



Charlotte City Council
Housing, Safety & Community Committee
Summary
October 7, 2024

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

1. Charlotte Fire Department After Action Update (Informational)
2. Changing Opportunity Update (Informational)

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present:	LaWana Mayfield (CMGC), Dimple Ajmera (virtual), Tiawana Brown (CMGC), Renee' Johnson (CMGC)
Committee Members Absent:	Victoria Watlington
Other Council Members Present:	n/a
Staff Resources:	Shawn Heath, City Manager's Office Reginald Johnson, Charlotte Fire Department Rebecca Hefner, Housing & Neighborhood Services Monica Holmes, Planning, Design & Development Erin Gillespie, Economic Development Danielle Frazier, City Manager's Office
Guests:	AJ Calhoun, Leading on Opportunity Tonya Jameson, Leading on Opportunity
Meeting Duration:	4:00 – 5:30 PM
Video available online:	https://youtu.be/8YpJ5JGwcjw?t=21573

MEETING MATERIALS

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

1. Presentation: 7741 Liberty Row Drive - Charlotte Fire Department After Action Update
2. Presentation: Changing Opportunity

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

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

Charlotte Fire Department (CFD) After Action Update

Chief Reginald Johnson provided an overview of the 2023 five-alarm fire and after-action findings at the then-under-construction development at 7741 Liberty Row Drive in the SouthPark area. He shared that he could not say enough about the bravery and courageous efforts of CFD responders in trying to get to and save the two construction workers whose lives were tragically cut short by the fire. Chief Johnson shared an overview of the event's key challenges, key conclusions, key recommendations and actions that CFD has subsequently taken. He shared that CFD's ability to access hydrants and water for ladder companies was not an issue at the fire event, even though initially CFD was told by on-site construction workers that one of the standpipes was operational when it was actually not working. Chief Johnson shared that no CFD units were short-staffed the day of the event. A successful field technician pilot program was one of the actions CFD undertook in early 2024; Chief Johnson shared that funding for this program will be a forthcoming budget request. He shared that the Fire Marshall has been able to successfully work with Mecklenburg County to allow CFD to be engaged in pre-permitting plan reviews and conversations for large and multi-family projects. CFD is committed to implementing recommendations and continuous improvement, and he will be glad to return to the committee to provide updates.

Highlights of what Committee members shared included:

- Condolences were expressed to the families of Mr. Sherrill and Mr. Jones, the two construction workers who lost their lives in the fire.
- Appreciation was expressed for CFD firefighters overall, and their bravery in this event.

- The importance of CFD being at the table with Mecklenburg County during the building permitting process.
- The importance of addressing the concerns shared with Council members about not having enough staffing and resources.

Changing Opportunity Update

AJ Calhoun and Tonya Jameson provided an overview of the 2024 Changing Opportunity: Sociological Mechanisms Underlying Growing Class Gaps and Shrinking Race Gaps in Economic Mobility Report (commonly referred to as the “Chetty Study”). Mr. Calhoun shared that new data show that economic mobility is improving, while acknowledging that this is not absolutely true for every person in the community. There are three primary things that are driving the improvement: public-private partnerships, an expanding economy, and nonprofit navigation. Ms. Jameson shared recommendations set forth in the Chetty Study and examples of current initiatives in Charlotte for each. She also shared the importance of social capital. There is not one thing that will continue to improve economic mobility, instead it is something that should remain a focus area. Ms. Jameson shared that she is excited about the progress that has been made and will continue to be made, and that Charlotte is already doing a lot of the things that the report recommends. She encouraged Council to consider how to encourage a two-generation approach to workforce development, how to infuse social capital into workforce development, and how to leverage opportunity hubs to help strengthen MWSBE firms to thrive, create jobs and have a bigger impact in our community.

Monica Holmes, Rebecca Hefner, Erin Gillespie and Daniel Frazier provided an overview of city initiatives that support the Chetty Study’s recommendations within the areas of planning and mobility, housing and neighborhoods, corridors of opportunity, and community workforce development. Staff also shared how the city is helping its employees through employee benefits and supports.

Highlights of what City Council members shared included:

- Interest in understanding the study data and its accuracy.
- Interest in program outcomes that were implemented in response to the initial Chetty study, such as Mecklenburg County Pre-K, to learn if those programs moved the needle and have measurements of success.
- Interest in sharing the report more broadly and with a deeper dive with full City Council.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will occur on November 4, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 pm.