sustainable in Charlotte and they have the opportunity to grow, that we can lean in again on arts education, that we can lean in on smaller organizations and grassroots, we can go into

neighborhoods. There's just so much that could be done. Secondly, that growth, to create the growth that brings other artists to Charlotte. We're becoming a place that artists want to come to. That's a very different world than it was a long time ago, or even 20 years ago. So, you've made that possible by putting this committee in place. We've done our work. Some of us are saying, "Okay, we're getting short timers," as we say, but this is the last piece of it, and all the pieces are there. If the funding's there, we've put together a how the governance structure will work. The third priority of the eight is, how will equity work long term? How will we measure that? So, that's critical. Thank you very much.

**Jen Sudul Edwards, 500 South Tryon Street** said I am Jen Sudul Edwards. I'm the Chief Curator and Curator of Contemporary Art at The Mint Museum, and I want to thank Mayor Lyles, our City Manager Jones, and the rest of the Council members, for yes, as Cyndee Patterson mentioned, pushing forward this really bold funding plan for the arts in Charlotte. I wanted to come here today, and also just let you know how important it is for our large cultural institutions, to not only receive the funding that we need to do our jobs, and I am so grateful to Davita and Carla and Tim and Makayla, for outlining the way that The Mint specifically commits to our Charlotte community, to help them do their jobs. I also wanted to mention how important it is for us to have a commitment that's longer than just a year, to think about the long-term funding that we need to know is in place, so that we can commit to these artists, commit to these larger projects that need a two, three, four-year runway. So, not just one year, but knowing that we will be secure for at least two to three years to come. So, as my fellow artists talked about, The Mint has been committed to bringing their work into the museum spaces to show alongside more internationally recognizable names, like Annie Leibovitz, Anna Sui, and Pablo Picasso. When The Mint had the Picasso exhibition last year, we welcomed an incredible number of people. Throughout that year, we had 98 of North Carolina's 100 counties represented in the Museum. All 50 states made an appearance and 48 different countries. When people came to see Picasso Landscapes, they also saw an exhibition devoted to Romare Bearden in conversation with Picasso, and they saw 10 of Charlotte's Mirrorless on view, not only in The Mint Museum, but throughout the City. This was a huge step for us to equate this international artist with our locals. Thank you so much.

**Terri White, 3500 Shamrock Drive** said good evening, all. My name is Terri White, President and CEO of the Charlotte Museum of History. I want to thank you for the \$11 million that you have allocated for the arts, but gently remind you, you forgot us, so we are asking here tonight to be included. In the last year and a half since I have been President of CMH (Charlotte Museum of History), we have undergone a massive cultural and operational change to move away from the isolationists and elitist past that we had, to become an inclusive, fiscally responsible institution that we are today. We are the City's oldest history museum with roots at our site going back to the 1940s. We take care of the county's oldest home, which turns 250 this fall. We are mere weeks away, thank God, from reopening the Historic Salem School to the public. We have partnered with local organizations of all sizes to provide engaging and innovative programs and exhibits, and we do this on shoestring budgets and prayers. Every metric the museum can directly control has improved substantially. Our overall income is up 23 percent from last year. Contributing income is double what it was in Fiscal Year 2023, and our fundraisers are more productive than ever. However, we make these improvements at the bottom of a hole that decades of neglect and divestment have left us in. We are asking for a one-time infusion of cash to help us level set once and for all from our past debts, and to be included in the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget, and each year moving forward, with an annual allotment of resources to help us maintain our eight-acre campus. Since I've taken the helm, Charlotte Museum of History has spent more than \$3.2 million on operations, exhibits and programs, 73 percent of which went right back into the local economy. Our small business spending is up 189 percent, and roughly one-third of that is spent with woman and minority-owned companies. We're doing this by robbing Peter to pay Paul, and we can longer wait to patiently wait until next year. Thank you.

**Micah Belong, 1344 Green Oaks Lane** said my name is Micah Belong, and I'm a minister of the gospel to those on the outside. The fish have the sea, and the birds have the trees, but the son of man has no place to lay his head. Jesus Christ was a homeless man. Now, I've been thinking a lot about something that Councilmember Bokhari said last time, that we shouldn't be throwing good money after bad, when he dismissed the idea that we should fund affordable housing. Well, your government came out and did these listening sessions, and they admitted that every time we invest in affordable housing, the last couple times we've done it, we put \$50 million there, and we've been able to build units at about \$8,000 every time. You know how much that is equivalent to? One night in jail in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg system. We can put permanent housing permanently in our community for the same cost as one night in prison. So, why are we throwing good money after bad by continually funding the police instead of the things that actually solve the crimes, housing, in the first place? I am so grateful that you have put \$100 million toward affordable housing, and you know what? In 19 years, we will have built enough affordable housing to get up to where we need it today, 19 years. We need a billion dollars in affordable housing, not \$100 million. A billion is what your government said we needed to build in the City to actually make things affordable. That sounds like a really big number until you think about the fact that's 40 percent of the budget of an ineffective police force, that doesn't actually solve the crimes, because last time you came here and you chose a method that every expert in this room told you was the bad idea. They told you it was a silly idea. They told you it was a stupid idea, and we chose that, because cruelty mattered more. We thought cruelty could keep away the people, just like the government thought they could do with Jesus Christ. Instead, I am offering you to join smart and kind and real solutions. Put money in affordable housing. Put a billion dollars into affordable housing to make Charlotte a place that this little girl can grow up in.

**Kenneth Robinson, 1635 Waybridge Lane** said I am Kenny Robinson, Founder and Executive Director of Freedom Fighting Missionaries. I've got my notes here today. I don't normally bring any notes, but I don't want to misinterpret anything. Due to the unstable living conditions, it is difficult to obtain an exact count of the type of temporary housing our McKinney-Vento identified families live in. So, I am here for The People's Budget, Freedom Fighting Missionaries, and the 5,200 invisible children currently homeless in the Mecklenburg County school systems today. Well, last year, McKinney-Vento served 4,815 students. The 2022, 2023 data reported that 502 children lived in shelters, 1,117 lived in hotel/motels, 65 were unsheltered, 3,131 lived doubled up, meaning living with others. There were 311 students unaccompanied with no caregiver whatsoever. Most families and youth experience the combination of these arrangements throughout the year. The racial makeup of our families is, African American 3,707, White 193, Hispanic 674, multi-racial 193, other race 43. The needs in our district are obviously great, as evidenced by the number of students and families experiencing a housing crisis. Those numbers represent 76.9 percent of homeless children in CMS are black, 4 percent are white, 75 percent of the people in a detention center are black, 13 percent are white. Homeless individuals consistently make up 78 percent of black people, and 97 percent of the people that our organization serves are black, 70 percent of FFM (Federally-Facilitated Marketplace) clients are single woman with two or more children. That was the fastest two minutes I've seen ever.

**Justin Harlow, 16546 Bastille Drive** good evening, Mayor, Council, City Manager. Thanks for the opportunity. I'm Justin Harlow. Since November 2021, I've had the pleasure, along with Kim Graham, to Co-Chair your appointed 15-member Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization Commission, also known as the NEST Commission. In those two and a half years, we've worked hard to try to meet your charge of recommending specific anti-displacement strategies to protect residents at risk of displacement. Reporting quarterly to Dr. Watlington's Committee Housing Safety and Community, I'm here to say that the NEST Commission is thankful to this Council and previous Councils for taking our recommendations and putting them into the Budget and programmatic use investments over the past two cycles. We hope the same this year. Last summer, this Council adopted our recommended anti-displacement strategy, which led to a subsequent \$6 million in programmatic investments, including \$1 million into acquisition rehab and resale programs, \$1 million in accessory dwelling units,

support and construction, a double down into House Charlotte and House Charlotte Plus, and \$2 million invested to support rehab and NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) projects, specifically for small landlords. In this Budget, we commend you, Mr. Manager. The NEST Commission, along with many other advocacy groups, as you've heard, are in support of \$100 million Housing Bond proposal and we're confident that the community in Charlotte, this November 2024, will support them. We also hope that future debt capacity can support it as well. We are recommending a \$25 million carve-out for specific anti-displacement initiatives and strategies. Lastly, we appreciate the inclusion of supporting our NEST recommendation to increase the Transit-Oriented Development fee-in-lieu rate as a part of the affordable housing bonus program. Since 2019, that program has generated \$17 million, and we believe that this can be an ongoing bucket for a permanent anti-displacement fund. Overall, we're encouraged by the City Council's reception to our recommendations, and we hope that you adopt this Budget with housing and anti-displacement line items as proposed.

**Ismaail Qaiyim, 4938 Central Avenue** said hello everybody. So, I just want to add one quick point to what Mr. Harlow said. Every single recommendation made by NEST Commission was not adopted. The specific recommendation that the City of Charlotte fund eviction defense and diversion, was not adopted. In fact, my understanding is that there's some type of hostility towards the idea that people who are facing eviction should have legal representation. Earlier, we heard from a young lady, who's from the Charlotte Hills Mobile Home Park. I will disclose that I am an attorney, and I represent tenants in private practice, and I've just settled a case with a tenant at that specific mobile home park. I can tell you, that if the tenants at that mobile home park, many of whom are Spanish speaking and Latino, have representation, there's a much less likelihood that they'll be displaced. I'm saying that as a person, can't talk about the settlement, but has seen the interworking's of Charlotte Hills Mobile Home Park. Legal defense keeps people, particularly black people, black woman, housed. It is a direct form of intervention. It's no different than the Housing Trust Fund. It's no different than Rental Assistance. It's no different than building affordable housing. There's no reason for it to be separated. There's no reason for it to not be included in the Budget, and I say that as a person that sits on the Board of the West Side Community Land Trust. I say that as a person that believes in building cooperative housing. I say that as a person that is committed to affordable housing. However, property rights are enshrined here and are enforced by the law, and what that means is that oftentimes an eviction is the thing that stops somebody from being able to pursue upward economic mobility and opportunities for homeownership. Many of you voted to criminalize homelessness awhile back ago, and what we're here today to say, is that you have an opportunity to enact a measure that we know, through tried-and-true methods, will keep people housed, 85 percent success rate for legal aid when representing tenants. We have more evictions being filed every day as a direct result of our growth here in Charlotte, and I'm asking you to do the right thing, because it's in your power. Thank you.

**Ricky Woods, 4725 Kirkgard Trail** said good evening, Mayor Lyes, City Manager Jones and members of the City Council. Tagline for Budget 2025 says, "Advancing opportunities for all." However, the current Budget proposal places low-wealth property owners at risk of losing their homes because of taxes or affordability. Whereas I applaud the increase in investment in public safety, it will have very little real impact until our court systems are funded, and the District Attorney has what he needs to enforce the law, a matter for state government. Those who put themselves in harm's way, should not see the persons that they arrest over and over again, endangering public safety and law enforcement, a case that Chief Jennings made just recently. However, this Budget is more than public safety. It increases art funding, comes with an added tax. As a member of the City appointed Infusion Fund that made funding decisions for the arts over the last three years, I oppose this recommendation. Again, low-wealth property owners should not be forced to fund the initiative, whereas actual operations of funding was still in question, after funds were withheld from Arts and Science Council, and there is no commitment to equity in the current funding model. The Budget includes additional funds for the Housing Trust Fund, which provides opportunities, mostly for rental units and not homeownership, yet the tax increase puts in danger those who currently own their own homes. Last year, the property revals sent



almost all of those homes over the average cost used to talk with media and the public, of \$350,000, because of location in the Crescent, those values exceed \$400,000 and beyond. We're still waiting for the tax increase from the school bonds passed last year, and the Council is pondering a possible tax increase for transit in the near future.

**Jerome Wagner, 110 Summerlake Drive, SW, Concord** said good evening and thank you for this opportunity to address you. My name is Jerome Wagner. I'm the lead organizer of 350 Charlotte, that is a climate change focused advocacy group. I also convene the SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan) Accountability Committee for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Climate Leaders. Tonight, I'm speaking as an individual. I'll be addressing the proposed Budget from the perspective of environmental sustainability, energy use, and climate change mitigation. Kudos to the Sustainability staff, and the City's executives relative to your national recognitions and rankings. Kudos also for securing the South Davidson Solar Energy Generation Project, especially in view of the collapse of the Olin Creek opportunity, and kudos to City Council for approving that project, and lastly, kudos for securing additional support from the Bloomberg Climate Cities Initiative. In his presentation of this Budget to this Council, City Manager Jones commented that sustainability and resiliency are now built into the fabric of the City's operations. This is increasingly evident, as is shown in the tabulation for SEAP specific spending shown on page 288. It shows embedded staff in both CATS and the Aviation Operation. It also totals almost \$50 million for Fiscal Year 2025, for SEAP-related features. I note that that's just one percent or so of the City's overall Budget, and about one-tenth of the public safety allowance in the Budget but is still a significant level of spending. I note that there's also one additional head count in the current forecast for the sustainability office, that being for an additional Energy Coordinator. For that, I thank you. We join the City in looking forward to the securing of the Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant, to be applied for solarization and other energy efficiency improvements. Good day.

**Tara Peele, 1640 Parson Street** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, City Manager Jones, and Council members. My name is Tara Peele, and I work with Housing Collaborative of Charlotte nonprofit, that makes affordable housing easier to navigate for people who are experiencing, or at risk, of homelessness. I'm here tonight to thank you for considering adding Housing Collaborative as a City financial partner, and to share a bit about our work. Housing Collaborative helps people overcome barriers to housing by justice system involvement, prior evictions, or use of a rental subsidy. We do this by removing financial barriers to housing, like application fees and deposits, and by building relationships with housing providers to make it easier to work with rental subsidies. We believe that people with lived experience are the most effective in helping others overcome barriers to housing. Over 25 percent of our team members have experienced incarceration, homelessness, or domestic violence, and they're using their journeys to help others. The households Housing Collaborative assists are referred to us by amazing community partners, like Roof Above, Safe Alliance, and Freedom Fighting Missionaries. Over the last year, through the support of the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and private funders, we've helped 329 households, including 388 adults and 362 children to secure permanent housing, including 60 households displaced from J.T. Williams Apartments, the Econo Lodge, Economy Inn, and Speedway Inn. We provided security deposit assistance to over 350 households, coordinated over 1,080 housing inspections to help voucher holders move into housing faster. We administered rental subsidies for over 200 households. We added 80 new housing provider partners willing to accept households we refer, and we checked in with our housing provider partners over 1,400 times to support housing retention. Becoming a City financial partner will assure we're able to help even more households next year. We thank you so much for your support of Housing Collaborative and your investment in housing through the increase in the Housing Bond, and investments in preservation through the NOAH housing program. Thank you very much.

**Jimmy Vasiliou, 1312 Woodward Avenue** said hello. My name is Jimmy Vasiliou, and I'm a member of the Housing Justice Coalition. I'm here tonight to ask you to include a Budget line item of \$1.8 million for Right to Counsel or Eviction Defense, in order to match the county's proposed \$1.8 million that they'll be partnering with legal aid to

provide. I also would like to ask you to heed the call of the public workers of UE150, to include a \$25 an hour minimum wage, daily overtime, a six percent raise, a four percent 401K contribution, and ultimately a Workers Bill of Rights for them. While the City has continually moved towards policies that aim at building more housing, the cost of housing continually climbs, as economic development through tax incentives and concessions to corporations, takes priority. These giveaways have advanced Charlotte's position as the largest metro area in North Carolina, which has been named by CNBC as the number one state for business, but what about the workers, specifically the workers of Charlotte? Workers have to deal with a completely defanged NC (North Carolina) Division of Occupational Health and Safety, which is understaffed and unable to deal with the hazards that workers face as exemplified by the scaffolding collapse off of Morehead and the five-alarm fire at a building site in South Park last year. Both incidents cost workers their lives. Workers have to figure out how to put food on the table in an environment where higher prices are eating into the incomes due to profit-driven inflation, and finally workers in Charlotte increasingly have to worry about whether or not they have a roof over their head. According to the 2023 State of Housing Instability and Homelessness Report, 48 percent of renter households are paying more than 30 percent of their monthly income towards housing costs. This is a 46 percent increase since 2012. This housing insecurity, along with the other heightened costs of living without an increase in pay, often forces workers to live in precarious situations. These conditions have led to a 10 percent increase in the amount of evictions granted since 2019. Many workers are being pushed out due to rising rents. Support Right to Counsel. Thank you.

**Apryl Lewis, 1026 Jay Street** said alright, good evening, City Council members. My name is Apryl Lewis, and I'm a Housing Justice Organizer here in Charlotte. I stand before you today to advocate for the thousands of residents in our City who are facing the threat of eviction and the devastating consequences that come with it. I want to bring your attention to a specific case that highlights the urgent need for Right to Counsel in our City. At Randolph Hills, an apartment complex in Grier Heights, residents are being forced to pay back rent as far back as 2019 due to incompetence and negligence of the office staff. These hardworking individuals and families are now facing the possibility of losing their home, because of the mistakes that were not their own. This is just one example of the many struggles our residents face when it comes to housing instability. By allocating \$1.8 million in the Fiscal 2025 Budget for Right to Counsel and Eviction Defense, you can provide essential legal support to those who are at risk of losing their homes, including the residents of Randolph Hills. This funding would match the County's proposed contributions, demonstrating a uniting front in the fight against housing instability. Cities like Detroit, Kansas City and Cleveland have already implemented Right to Counsel programs and these results speak for themselves. With success rates of over 80 percent, these programs have helped tenants maintain their housing or negotiate settlements with their landlords. By keeping residents housed, we can reduce the population relying on shelter services, saving our local government money in the long run. The City has the means to fund Right to Counsel, with over \$5 million in federal ARPA funds earmarked for general anti-displacement costs, and over \$2.58 million in the 2025 proposed Budget of PAYGO (Pay As You GO) funding, including \$1 million listed as support public/private partnerships to end and prevent homelessness. We have the resources to make this crucial investment in our community's wellbeing. I have seen firsthand the devastating impact of evictions on our community. I have witnessed tears, the heartache, and the desperation of those who are fighting to keep a roof over their heads. By providing Right to Counsel, you can give these individuals and families a fighting chance to stay in their homes and maintain their dignity and build a better future for themselves. I would also like to remind you that evictions.

**Maureen Gilewski, 7518 Linda Lake Drive** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, Manager Jones and members of the Council. I'm Maureen Gilewski. I'm a resident of East Charlotte and a very dedicated East Charlotte advocate. I'm here tonight really to talk about what's missing from the Budget, and that is the continued investment in the completion of the Central, Kilborne and Norland CNIP (Comprehensive Neighborhood Improvement Program). So, that actually originated from bonds that came out and were

voted for in November of 2014. So, this is for sidewalks. It's for protected bike lanes. It's for improved safety at the intersection of Central and Kilborne and Norland. So, this has been a long-awaited project for the community, and it's been, we're looking at 75 plus years, of aging infrastructure in this area. I have been advocating for this East Charlotte connectivity as well as the historic site for gathering for the past 12 years. The project is incomplete. A project that is 10 years behind, while new projects are still being considered, shows a concerning lack of dedication to the East Charlotte community. Our community and its people, we really do deserve some transparent communication. Thank you.

**Tonya Cowans, 4910 Water Oak Road** said good evening. My name is Tonya Cowans and I'm a survivor of an unjust eviction. We do not normally associate surviving with a process. In fact, you really do. The place that was my home became my prison. My slumlord wanted more money, but I wanted heat, a hot shower, and roof that did not leak. In turn, my slumlord punished me for my needs with displacement. I urge you to consider the addition to the Budget that reflects our commitment to justice and fairness. The implementation of a Right to Counsel Eviction Protection Program. As we confront the sobering reality of rising eviction rates within our community, providing legal representation to the tenants facing eviction is not just a moral imperative, but a strategic investment in the wellbeing of our City. By ensuring access to legal aid, we empower vulnerable individuals and families to navigate the complexities of the eviction process. Let us not miss the mark with the opportunity to uphold the principles of equity and justice, and setting a precedent for compassion and solidarity in Charlotte. Implementing a Right to Counsel yields several significant benefits, legal equity, prevention of homelessness, financial stability, public health, and wellbeing. It's a cost savings, which is identified as a national best practice, and is in practice in Winston-Salem. Fair housing practices, community stability, and resilience. In summary, adding a Right to Counsel for Charlotte citizens facing eviction, not only upholds principles of justice and fairness, but also yields tangible social.

**Nolan Dahm, 3910 Briarhill Drive** said thank you to Mayor Lyles and Council. My name is Nolan Dahm, and I'm the Programs and Exhibits Manager at the Charlotte Museum of History. I live and work in District 1. I'm here to speak about the proposed arts and culture funding budget for this year, and specifically, I'm here to request that you increase that budget to more than \$11 million that is currently allocated. As my boss, Terri, mentioned earlier, the Charlotte Museum of History does not receive a single dollar in regular public funding, despite being the City's namesake history institution, and frequently hosting events for City officials in our space. Therefore, we are asking for sustained funding for operational support, and an additional one-time infusion to help us resolve this history of underinvestment. Our funding ask is the same or similar to other history institutions in the City, and as far as we are aware, we are the only major history institution in the City that does not receive public funding. We're located in East Charlotte off of Shamrock Road, one of the City's Corridors of Opportunity, and we take that very seriously. Our museum is host to the annual African American Heritage Festival, the City's largest. We just hosted the City's largest Earth Day Festival, and we're planning the City's largest Latin American Celebration this fall as well. Each of those events sees over a thousand people at our museum, and we see tens of thousands more at our programs and events. In addition, we're a key educational space in the City. Our campus is located on the Historic Alexander Home site, the oldest standing home in the County, the newly renovated Siloam School, which will be the only place in the City to learn about the history of Rosenwald Schools and school segregation. In other words, there is no better place in Charlotte to learn about the City's history, the good and the bad. You've already heard from many people tonight, many speakers, about the history of urban renewal, redlining and underinvestment that led to many of our City's challenges. Where better place to learn about that than at the Charlotte Museum of History. Without understanding this past, we cannot build a better future. To be clear, this is not a selfish ask. As Terri said, we invest almost every single dollar that we get back into our community through contracting with local businesses, educating local students, paying our staff for their hard work. We know that you all understand the importance of arts and culture investment, and we hope you'll consider funding the art museum, like the other museums.

**Maribel McBeath, 309 South Cloudman Street** said hi Mayor and hi all Council people. My name is Maribel McBeath. I'm a cabin cleaner at the Charlotte Airport, where I've worked for 11 years, and one of the essential workers who keep the airport running while being the least appreciated. I make \$16.50 an hour, and I pay for my health insurance. This is not enough, not in this economy. Less than a year ago, my rent went up and I had to move out of my apartment, because I could no longer afford it. I had to go to a hotel. According to the 2023 State of Housing Instability and Homelessness, 103,239 of renter households, that's 48 percent, were paying more than 30 percent of their monthly income to our housing costs. This is an increase of 46 percent since 2012. I was finally able to find an apartment. Studies have proven that local governments with Right to Counsel save money that would otherwise go to shelter costs, due to reducing the population relying on those services, by keeping residents facing eviction housed. As a Charlotte Airport service worker, it is hard to survive in the City making the low wages they pay. We shouldn't have to worry about not being able to pay the rent and being evicted with no Right to Counsel, when we are working hard every day. Thank you.

**Rob Nanfelt, 4127 Wright Avenue** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, members of Council and City Manager. I'm Rob Nanfelt. I'm the Executive Director of REBIC (Real Estate & Building Industry Coalition). REBIC is a real estate and building industry coalition. As a refresher, our members work with businesses to locate here or expand. They've helped them find locations. Our members develop land and build the homes to house those workers. Our members help those employees make the biggest investment they're likely to make in their entire lives, and they also help if they're looking for a rental home as well. That's who REBIC is. A couple of things in the Budget I just wanted to touch on. First, as it relates to the property tax increase. Property tax increases are not enjoyable for anyone. It's been a little while, so perhaps there's a need at this point, but I would encourage you, as you make this point, make sure the community understands that this is likely the first in a cycle of these. The County's going to do the same thing shortly, and I think communicating that message to the community, making sure they understand the long-range plan, and doing it once, makes a lot sense, and I would encourage you strongly to do that, make sure you have a concise plan that they understand. So, that's number one. Number two, as it relates to the \$100 million in the Trust Funds, that is doubling of the current amount. We encourage you to go back and look and see how that \$50 million right now is being spent. Is that being spent to your expectation, or the outcomes which you're looking for? If you are going to double that, and it looks like you are at this point, how about part of that being set aside for things like downpayment assistance, so those folks that are right on the cusp of being unable to afford a home, have that little extra help, and then perhaps educational opportunities, especially in the trades. Folks, there are jobs in the trades that are very well paying, and I don't think enough is done to point folks in that direction. So, I just strongly encourage you to do that. Finally, the last point is.

**Dr. Blanche Penn, 2207 Century Oaks Lane** said Dr. Blanche Penn. I'm here also for The People's Budget, but for me, when we cry, do ya'll listen? Now ya'll sit back and eat your little chips and drink your little sodas, but are you listening? Maya Angelou is one of my favorite people with a poem, but I have a poem for you, because it says, "Say it with me now." This is my poem I just made up for you. To move beyond the block into housing now, say it with me. Save space for homelessness, say it now, now. Support The People's Budget, say it now. You've got the four percent 401 contribution, say it with me now, six percent raise, say it with me now. Working Bill of Rights, say it with me now. Double daily overtime, say it with me now. Twenty-five dollars minimum wages, ya'll can't say that with me now? What you need to do is say it with me now, because if you don't say it with me now, the people will say it to you. So, you need to sit back and relax, like you're doing, and you might sit there and already made up your mind, but you see that word the City of Charlotte, you've got to say it with me now, because right now, it is about the people. Remember they put you in those seats, it's the people. The same way Brown said several times, the word that you use, you didn't say this word, but the other word that you used three or four times, I'm saying it now, say it with me now, say it with me now, The People's Budget.

**Jordan Lopez, 4411 Eastland Court** said good evening, Mayor Lyles, Council members, and City Manager Jones. Thank you all for your service and for making it this far through a public hearing. My name is Jordan Lopez, and while I wear many hats throughout this community, tonight I'm here as an East Charlotte neighbor and resident. I'm here to ask for each of your support in fully funding the Central/Kilborne/ Eastway Comprehensive Neighborhood Investment project that was approved by voters in 2014 and is still unfinished. One of my neighbors has already went and another will come next, but I'm here to echo their concerns, to the fact that this project would directly impact thousands of residents in the immediate area, creating a new and safer way to access recreational amenities in the area, such as Kilborne Park or the Evergreen Nature Preserve, improve safety for Eastway Middle School students who walk or bike to school, and the general safety of pedestrians in an area that already sees a concentration of incidents with pedestrians and bicyclists. Additionally, this allows for greater access and visibility to the commercial district along Central Avenue that is home to many small minority-owned businesses, that is truly the heartbeat of East Charlotte. This project is long overdue and would have an immediate and lasting impact on our community, and we hope that we can see it fully funded and completed before taking on new projects. Thank you.

**Diana Martinez, 5427 Coburg Avenue** said hello, my name is Diana Martinez, a resident of Shannon Park in East Charlotte speaking to the proposed property tax increase that will fund, among other items, capital improvement projects. In 2001, when I was one year old, and not yet in United States of America, the Eastside Strategy Plan called for the bicycle and pedestrian connection to link the commercial area of Central Avenue to the Evergreen Nature Preserve. In 2014, when I was a Freshman in Garinger High School, the Central/Kilborne/Norland intersection and Roadway Upgrade Project was selected as one of the projects to move forward as part of the \$20 million CNIP approved by voters. Today, this project continues to be on hold, and I am now 23. While other bike/pedestrian projects in other parts of our City, such as SouthPark CNIP, and the Matheson Avenue Bridge, for example, our seemingly prioritized. I am here tonight to ask this question in regard to the proposed property tax increase. How can our residents trust that the City will apply an equitable lens to capital improvements projects, when the City cannot commit to finishing the projects that were put on the books a decade ago? Thank you.

**Jennifer Vollmer, 5332 Farm Pond Lane** said good evening, everyone. I'm really here to see Councilwoman Tiawana Brown up on the dais. I was so happy to see her elected. I want to say, I just think she's a treasure to the City, and I heard that she's been having a pretty rough time being on City Council. People are being kind of mean to her, so stop doing that ya'll. She's really important. I mean, the voice of somebody with a lived experience on the City Council, that's amazing, that's national news, thank you. Thank you for the work you're doing. Thank you for putting up with all the crap that I hear you've been getting. Just thank you. Thank you for running and being there. We need more people with a lived experience up there. The second thing I want to say is shame on the City seven, ya'll passing these regressive ordinances that have led to chaos in my life, but definitely incredible harm to homeless people. I'm here because I'm with the Black People's Community Justice Center, and what we do is we help people, especially people who have never been, which means a lot of really young people, like 18, 19, 20-year-olds, navigate criminal cases through our courthouse. That's what I do. We have a big hearing on Friday if anybody wants to come and do court support, and I hope all seven of you that voted for those ordinances, I hope all seven of you get replaced. I hope we just elect right off the board, right off the Council. That was disgusting. We've been through this. We've been through this so many times. Ya'll know that's regressive. Ya'll know it's not going to work. I hope all seven of you get replaced. I'm here to support The People's Budget.

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you. That is the end of our speakers on the Budget for this evening. Thank you all that came early, those that have stayed late, those that are still watching, we appreciate everything that you provided to us as information. The next steps are the Council with begin to continue to work through this Budget. To all of you that have been here and stayed with us and expressed what you wanted to make sure

that we saw and heard, that we are grateful to have this kind of participation in our community.

The following persons submitted written comments regarding this item pursuant to S.L. 2020-3, SB 704. To review comments in their entirety, contact the City Clerk's Office.

**Ashley Velez, [asearing1025@gmail.com](mailto:asearing1025@gmail.com)**

**Brenna Johnson, [bkjohnson3788@gmail.com](mailto:bkjohnson3788@gmail.com)**

**Tyler Collins, [tylercollins0413@gmail.com](mailto:tylercollins0413@gmail.com)**

**Hillary Connors, [hillarygconnors@gmail.com](mailto:hillarygconnors@gmail.com)**

**Logan Harrison, [legologan3@gmail.com](mailto:legologan3@gmail.com)**

**Jerome Wagner, [jjwagner00@gmail.com](mailto:jjwagner00@gmail.com)**

**Ashley Parrish, [arparrish83@gmail.com](mailto:arparrish83@gmail.com)**

**Marissa Garst, [marissa.garst@gmail.com](mailto:marissa.garst@gmail.com)**

**Nicolas Decarolis, [Nicholas.decarolis@gmail.com](mailto:Nicholas.decarolis@gmail.com)**

**Deborah Owenby, [dlynn16@hotmail.com](mailto:dlynn16@hotmail.com)**

Motion was made by Councilmember Johnson, seconded by Councilmember Bokhari, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing.

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**ITEM NO. 8: PUBLIC HEARING ON A RESOLUTION TO CLOSE A PORTION OF TWO ALLEYWAYS BETWEEN HEATH COURT AND HAWTHORNE LANE**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to (A) Close the public hearing, and (B) Adopt a resolution and close a Portion of Two Alleyways between Heath Court and Hawthorne Lane.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said we went through that rather quickly. For agenda Item No. 8, I see where Councilmember Anderson had responded to a constituent who has questions regarding the T-shaped alleyway and the abandonment of the portion being identified tonight for closure. Tonight is just the public hearing on it, but I have an older constituent that's not necessarily as comfortable with internet that reached out, and even though tonight is the hearing, this is only time for them to actually speak to either this or the next item that we have for the public hearing. Mayor, just as an aside, a question. Outside of being in person, since we have elders that aren't comfortable driving at night and utilizing the internet, can you identify or suggest other ways for those in our community that's finding some challenges, that have questions regarding some of these either openings or closings in their dead-end street, so in their neighborhoods?

Mayor Lyles said I'm going to probably ask our attorney or our real estate person, but usually these are advertised in advance, and I think that they are maybe as well on.

Ms. Mayfield said they're mainly advertised online.

Mayor Lyles said mainly advertised online, but we also have the public hearing that we read, and I believe that there's contact made in this case. This is another one, so Heath Court and Hawthorne Lane. I think that if there's a way to recognize, or how do they receive notice of closing of public spaces, or basically land that we are abandoning, and I would tell you, I've always asked. Debbie is going to come up and talk about how they're notified, who is notified, and how.

Ms. Mayfield said and that's the challenge, Mayor, because according to the email that was sent to all of us, we would like to point out that contrary to the statement published in the resolution to close, no letters were sent to property owners who own parcels along this T-shaped alleyway. In addition, this alley closing as presented, is contrary to the public interest, and the property owners in the vicinity of the alleyway would be deprived of reasonable means of egress and ingress, as required per Statute 160A-299. So, we received the email to all of Council that's specifically addressing, and it's not the first time that we've had residents to share that, no, they did not receive notification.

Mayor Lyles said alright, so how do we get them notified Debbie?

**Debbie Smith, Transportation Director** said absolutely. Good evening, Mayor and Council. Debbie Smith with Charlotte Department of Transportation, and we notify in a couple of ways. One is we publish a notification in the Mecklenburg Times to be able to notify people of that. In addition to that, we notify the people that are directly adjacent to the property, and in addition to that, we post very visible signage, which has information where you can contact us if anyone has questions, and we can reach out directly to them in that way.

Mayor Lyles said so, there's a letter sent by certified mail or just regular mail?

Ms. Smith said it is sent by certified mail directly to the adjacent property owners, and, like I said, we also notify them with that signage out on the street and visible for everyone to see.

Mayor Lyles said, and the signage is in a visible connectable prominent location?

Ms. Smith said to a prominent location, correct, yes.

Ms. Mayfield said and again, Mayor, just for clarification and for transparency, because we all received the email that clearly stated that that is not what happened, and that is not the first time that we've had constituents reach out saying, "No, we did not receive any information," and even, I think about the notifications that I receive in the mail, most of the correspondence is via zoom. One of the biggest challenges with that is, one, everyone that's on that zoom call it is not easily seen. The zoom calls are closed, so when individuals may ask a question, that question is not seen by everyone. It's if we would do in a group meeting, before we went to zoom for everything, in that public meeting, everyone would hear the question, there would be consistency. That is not what's happening in some of the meetings. The Council's already moved forward. They're going to close it. I just want to make sure I'm bringing to the space, that we did have a constituent reach out to all of us sharing concerns, saying they did not receive information, but also sharing that others have reached out, because our current process of a lot of our petitioner's, whether it's City or a developer, are moving towards zoom versus the in-person option, and that zoom is limiting the voices of our constituents.

Mayor Lyles said I don't know whether the law requires us to use certified mail, and I also know that if you're like me, you may not open your mailbox for a while. So, I think the question is, do you do zoom meetings for it?

Ms. Smith said no, ma'am, we do not.

Mayor Lyles said I don't think we do zoom meetings for these openings and closings for the alleyways. So, I think what we're looking at is, is the certified mail required by law?

Ms. Smith said yes, ma'am, it is.

Mayor Lyles said and it's sent out. I don't know whether or not people get their mail or not. I mean a lot of people just don't have that opportunity. I think what Ms. Mayfield is saying, is there another way that would be more of an assurance besides the older way that we've been doing it. So, we could take a look into that and see what we're doing.

Ms. Smith said absolutely.

Mayor Lyles said but I know we have to do the certified mail, and I know the signage is up and available in the neighborhood, but I also understand that not everybody sees everything the same way. So, Debbie, if you guys could think about that. I think we've already gotten an approval for this one on Item No. 8.

**Councilmember Johnson** said yes, thank you. This is the second or third time we've heard that residents aren't receiving the notice. We're using a newspaper. It may be enough people aren't reading. Is there a way that this could be posted in the Observer?

Ms. Smith said Ms. Johnson, we'd be happy to investigate that. The Mecklenburg Times has been one that we have used historically for just such a long period of time, and it's fairly cost effective for us to do that, but we can certainly investigate another means necessary, absolutely.

Ms. Johnson said or even social media or something. Then, Councilmember Mayfield, you talked about individuals not being able to maybe drive at night to come to the meetings. I will tell you that previous councils, we had virtual Council meetings, where the public could speak, and they were actually Council meetings. So, there was a Council that overturned that, but there is a way to manage and allow residents to be able to participate in Council meetings. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said so, I agree with the Mecklenburg Times. It's pretty much real estate and legal documents. That's where you find out who didn't pay their taxes, and whether or not you can bid on their houses. So, I think there is some opportunity that we could perhaps determine. I know it will be more expensive with the Observer, and I don't know that the Observer is really able or any different. So, I think we need to give this some thought and would ask the staff to come back and give us some information about what you think works best in this situation.

Ms. Smith said no ma'am.

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

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 151-155.

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## **POLICY**

### **ITEM NO. 10: CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

No City Manager's Report.

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### **ITEM NO. 11: CHARLOTTE BUSINESS INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERM LENGTH**



Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Graham, and carried unanimously to approve the Jobs and Economic Development Committee's recommendation to change the term length for appointments to the existing Charlotte Business Inclusion Advisory Committee from two-year terms to three-year terms.

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## **BUSINESS**

### **ITEM NO. 12: GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND REFERENDUM**

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Anderson, and carried unanimously to adopt resolutions authorizing staff to proceed with the necessary actions to conduct a general obligation bond referendum on November 5, 2024.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 156-161.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **ITEM NO. 13: GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS**

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt an Initial Finding Resolution Authorizing Refunding of existing Outstanding General Obligation Bonds series 2014A not to exceed \$70,000,000, (B) Authorize City Officials to take necessary actions to complete the financing, including making the application to the Local Government Commission, and (C) Adopt Budget Ordinance 797-X appropriating \$70,000,000 to the Municipal Debt Service Fund.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 67, at Page(s) 111.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 162-163.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **ITEM NO. 14: WATER SEWER REVENUE BONDS AND REVENUE BOND ANTICIPATION NOTE**

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Molina, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt bond orders and resolutions authorizing and approving issuance of Water Sewer Revenue Bonds and Bond Anticipation Note and calling for the execution and delivery of various documents necessary to complete the sale, (B) Provide for the issuance of Water Sewer Revenue Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$610 million to refund outstanding 2022 Bond Anticipation Notes and provide financing for water sewer projects, (C) Provide for the issuance of Water Sewer Revenue Bond Anticipation Notes in an amount not to exceed \$500,000,000, and (D) Adopt Budget Ordinance 798-X appropriating \$500 million in revenue bond proceeds and \$5 million from the Charlotte Water Operating Fund to the Charlotte Water Revenue Bond Debt Service Fund.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 67, at Page(s) 112.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 164-178.

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**ITEM NO. 15: NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESERVATION SUPPORT REQUEST**

Motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to (A) Approve a \$1,000,000 Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) allocation to Pineville NOAH, LLC, an affiliate of Ascent Real Estate Capital, LLC, for the rehabilitation of Ascent Pineville Apartments, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate, execute, amend, extend, and renew contracts as needed to complete this transaction.

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Bokhari and Driggs

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**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**ITEM NO. 16: APPOINTMENTS TO THE CHARLOTTE BUSINESS INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The following were considered for two appointments for a two-year term beginning upon appointment and ending based on term length as designated by Council for the committee:

- Marjory Brifil, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Monica Kweman, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Zahn Patin, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Marjory Brifil, Monica Kweman, and Zahn Patin by acclamation.

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**NOMINATIONS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**ITEM NO. 17: NOMINATIONS TO THE BECHTLER ARTS FOUNDATION BOARD**

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027:

- Oneaka Mack Saba, nominated by Councilmembers Brown and Johnson
- Sam Spencer, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield and Molina

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Sam Spencer by acclamation.

Mr. Spencer was reappointed.

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**ITEM NO. 18: NOMINATIONS TO THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The following nomination was 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:

- John Castano Gallego, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, and Molina

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint John Castano Gallego by acclamation.

Mr. Castano Gallego was appointed.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 19: NOMINATIONS TO THE CHARLOTTE BUSINESS INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The following nomination was made for one appointment for a two-year term for a Black Chamber of Commerce representative beginning March 1, 2024, and ending based on term length as designated by Council for the committee:

- Marjory Brifil, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Marjory Brifil by acclamation.

Ms. Brifil was appointed.

The following nomination was made for one appointment for a two-year term for a Carolinas Asian-American Chamber of Commerce representative beginning March 1, 2024, and ending based on term length as designated by Council for the committee:

- Monica Kweman, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Monica Kweman by acclamation.

Ms. Kweman was appointed.

The following nomination was made for one appointment for a two-year term recommended by the Metrolina Minority Contractors Association beginning March 1, 2024, and ending based on term length as designated by Council for the committee:

- Zahn Patin, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Zahn Patin by acclamation.

Mr. Patin was appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 20: NOMINATIONS TO THE CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG PUBLIC ACCESS CORPORATION**

The following nomination was made for one appointment for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2026:

- Cedric L. Dean, nominated by Councilmember Brown

This appointment will be considered at the next Business meeting.

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**ITEM NO. 21: NOMINATIONS TO THE CHARLOTTE NEIGHBORHOOD EQUITY AND STABILIZATION COMMISSION**

The following nominations were made for one appointment for a partial term for a Neighborhood Conditions Representative beginning upon appointment and ending August 31, 2024:

- Temako McCarthy, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Graham, Johnson and Mayfield
- Tanisha Patterson-Powe, nominated by Councilmember Driggs

Results of the ballot were recorded as follows:

Temako McCarthy, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Graham, and Molina.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Temako McCarthy by acclamation.

Ms. McCarthy was appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 22: NOMINATIONS TO THE CIVIL SERVICE BOARD**

The following nominations were made for four appointments for a three-year term beginning May 16, 2024, and ending May 15, 2027:

- Shelia Etheridge, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Chad Hullett, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Nicholas Peach, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Katherine Susie Taylor, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Charris Torrence, nominated by Councilmembers Brown and Johnson

Results of the ballot were recorded as follows:

- Shelia Etheridge, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Chad Hullett, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.

- Nicholas Peach, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Katherine Susie Taylor, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Shelia Etheridge, Chad Hullett, Nicholas Peach, and Katherine Susie Taylor by acclamation.

Ms. Etheridge was reappointed. Mr. Hullett, Mr. Peach, and Ms. Taylor were appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 23: NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

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

- Monica Kweman, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, and Molina.
- Tara Peele, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, and Molina.
- Katherine Susie Taylor, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.

Ms. Kweman, Ms. Peele, and Ms. Taylor were appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 24: NOMINATIONS TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

There were no nominations for one appointment for a partial term for a Resident Owner of Fourth Ward beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2025.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

There were no nominations for one appointment for a partial term for a Resident Owner of Hermitage Court beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2024, and a three-year term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

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**ITEM NO. 25: NOMINATIONS TO THE KEEP CHARLOTTE BEAUTIFUL COMMITTEE**

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

- Jacqueline Roseboro, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Johnson Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

The following nominations were made for five appointments for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027:

- Michael David Davis, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Grace Few, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs,

- Graham, Johnson Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Sharon Geter, nominated by Councilmember Graham
- Edieberto Torres, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Elizabeth Winebarger, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington
- Christa Youtz, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Results of the ballot were recorded as follows:

- Elizabeth Winebarger, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Michael David Davis, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Grace Few, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Christa Youtz, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.
- Edieberto Torres, nominated by Council member Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Michael David Davis, Grace Few, Jacqueline Roseboro, Edieberto Torres, Elizabeth Winebarger, and Christa Youtz by acclamation.

Mr. Davis, Ms. Few and Mr. Torres were reappointed. Ms. Roseboro, Ms. Winebarger, and Ms. Youtz were appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 26: NOMINATIONS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANTS FUND**

The following nomination was made for one appointment for a two-year term Recommended by School Superintendent beginning April 16, 2024, and ending April 15, 2026:

- Latisha Hensley, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Latisha Hensley by acclamation.

Ms. Hensley was appointed.

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**ITEM NO. 27: NOMINATIONS TO THE PASSENGER VEHICLE FOR HIRE BOARD**

There were no nominations for one appointment for a Hospitality / Tourism Industry category representative for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending June 30, 2024, and a three-year term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027.

Nominations will be kept open until the next Business meeting.

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**ITEM NO. 28: NOMINATIONS TO THE TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The following nomination was made for one appointment for a Local/Express Service Passenger category representative for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending January 31, 2026:

- Edward Jernigan, nominated by Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to appoint Edward Jernigan by acclamation.
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Mr. Jernigan was appointed.

There were no nominations 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.

**Councilmember Johnson** said a former employee had applied for one of the boards, and was told that they were not eligible, because they were a former City employee, and I wanted to know about that policy. Is that the policy for all of the boards, or just specific boards?

**Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk** said no, ma'am. As I mentioned, it's only for the Civil Service Board and the Citizens Review Board. No current or former employees are eligible for consideration, nor are the parents, spouses or immediate family members of police officers or fire firefighters eligible to be appointed to either of those boards. Those are the only two that have those as qualifiers.

Ms. Johnson said so, Citizens Review Board and the Civil Service Board. You said current or former. So, current employees are allowed to serve on boards?

Ms. Kelly said in some instances, maybe. It depends on the board and their particular position. I don't know that we have any current City employees serving on any boards, but I believe we have had, with the approval of their department head.

Ms. Johnson said okay, I just wanted clarification. Okay, thank you.

**Councilmember Bokhari** said could I please be recorded for business agenda Item No. 12 as opposed, the GO bond referendum, please? You can definitely do that.

**Councilmember Watlington** said no, you can't.

Mr. Bokhari said don't make me ask Mr. Baker. Mr. Baker, in the same meeting, can someone change their vote?

Ms. Watlington said not if they're not on the winning side, they can't recall it.

**Patrick Baker, City Attorney** said you're not asking to reconsider the vote. I'm not aware of a policy that you have that allows you to change your vote that's already been recorded, but you can state on the record, which you have, that you didn't.

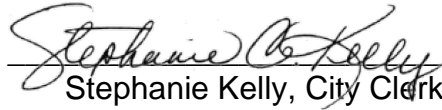
Mr. Bokhari said on the record, absolutely, without equivocation, while I stepped out to use the bathroom, didn't get a chance to be a lone voice against the \$100 million Affordable Housing Bond for referendum. So, I'm opposing it, and if someone digs that deep into the records 10 years from now to watch this, they can see it.

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### ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Watlington, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

  
Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 4 Hours, 13 Minutes  
Minutes completed: December 2, 2024