

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Action Review on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 5:12 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, Marjorie Molina, and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT:** Councilmembers Tiawana Brown and James Mitchell

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mayor Lyles** said I want to call to order the consent and Action Review items for the Charlotte City Council. This is a time that we review things that perhaps we are working on or working towards and sometimes be able to actually get things done faster with this part of it. So, we have a program that we begin with introductions.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **ACTION REVIEW**

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

There were no consent agenda item questions.

### **ITEM NO. 2: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 17 THROUGH 36 MAY BE CONSIDERED IN ONE MOTION EXCEPT FOR THOSE ITEMS REMOVED BY A COUNCIL MEMBER. ITEMS ARE REMOVED BY NOTIFYING THE CITY CLERK.**

**Councilmember Mayfield** said I would like to pull out 26, 34, and.

**Mayor Lyles** said 26, 34. I should've gotten that, because we have speakers that are going to be here on 34, so that would be very helpful. Thank you very much for that.

Ms. Mayfield said okay, and 23. So, 23, 26 and 34 for discussion.

Mayor Lyles said 23, 26 and then 34.

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, and carried unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with the exception of Item No. 23, Item No. 26, and Item No. 34 which were pulled for discussion.

The following items were approved:

#### **Item No. 17: Fire Turnout Gear and Related Services**

(A) Approve contracts for firefighting turnout gear and related services for a term of three years with the following: AEST Fire & Safety, Fire-Dex GW, LLC dba Gear Wash, Lions TotalCare, Municipal Emergency Services Inc., Newtons Fire & Safety Equipment, Inc., North America Fire Equipment Co., Inc., Rhinehart Fire Services, Viking Life-Saving Equipment, 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.

#### **Item No. 18: Building Commissioning Services**

(A) Approve unit price contracts with the following companies for building commissioning services for four years: Atom Engineering PLLC, Chinook Systems, NC Inc., CMTA, Horizon Engineers, Inc., RMF Engineering, Systems WorCx, PLLC, The Milborne Group Consulting Engineers, Inc. dba TMG Consulting Engineers, Inc. (MBE), TLC Engineering Solutions, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts

for up to one additional, one-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

**Item No. 19: Citywide Janitorial Services**

(A) Approve contracts for janitorial services for a term of three years with the following: A & B Cleaning Service, Inc. (MBE), Amaze Clean Inc. (WBE, SBE), Brotherly Glove Commercial Cleaning Inc. dba BGCC Inc. (MBE), Dauntless Enterprises, Inc. dba City Wide Facility Solutions, Facility Maintenance Group, LLC dba FMG360 (MBE), Golden Cleaning Service, LLC (MBE, SBE), GreenGuard Commercial Cleaning LLC, Integrated Commercial Cleaning Service, Inc. (WBE), Interstate Premier Services Corp., Life Time Cleaning Inc. (MBE, SBE), Love Cleaning with Care Inc. (MBE, SBE), Oneliance LLC (WBE), REDLEE/SCS Inc., and (B) 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.

**Item No. 20: Citywide Safety Supplies**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Vesta Products for the purchase of safety supplies 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.

**Item No. 21: Construction Manager at Risk for Firehouse No. 46 Infill Station Project**

Approve a contract in the amount of \$17,337,294 with J.E. Dunn - McFarland, A Joint Venture, for construction phase services of the Firehouse No. 46 Infill Station Construction Manager at Risk project.

**Item No. 22: Professional Services for Strategic Mobility Plan**

(A) Approve contracts for owner advisor, program management support and augmentation, and program/project controls and risk management support for a term of three years with the following: AtkinsRealis, USA, Inc., Infrastructure Strategies, LLC., 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.

**Item No. 24: Sugar Creek Water Resource Recovery Facility Ultraviolet Disinfection System Replacement**

Approve a contract in the amount of \$9,880,000 to the lowest responsive bidder Garney Companies, Inc. for the Sugar Creek Water Resource Recovery Facility Ultraviolet Disinfection System Replacement project.

**Summary of Bids**

Garney Companies, Inc.	\$9,880,000.00
PC Construction	\$10,914,000.00
Harper General Contractors	\$12,299,000.00

**Item No. 25: Wastewater Treatment Equipment**

(A) Approve the purchase of a screenings washer compactor by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with Duperon for the purchase of a screenings washer compactor, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 27: Engineering Services for Perth/Milton Storm Drainage Improvement Project**

(A) Approve contract amendment #3 for \$650,000 to the contract with STV Engineers, Inc. for Perth/Milton Storm Drainage Improvement Project, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract and this amendment were approved.

**Item No. 28: CATS Bridge Inspection Services**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with HNTB, Inc. for the inspection of bridges, culverts, and other structures for an initial term of three years, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for one, three-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 29: CATS Special Transportation Services Vehicle Parts**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Vendor Maintenance Program, Inc. for the purchase of Chevrolet Special Transportation Services Bus Parts for a term of three years, 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.

**Item No. 30: Equipment for Light Rail Operations**

(A) Approve the purchase of DC pad-mounted disconnect switchgears by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with MAC Products Inc. for the purchase of DC pad mounted disconnect switchgears for a term of three years, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 31: Airport Antenna Lease Extension**

(A) Authorize the City Manager to approve a lease amendment with Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless for an additional five-year term for telecommunications equipment on the Airport’s rotating beacon tower, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to extend the lease for two additional, five-year terms and to amend the lease consistent with the purpose for which the lease was approved.

**Item No. 32: Airport Automated External Defibrillator Retrofit and Upgrade**

Approve a contract in the amount of \$3,489,000 to the lowest responsive bidder Messer Construction Co. for the Automated External Defibrillator Retrofit and Upgrade project.

**Summary of Bids**

Messer Construction Co.	\$3,489,000.00
Edison Foard, LLC	\$3,590,900.00
JE Dunn Construction	\$3,870,337.00
JE Dunn Construction Company	\$3,870,337.00

**Item No. 33: Airport On-Call Window Washing Services**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Scottie’s Building Services, LLC for On-Call Window Washing Services for an initial 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 consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS**

**Item No. 35: Meeting Minutes**

Approve the titles, motions, and votes reflected in the Clerk’s record as the minutes of: March 3, 2025, Council Committee Discussions, March 17, 2025, Zoning Meeting, March 24, 2025, Budget Workshop #2, and March 24, 2025, Business Meeting.

**Item No. 36: Aviation Property Transactions - 9516 Markswood Road**

Acquisition of 67,387 square feet (1.547 acres) at 9516 Markswood Road from James R. Hayes and Ana M. Hayes for \$425,000 for EIS Mitigation Land South.

\*\*\*\*\*

**ITEM NO. 23: NUTRIENT HARVESTING AT MCALPINE CREEK WATER RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY**

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to Approve a guaranteed maximum price of \$30,340,000 to MEB General Contractors, Inc. for Design-Build construction services for the Nutrient Harvesting Facility at the McAlpine Creek Water Resource Recovery Facility project.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said so I just want, one I appreciate that we have a good number of participation. I just wanted to make sure I had a better understanding, when we're looking at a \$30 million grant for the design, build and construction, and this is a facility in Pineville, understanding the relationship between Charlotte and Pineville, and what, if any, funding is contributed by Pineville on these partnerships, and if that's something in the future that can be added, because we have a number of partners in the region. I think it will be helpful to have a clear designation so that the taxpayers in Charlotte understand why, and that we may be partnering on these projects and not looking for the full amount to be coming from us.

**Mayor Lyles** said okay, great. Thank you very much for that.

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

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 26: WATER TREATMENT PLANTS FORCE MAIN AND PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION CHANGE ORDER**

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera to Approve change order #3 for \$4,167,950.95 to Sanders Utility Construction Co., Inc. for the Vest Water Treatment Plant Residuals Force Main to Franklin Water Treatment Plant and Lee S. Dukes Water Treatment Plant Chlorine Dioxide Pipeline project.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said I have a challenge, as the original contract was \$11 million, and out of that \$11 million contract the participation goals were two percent and eight percent. Now that we are moving forward with this amendment, which will make this a more than \$15 million contract, \$15,375,610.02, I have a concern that we're still looking at the exact same overall project goal of only two percent of Minority Business Enterprise and eight percent. I will not be supporting this. There was an opportunity for us to identify, since this original contract was approved back in 2023. We have had growth in our business contacts over the last year and a half, and this was an opportunity to go back to see if there were additional opportunities with this third change, even though this third change is the first additional request. Thank you.

**Councilmember Watlington** said as a follow-up to that, I would love to hear from staff, in regard to this particular one, and how we ended up here. I know Steve Coker's in the back. I don't know who might be in the best position to speak to that, but I would like a little bit of an explanation.

**Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget** said and that's a good point ya'll are bringing up, and I'm not privy to the specifics of this contract, but just for the good of the public, think of it too where, if you go to a restaurant and you have in your mind you give at least 20 percent tip, you probably still give 20 percent regardless if you spent like \$100 or \$150. So, for the good of the public, even though the percent stays the same, the dollar amounts going to our registered vendors do increase, proportionately.

**Mayor Lyles** said alright. I think the person that runs that division is responsible for a large part of what we're talking about. So, Angela, do you mind taking us through that discussion that Ms. Watlington had a question, as well as Ms. Mayfield.

**Angela Charles, Director of Charlotte Water** said sure. Thank you, Mayor, Council and Manager. Angela Charles, Director of Charlotte Water. Deputy Director, Ron Hargrove, is going to give you the details regarding the amendment to this project. I can tell you that at Brookshire Freeway and 85, NC-DOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation), along with our folks, found problems with the raw water line going to the Vest Plant on Beatties Ford Road. So, Ron, if you could c'mon.

**Ron Hargrove, Deputy Director of Charlotte Water** said sure. Good evening, Mayor and Council members. Ron Hargrove, Charlotte Water. This original contract was to install a pipeline between the Vest Plant on Beatties Ford and our Franklin Plant, to convey residuals, solids, that we take out of the water through the process. When we got to I-85, they actually put a sleeve under 85 to slide the new line in, and during that time there was leakage coming out of both ends on either side of I-85. So, after exploratory work, we realized one of our raw water pipelines was leaking and it was leaking under I-85. Shortly after the New Year, it got really cold, we had ice coming up through the pavement under 85. We've done a lot of exploratory work and realized there's a void due to that leakage. One of those pipelines is a 1911 cast iron main that has a leak in it, and so we were trying to keep this from being an emergency. We had a contractor on site. We used the sleeve that they put under I-85 to slide a new water main in, and that's what this change order is about, to actually put a line in that will convey the water between the two plants, and then to fix I-85. The pavement out there has a depression that we are going to need to fix, according to DOT (Department of Transportation).

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for the explanation as to why we need it. That didn't address the concern that I have regarding the fact that additional work was needed, and to Ms. Harris, I apologize, because I did not send this to you earlier when I had the chance to ask you a couple of questions, that I notice now, there were a couple that I missed, so you were not ready to necessarily answer this question. The opportunity, is what I'm saying, is opportunity that potentially was missed, and that is because additional work was identified, then that's additional service. This isn't a \$400,000 or even a \$200,000 repair. We're being asked tonight to approve over \$4 million. So, to say that in that additional \$4 million, of which is not necessarily the cost of materials that's going to get us at that point, but the need for the workers and for those small businesses that were identified initially. I'm saying there was potentially an opportunity there to go back and see, because additional work was needed, what else will we possibly need from our partners, and is two and eight percent still an accurate number. Because, those numbers were very low on an \$11 million project in the first place. So, that is the challenge that I have with it, but I appreciate you sharing why it needed to be done. I just think there was an opportunity to continue working with CBI (Charlotte Business INclusion), and seeing if there was additional, either for the current partners to receive an increased amount, or if there was a need for an additional partner, for them to come in to make sure that while we have the opportunity we are supporting as many small businesses as we can.

Mr. Hargrove said understood. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay, thank you very much. Thank you, Ms. Mayfield.

Ms. Watlington said so I see Steve standing here, so I'd love to understand whether or not that investigation was conducted before we got here, because if we have not gone back to take a look at who might be able to participate since the scope was increased, then I'd like us to give some time to do that work. So, I want to understand, has what Councilmember Mayfield suggested been done?

Ms. Harris said I'm sorry. Dr. Watlington, if I may. I don't know if you caught the part where she was talking about, it's an urgent emergency repair, so there wasn't an opportunity to, but to your point, I think they noted if there are things that are getting added in scope that aren't emergency in nature, they'll look at that in the future.

Ms. Watlington said gotcha, thank you.

pti:pk

Ms. Harris said thank you.

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Molina, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Johnson and Mayfield

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 34: ARTS AND CULTURE GRANTMAKING SERVICES**

**Wendy Hickey, 113 Freeland Lane** said good evening, Mayor, Council members, and community members. My name is Wendy Hickey and I'm the Executive Director of the arts nonprofit ArtPop Street Gallery. Tonight, I want to begin by thanking you. The announcement that a facilitator will be named, and that the grant process of funding will be expedited, is incredibly encouraging. We are grateful for this progress and for your recognition that time is of the essence. Right now, ArtPop Street Gallery has five community partner shared events on our 2025 calendar that will create sales and commissions for local artists. We have 11 paid project opportunities that are in the making, and ArtPop is currently supporting 20 local Charlotte artists through a \$8.5 million nationwide billboard campaign. We have not given up. ArtPop has been here for 12 years. We've supported over 300 local Charlotte artists and brought art to more than a billion sets of eyes across Charlotte. We have paid directly to local artists over \$1 million through sales and commissions. Our artists will tell you how impactful it has been for their small businesses. We host free to attend and open to the community events year-round connecting local artists to community, and our artists keep 100 percent of the sales from these events and more. In our March 2025 market alone, our spring art market paid local artists over \$11,000. Every month of delay has a cost. For some, and I know for us, it's been eliminating jobs, it's closing programs, and for a few including ArtPop, we are at risk of closing the mission entirely. Running our four-division, half a million annual budget, with myself and only one other full-time staff member, is a real challenge. No organization should be under this type of pressure and lack of financial support, to do good for arts and community. I also want to make mention quickly of Theatre Gap Initiative and Charlotte Street Art Collaborative, who were unable to make the meeting tonight.

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you very much, appreciate that. If you want to leave your remarks with the clerk, and we can include those that were written, thank you.

**Robin Stockton, 13131 Rosedale Hill Avenue, Huntersville** said Your Honors. Discomfort and embarrassment are an individual's most powerful barriers to community involvement. This is especially true for the disabled community, but needs and disabilities seen and unseen are still a part of all of our lives. "Where are the bathrooms? Will I fit in a chair? Will my wheelchair be in the way? How is the parking? Will everyone be watching me, or what if I have an episode? Is there a safe space for me?" All of these questions are important when someone considers leaving the safe comfort of their home to enjoy a show, attend an art class, or share their own artistic gifts. My name is Robin Stockton, Founder and Executive Director of RA Arts for All, which serves the greater Charlotte area with free art classes for senior adults and adults with disabilities, free community theatre productions, such as Theatre on the Beach, our annual Teacher-Penned Play Festival. We also advocate for arts access through our Welcome Here Initiative. We survey local arts venues and ask the questions that make arts engagements accessible to patrons and artists who have been held back by their disabilities and barriers, such as embarrassment and discomfort, or I could call that dignity. At Arts For All, we are very passionate about creating pathways for all people to engage in arts experiences, to see live theatre at the Booth, to sharing stories of local musicians, to swim in the visual buffet of galleries and museums. We were made to convene and share in artistic creation and enjoyment. People need people. People need love and art is how we share our love. Creative engagements are the frontline warriors against depression, addiction, loneliness, complacency, lack of empathy, and

loss of community. Our need for community, connectiveness, and inclusion is clear, and Charlotte stands to be on the front runner of arts access. The goal of Arts For All is a Welcome Here initiative. It is a comprehensive arts and culture guide personally vetted by trained staff and evaluated by end users. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. Again, leave your remarks with the clerk and we'll include those as well. Alright, thank you.

**Melody Cassen, 3218 Arbor Pointe Drive** said Mayor and Council, thank you for hearing me today. My name is Melody Cassen, and I'm a local Charlotte artist. In 2014, I was part of the inaugural group of ArtPop Street Gallery artists. Back then, ArtPop was simply 20 artists on 20 billboards in the Charlotte area. Since then, ArtPop has grown to support local artists in an important variety of ways. Among them is artists management, of which I have personally benefited. ArtPop connects local artists with Charlotte businesses for artistic opportunities at fair market wages. A future aim of ArtPop is providing opportunities for artists to learn business skills and professional practices, things like contract negotiation, understanding copyright law. Speaking as an artist myself, these skills are crucial towards the sustainable, creative practice. We know that you and the City Council support the arts in Charlotte. Your funding is vital to the arts in our city, so much so that without the support, some of our key nonprofit organizations supporting Charlotte arts, such as ArtPop, could not exist. ArtPop, and other key backbone organizations, are in danger of shuttering in the very near future. So, here today, we are asking for your help and assistance in the expediting of existing funding for distribution to help keep ArtPop and Charlotte's local grassroots' art groups from closing down. Keeping Charlotte's own art active and engaged for the benefit of all Charlotteans, is everyone's goal, I believe. Thank you for your help and thank you for your time today. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you for your comments.

**Jonatan Diaz, 5300 Tucker Court** said good evening, Madam Mayor, everyone here. I am simply an art lover. That's why I'm here, but I'm not here for myself, I am here for my grandmother, my abuela, Lydia, or you can call her Lydia. She's a very sweet, great grandmother and grandmother in her 80s. She moved from Cuba to Charlotte as a political refugee about 13 years ago, and she had a fall unfortunately about a year and a half ago, and it really set her back, had some knee issues, but we had to get a caretaker for her. Luckily, the caretaker was an artist who showed her how to draw, showed her how to sketch, and over the last six months it's completely changed her life. She is a completely, brand-new person. I have bonded with her in a way I can't describe, and I have seen what art can do to someone. Art has the power to change anyone's life at any age. She started just drawing simple things, such as vases and flowers. She moved on to bigger projects of color, and she's even at the point where she's using dried flowers in her paintings. At the end of the day, I just want her to be able to enjoy these art shows that ArtPop takes a part of, maybe set her up with her own booth one day, and who knows maybe a billboard at the end of the day, that would be a goal of mine for her. She has no idea I'm here, and she might not get that opportunity if there's no ArtPop. So, before I can share some of this art with you guys, she has so much of it. She literally has to just give it out to people, because she has so many stacks of it. Just remember, art has the power to change lives, and it doesn't matter the age. That is why we need this funding for all of the Lydia's, for all of the abuelas out there. Thank you.

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.

**Wendy Hickey, 113 Freeland Lane**

**Robin Stockton, 13131 Rosedale Hill Avenue, Huntersville**

**Melody Cassen, 3218 Arbor Pointe Drive**

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much, thank you. You are our last speaker, and you did pretty well on making that really resonate with us, so thank you very much for that. So, that is the end of our speakers that are here tonight. Thank you guys for knowing that art makes a difference, and I hope that someday we'll all have the opportunity to be a participant in some kind of way that makes the City even better, because of its art and what we do with it. So, thank you very much for that.

Motion was made by Councilmember Ajmera, and seconded by Councilmember Anderson to (A) Approve a contract for \$2,000,000 with Charlotte Is Creative for Arts and Culture Grantmaking Services, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I have a couple questions. What does it mean to authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with purpose for which the contract was approved? What type of amendments are we talking about?

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so, thank you, Councilmember Johnson. I apologize, we've got to go really far back. As you will recall, the City Council approved \$11 million to go into the arts and culture ecosystem. The County approved another \$10 million, so \$21 million. Of our side, the \$11 million going into the \$21 million, \$9 million was hardwired, went over to the Foundation For The Carolinas, and it went to the 30 or so plus organizations that traditionally had been funded. I'll say the County piece a little bit, and then I'll get back to us. The County, in their mix, a lot of their money was for these individual artists and some of the smaller organizations. So, let's flip back to the \$11 million. When the Council decided to let the remaining \$2 million that would go to, let's say, the individual artists and other organizations, to go to an RFP (Request For Proposal) process, we had to amend the contract we had with the Foundation For The Carolinas, get our \$2 million back. Now, we've gone through the RFP process, and Charlotte Is Creative has been selected, and so now there's the opportunity to work through Charlotte Is Creative, to get the \$2 million back into the ecosystem. So, that's the amendment of the contract.

Ms. Johnson said okay. I also should thank the artists for speaking today. Thank you for coming and thank you for the beautiful art from your grandmother to the young man, thank you. Charlotte Is Creative has been selected. If I recall correctly, Charlotte Is Creative was identified as the provider, and then Council requested that an RFP be issued. So, the RFP was issued, and then Charlotte Is Creative won the RFP?

Mr. Jones said correct.

Ms. Johnson said okay. So, I haven't seen any rubrics or anything like that, and I'm sure that Charlotte Is Creative does a great job. This is multiyear. We funded them before, right?

Mr. Jones said well, they've been a part of what was the Infusion Fund, but this would be the first time that we have a contract directly with Charlotte Is Creative, as opposed to coming through the Infusion Fund.

Ms. Johnson said okay. So, art is very important. I don't know if you all know, I sent you texts that Charlotte BOOM was in District Four this past weekend. It was wonderful. It was exciting. So, art is wonderful, the Charlotte SHOUT, and we just do a phenomenal job of supporting art in our City, but we could also argue that art is also a tourist attraction in our City. So, I've asked the question about money from the Tourism Fund to support the arts. I think there was going to be some research on that. I know I brought that up a while ago. Can you give me an update on that?

Mr. Jones said yes. So, Councilmember Johnson, we did research. It was sent to the Jobs and Economic Development Committee, and I think it was unanimous that the funds not come from the tourism pot.



Ms. Johnson said from the committee.

Mr. Jones said from the committee.

Ms. Johnson said not from the Council.

Mr. Jones said I think there was actually a vote as we moved forward for this year, yes.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

**Councilmember Watlington** said it was tucked inside as a note of another motion, but there was no vote on whether or not funding would come out of there. It was slipped in as a note as part of background information on the vote for the structure.

**Councilmember Graham** said it came before the Council. It left the committee with a 5-0 vote not to do that, and I'm not sure it was an agenda item specifically, but the Council did have a discussion around the dais in reference to it, and it may have been a part of another line item on the agenda, but the question was asked and answered.

Ms. Johnson said okay, alright. Well, and there might be five or more individuals who feel that way, but I don't, and I've been public about saying that. Part of our arts plan, and I don't have the verbiage in front of me, but was to make art part of the tourism of the City, and I just think that it's important that we all contribute, all of the establishment and all of the powers that contribute for things in our City, and that the taxpayer dollars should be the last resort and not the first. So, I don't know that I will be supporting this grant at this time. Thank you.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said so, Councilmember Johnson, I was in your district over the weekend to celebrate the BOOM Festival. Great job with bringing so many festivals to the boardwalk, that didn't happen before. I'm very excited about the Kids Festival that's coming. So, I think this is really the question about the \$2 million that was already allocated in the Budget. This is not so much about the funding source. I understand your concern, though. In last year's Budget, we approved \$2 million to go out to individual artists and smaller organizations that depend on this funding. I'm worried about, if we are going to delay this further, it impacts the very organizations that we heard from. Over the past several months, we have heard from various organizations who have relied on this funding in the past that are on the verge of shutting down if this funding doesn't get out. So, I think there is a sense of urgency with this funding to get distributed so that artists and smaller organizations can benefit from it. I know that we went through the RFP process, and that's why it delayed this, but I hope that this is a lesson learned for us moving forward, that we just go ahead and do the RFP once the Budget is approved, so we don't end up in the delay that we experienced this time, which really put a lot of organizations and individual artists in a very difficult situation. We heard from various members, where arts has a way to transform lives. It's a way where you can bond with your grandmother or great grandmother. So, I understand there is a debate about the source, but I don't want us to delay this further, since the funding was already allocated and approved in the last year's Budget, so this furthers our commitment to our arts and cultural organizations, especially individual artists. So, I will be supporting this and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said what we did initially, to my understanding, was identified that \$2 million was going to be allocated. Although, I appreciate the work of Charlotte Is Creative, I agree with my colleague that we, Council, should have at least had the bid tabulation to know if any other organizations did apply, since we did create an RFP. I also appreciate all the arts that we have in our City. I think I attended several events, including Bikers Behind Bars, the untold story of black bikers and the Harley Davidson exhibit at the Harvey B. Gantt Center, and definitely appreciated seeing co-founder, Tim Minor, there at that event. The challenge I have is the fact that we've allocated 14.25 percent of that \$2 million, which reduces that \$2 million by \$285,000, so leaving \$1,715,000, to actually be allocated out. As was mentioned, we have a number of organizations that had verbal commitments regarding funding and are very close to

being in a challenging position if we do not move forward. I do not like the fact that, out of the \$2 million that we approved for arts, that 14.25 percent of that is going for overhead for an organization to administer, and if there is a new application process that people are going to have to go through versus here are the organizations that have been identified, let's get them the funding as soon as possible. We also don't know the total request. So, out of that \$2 million, what do we have out there that was verbally communicated as far as financial commitments? How much of this \$1.7 million, that's left for allocation, is in the timeline in which it's going to be distributed, so that we ensure that we continue to support the arts? Yes, we did have the conversation regarding arts is an economic driver. We know that people come into our City for Blumenthal, for Charlotte SHOUT, for Charlotte BOOM, for other things. Committee made a decision. I agree that that was a discussion that could've come to full Council, not just out of committee, because for our committees, we make a proposal and a recommendation to full Council for full Council to then vote on, yet we moved, that is done. My challenge right now is the fee that is being paid. So, I think it will be helpful as a follow up, sooner rather than later, if Council is updated on these allocations, so that we can ensure that these funds are getting out as soon as possible, and that we don't set ourselves up in a position where, okay, we've created this budget line item, this is a one-time for this \$2 million, but want to make sure that we have not just created another financial partner to oversee the allocations, when we already have one partner that's doing that, and that's Foundation For The Carolinas. Thank you, Mr. Manager.

Mr. Jones said so, thank you, Councilmember Mayfield. Let me see if I can unpack it. So, there were a number of entities that responded to the RFP. Everybody had an admin fee. It ranged from 13 percent to maybe 16, so I think that's important. The second thing, and maybe I should've started with this, this is new to us, because for decades the City would just have a campaign, much like the private sector, where dollars would be collected and sent over to the Arts and Science Council to be distributed, and for the most part, there was no Council vote on who got what. The last three years, Fiscal Year 2022, 2023 and 2024, we had the Infusion Fund, where the only difference was, \$6 million from the private sector, \$6 million from the City, goes over to the Foundation For The Carolinas. There's a bunch of things in terms of having money distributed, not only to those 30 some organizations that we typically do, but there were some great, innovative things, in terms of, and Julia's in the corner, I think I can get this right, on-call, open calls, and ways to get more money into the community. So, if you were to approve this tonight, we are still weeks away from funds getting to the individual artists and the organizations, because first we have to finish the contract. Let's say if we rocket docketed that and had it done in a couple of weeks, but then there's a process that Charlotte Is Creative is going to conduct, that people are going to apply for funds based on certain criteria, and that will be later in the summer. So, again, firstly, everybody had an admin fee, and then there's a process that would be open to everybody to have a part of the \$2 million. Did I get that right, Julia? Okay.

**Councilmember Anderson** said thank you for the update on the results of the RFP. I think when we initially spoke to going down the process of an RFP process, I agreed with that, but it's been quite some time since we initially made that vote, and that's just more time that these local artists have been without funding and support. I'm going to respect the RFP process. I'm glad that we had multiple entries in it, and it just wasn't one or two. So, we have an outcome there, and we need to proceed. I just want to say, I believe that these artists, of course they're economic drivers, as some of my colleagues have said. Of course, they drive tourism, but they're also small businesses. You can view these artists as small businesses. They create art and they either sell it, or they perform it for a fee, or display it for a fee. So, this is a small business opportunity for us that's multi-pronged in terms of the impact to the community enrichment, the economy, and driving tourism. Ultimately, I think we have to ensure that we're helping these small business owners in our community continue to thrive and add to the beautiful mosaic that is the Queen City. So, we're in a place now where we're about to vote in a few weeks to finalize the budget for this year, and we're still waiting to distribute these funds from last year, largely through a bureaucratic measure, and that's okay, because I agreed with going forward with an RFP. I will say, I encourage us to vote to move forward with this process tonight, because it's still a long runway before the funds are

actually in the hands of the local small business owners, who happen to be artists, who really need them. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

**Councilmember Driggs** said for one, we had a long conversation about where the funds came from. I think Ms. Watlington had proposed it. We gave it due consideration. We had input from various sources. We had an analysis provided to us. Again, five members, only one less than it would take for a Council vote, all agreed, and I just hope we're not going to have to do all of that again. That's all I can say. I think we're done.

I agree with Ms. Mayfield, 14 percent sounds high to me, but at the same time I've had a number of contacts from Creative saying, "What are you guys doing?" and a County Commissioner. The money has been available since July 1, 2024. So, I can't imagine us doing anything that delays this any further. I'm certainly going to vote for it. The question, Mr. Manager, for you is, wasn't it the intent that there would be a board established for the new ASC (Arts & Science Council) within the foundation, they would create a grantmaking body, and that that's how it would work? Do we expect that that will happen in the coming year?

Mr. Jones said yes, and I guess at a previous Council meeting, you made appointments to that board, the County has some, the City has some. So, that allows, moving forward, for the funds to go over to that board to be distributed the same way as you decided for this year, which is \$9 million hardwired, and \$2 million to be disbursed through a grantmaking process.

Mr. Driggs said and that would then be within the ASC?

Mr. Jones said absolutely.

Mr. Driggs, yes, okay. So, I think it's right that we look at this critically, but at the same time, I hope we all remember \$21 million for the arts. For years, there was a small amount from the County, and we were putting in \$3.4 million or whatever. The arts community has come a long way since then, and I think we've addressed a lot of the concerns that were identified in our arts and culture plan. I think we're acting in accordance with that. We've created financial security for the legacy venues, and we have capacity to fund grassroots. There's an equity component to our policy. So, I'm happy about this. I hope we all are, and I would love to see us move ahead with the \$2 million tonight.

Mr. Graham said I too want to support moving forward tonight. I was one of those Council members that voted against the RFP proposal, because I knew we would be back to where we are tonight. Not to diminish \$2 million, but certainly, Councilmember Driggs articulated, as well as the Manager, what we did with the \$21 million, and how that was allocated, and the process that led to it going out. So, I feel the frustrations of many of the artists in the room. The money should've been on the street months ago, because I felt then, as I do now, that the RFP was unnecessary.

Secondly, and off subject, I think Councilmember Driggs summed it up correctly. We had a robust conversation with staff presentation at our committee meeting about this arts thing. It came to the Council. It wasn't tucked anywhere. It was part of an agenda item, and any Council member had the opportunity to vote it up, vote it down, make a substitute motion, do whatever they wanted to do at the time. So, I just don't like the terminology that somehow folks were sneaking or tucking something away, away from the Council and/or the public. That's just not the reality that I understood that happened. Thank you.

Ms. Watlington said with all due respect, Councilmember Graham, it was absolutely tucked. I asked specifically about it at the meeting and wanted to know whether or not that was going to be a separate discussion. What was said, during that meeting was, "Oh, well, it was a part of the overall discussion." So, we never got an opportunity to vote on that specifically, and I do believe that it was intentionally tucked. So, I appreciate that we disagree on that, but absolutely, I asked very specifically during that

time about that, and it was not an agenda item in and of itself, nor was it a key component of the agenda item that was presented. It was literally a footnote in the bottom of the background information, which I believe was by design.

I do want to speak to the broader conversation around this arts piece, because we're talking today about \$2 million, and we're talking about what fund it should've come from or whatnot. That discussion has been had for this time. That said, we know that as we look forward to next year, we're going to be having some real conversations about what we need to do in our budget, and I think this conversation's going to come back. I know there was some discussion around NASCAR funds and those particular things. My key takeaway from that was that we really have not solved this problem, and what we see in future years, is that we're going to continue to need to address the growing need. So, that's the piece that gives me pause around the broader conversation, is that, though we had discussion for the time, that we really haven't figured out a sustainable way to continue to serve the arts and also the fundamental services that are going to need to be paid for out of property tax. So, I expect that we're going to have some version of this conversation again, especially as we think about raising taxes for next year, which all indications seem to be going in that direction. That said, as it relates to this particular conversation, these funds are already within the budget, but I absolutely agree with Councilmember Johnson, as it relates to the future of arts and where it needs to be funded.

Mr. Graham said and, again, we agree that we disagree. I think our budget's like \$4.2 billion, and we're talking about \$11 million out of \$4.2 billion budget. I think the math makes sense in terms of us and our commitment to funding the arts appropriately. I think the question's already been asked and answered over and over again. Many Council members don't like the answer that's been asked and answered, and so I just hope that we won't have a broader conversation about a question that's been asked and answered several times and folks just aren't happy with the response. I'm willing to have a conversation about anything, but we're kind of retracing our steps over and over and over again on a wide variety of topics.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. Yes, I'm not happy with the response, but I can move on, that's not the issue. I don't think any funding should be exclusive or excluded when we need the money. When you talk about \$11 million or \$2 million, there's 35 families that are being displaced right now. That \$2 million would be wonderful for them. There's a trailer park in your district, Mr. Graham, where people are being displaced. So, there are needs, and if there's this fund that we won't even talk about or is not accessible for the fundamental needs of the City, when this strictly or definitely fits within the Tourism and Hospitality bucket, I think that we're doing a disservice to our residents. Thank you.

Mr. Graham said again, I don't want to be argumentative, but I think the City is fundamentally meeting the needs of our citizens on a wide variety of topics, whether it's housing, mobility, economic development activity, supporting small businesses. Can we do better? Yes, but we have a \$4.2 billion budget that we have exercised and demonstrated a wide variety of capacity to solve community problems, and can we solve every problem every day, all day? Probably not, but we're certainly doing a very, very good job of allocating resources appropriately, and making sure every citizen is taken care of as much as we can, and certainly those who live in District Two, since you called District Two out. We're doing a really good job over there, but let's keep things in perspective, \$4.2 billion versus \$2 million or \$11 million, I think we ought to keep things in perspective in terms of how we allocate dollars. Certainly, \$2 million is a lot of money, but we have a \$4.2 billion budget, and we're meeting the needs of our citizens in a wide variety of areas, and I'm looking forward to our budget meeting.

Ms. Anderson said I think the whole conversation around source of funding on a go-forward basis, we should absolutely have that conversation, and we can have that conversation as we are addressing this current budget that we're working on now, but I want to make sure that we aren't handcuffing the funds that have already been allocated in last year's budget. So, I think there's a space and a place to have this conversation, and rightfully so, about sources of funding. However, these \$2 million

have been allocated in the budget. They've been sitting there on the shelf waiting for distribution while we have small businesses in our community that need those funds. So, I think we need to not handcuff these funds, in order to make space to have a conversation about future source funding. So, I hope that we can move forward with voting for the process to distribute these funds that have already been allocated, but then also agree that, as we talk about this year's budget and the season that we're in, we can revisit these conversations, but the small businesses need the money. They need the help now. They've been waiting. These monies have been available for months, upon months, upon months. We are about to be in May 2025. I think the time is right to move forward with the distribution of the funds. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

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

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

NAYS: Councilmember Johnson

\* \* \* \* \*

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

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so, Mayor, members of Council, it's one of those Mondays where we have the public forum, and people will be starting to get into the Chamber at 6:00 p.m. So, we have three items tonight on the agenda review, and I wanted to just offer up some of my time for the Manager's report for any of the items that don't relate to the City Attorney. So, I'm just saying, we know we can't do this in 30 minutes, so I just wanted to frame that. So, we have three items on agenda review. One is the determination of process for filling the vacant Council District seat Six, and we will have the City Attorney, and his team provide information there. Then, we have community area planning, which Monica Holmes and her team will provide an update there. Then, the minimum housing code with Rebecca Hefner and her team. So, Mayor, just trying to set expectations.

**Mayor Lyles** said alright, everybody understand? We're going to do a speed round, and if we have to come back and do it again, we might have to try that, but the first item is for the City Attorney, the determination of the process for filling the vacant Council District Six seat.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ITEM NO. 4: ACTION REVIEW ITEMS

**Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney** said thank you, Mayor and members of Council. Lena James, your Deputy City Attorney, will walk you through a PowerPoint. Just quickly, the PowerPoint will outline the criteria required for a Council member to be seated. It will then talk about a process. It will include a couple of proposed deadlines or timetables for you. All are within your bailiwick and your discretion. Lena, I'll turn it over to you.

**Lena James, Deputy City Attorney** said thank you. Good evening, Mayor, members of Council, members of the public. It's a pleasure to be here. I know you have lots of robust conversation ahead of you and a long night, so I'll be quick. We have about five slides, and so I'll go through them quickly with you. I believe Mr. Fox sent you a memo and some information about what we had done with a similar process in 2021. This was the same process that we also followed in 2017 when we had a vacancy. So, the law, the statute governs and tells you what you have to do as a Council member to fill a vacancy, but in terms of how you do that is a process that's up to Council. So, what I was going to do is just quickly outline the law, and then give you some options on the process, and you can decide where to go from there.

So, we received the notice of Councilmember Bokhari stepping down effective April 20, 2025, for District Six, which created that vacancy. The law says specifically, "The vacancy shall be filled by an appointment of Council." In cities like ours, where elections are partisan, the person who fills that unexpired, or the duration of that term, has to be a member of the same political party as the person who stepped down. The qualifications and the requirements for who gets to fill it are also dictated by state law, so the requirement again, is that applicants who apply and ultimately who become qualified and eligible to be appointed, would have to be a registered Republican, obviously, a registered voter, 21 years of age or older, and be a resident of the District and qualified to vote in City Council elections, so would have to be a resident of District Six. So, again, those two slides are the law, very high level, and then I'll get to the process.

So, one of the things that Council chose to do, that you all did in 2021, and I believe in 2017 also, when we had a vacancy, was to post and require interested candidates to submit applications. The information that was included in the applications in the past was the information that's listed here in front of you. I won't go through all of it, there were about eight areas in which you asked for information, which comport with what the law requires. The last item, I'll just draw your attention to the last bullet, which is an optional item, so that's again up to Council to decide whether you want to seek something like that or not. My recollection from 2021 and 2017 was that that was not required and was not included in the application, so again, that's a Council. The other pieces of the application, for those of you who were here in 2021, you may remember in 2017, there were three questions on the application form as well, in addition to these eight items. One of the questions was asking the interested candidates why they're interested, or the applicants why they're interested. The second question was identifying Council's key focus areas and asking the applicants why they're interested and what their principles are or what they would do in shaping the policy, as it relates to those five focus areas that you have. The last question was asking what their experience was that has prepared them for this position, and that experience could be volunteer experience, professional experience, or advocacy experience. So, those were the questions that you had, and there was an area for the applicants to fill that out.

I'm going to move on to two options that we're simply suggesting as options for your consideration. The first is what we're calling an Action A, an expedited timeline. The second, I'll call it Action B, and a regular schedule. So, the expedited action would require you taking some action today. The regular schedule would be you taking some action at a future date. So, on this particular one on the first item, I'll say, if Council were to take a decision, adopt, vote, to approve a process today, then I believe, as quickly as the end of business tomorrow, applications could be posted on the City's website. The City would work with our Communications and Marketing Office, as well as the City Clerk's Office, to post and solicit applications for that. I believe the Clerk's Office, probably by the end of the day tomorrow, could have it ready, maybe not by tomorrow morning. What we have done in the past was have that application out there for about a week. So, if we project out starting from today, applications would close on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. The following day, I believe by Wednesday, May 7, 2025, so by next Wednesday, the clerk should be in a position to pass on applications to Council, having determined who's eligible, and what the Clerk's Office typically does is check the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections to make sure that the applicants who've applied meet those criteria, the qualifications that we discussed earlier. So, they can do that verification, pass the applications on to you. Then, I will say, what I've proposed here for Friday is simply because the last time you did it, it happened to be on a Friday. Again, the process of having a public forum for qualified candidates is completely up to Council. Again, no statutory requirement for that to happen. It would be a Council decision. It can happen on a Monday, a regularly scheduled meeting date, but if it's happening on any other day, then we'd have to publish a special meeting notice for applicants to come in and speak to Council. So, if we projected doing that, let's say next Friday, not of this week, but of next week, that's the timeline we're working off, and that's why it's there, but again, it doesn't have to be a Friday. It could be at any time. If it's on a Monday, of course, it would already be a date you scheduled, and we don't need to call a special meeting.

So, you could make a decision, having reviewed the application and heard from the candidates, as early as Monday, May 12, 2025. Then, shortly after that, the candidate would be the next day. This is, again, what we've done in the past. The candidate who receives the votes from Council could be informally sworn in. That means the Mayor and the City Clerk are present to swear in the appointed candidate, and then the following Monday, at Council's next regularly scheduled meeting, the candidate could be there for the next meeting. So, in this case, again I will say, draw your attention to the last column there. Two different dates, that would be the first meeting where they have a formal swearing in, and the member joins you at the dais to participate in your meeting as a member. That meeting on this expedited schedule, on May 19, 2025, is a Zoning Meeting. It's also the Budget Adjustments Meeting, and the alternative, if you wanted to adopt a process or the person does it at the next regular Business Meeting, that would be May 27, 2025. So, again, just that schedule, and I have hard copies of this that I'll pass out in just a moment, but wanted to go through that. This Action B, again, an alternate option for you, is what we call a regular schedule that calls for you considering it today, actually taking the vote to adopt a process on May 12, 2025. In part, it's May 12, 2025, because your meeting next Monday on May 5, 2025, is a Budget Workshop, and probably not be an ideal time to do this. So, we propose May 12, 2025, as the time to do that, and then the timeline follows from there. The process would be the same, posting of the application, solicitations, verifying with the Board of Elections, etc. Then, again, the public forum piece of it remains an option, something that Council does or doesn't necessarily need to do, and just simply draw your attention to the appointment happening on a Tuesday, so that's that Tuesday after Memorial Day weekend, which would be when your meeting was. The following Wednesday, the appointed candidate could be informally sworn in, and again, join you on June 2, 2025, which is a committee discussions date, and the meeting is in here. So, in our experience, usually appointed candidates want to do the swearing in in chambers of the dais, and if you did that then the alternate date would be June 9, 2025. So, that's what we're looking at. I have hard copies of both schedules for you that I'm happy to pass out, and happy to take any questions, as is Mr. Fox.

**Mayor Lyles** said I wanted to ask the City Attorney. I had a conversation about when the Council takes its summer break, and Anthony, do you recall what that timeline was? I had a conversation with someone that was interested, and it was interesting because they said, "Well, we're going to be on vacation this month, or, "We're going to do this." So, I was a little bit concerned that we'd be able to tell people when we will have meetings, if you're interested in participating in the process.

Mr. Fox said it's July 2025 through August 4, 2025.

Mayor Lyles said it's July 2025, I know, but people don't know that. So, I was hoping that we would be able to put that in some place along the application.

Mr. Fox said Mayor, your last meeting is June 23, 2025, and then you would break until August 4, 2025.

Ms. James said so, no meetings between June 23, 2025, and August 4, 2025.

**Councilmember Watlington** said oh, you answered my question in terms of how the criteria would be verified with the Board of Elections, so thank you for that. I think that's it, thanks.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said so I'm not sure why we have an expedited schedule. We need to stick to our regular schedule or how we have done this. This is not the first time we've had to appoint. We've appointed from Mayor to District Representatives, that's not new. I would support the idea of us moving forward tonight to adopt the process, but I personally prefer the actual regular schedule, as far as April 28, 2025, and then having this time for opening up the application process, but us going to June 2, 2025, or June 9, 2025, I do not see a need for us to try to expedite this. That's just putting more onto Council members to read through any applications that may be coming through. I do support the idea of us, if we are in agreement, adopting the

process this evening, having the process open, but looking at the regular schedule timeline as far as giving enough time for community to complete their applications, public forum, the swearing in being somewhere between end of May 2025, beginning of June 2025, versus mid-May, end of May.

**Councilmember Anderson** said so I just want to ask, I'm looking at the expedited schedule and the regular schedule, where's the issue of time compression here, because the application process is still open for seven days in each one of them, right?

Ms. James said it is. It's simply a question of whether it begins tomorrow or whenever you adopt the process. If you adopted it today, we could begin it as early as tomorrow. Certainly, it could be delayed. Alternatively, if you went with the regular schedule and voted on adopting a process on May 12, 2025, then the application would open up. It could be as early as the following day.

Ms. Anderson said so, given that that is really the only issue as to whether we take an action to vote tonight so that the process can be opened as soon as possible, I say we move forward with that process. Because, effectively, we have a district that does not have a district rep around the table here. There's really no time compression in terms of how long the application will be open, how long we'll have to review the applicants, and having the conversations that we need to have. So, I hope that we would support moving forward with adopting a process as quickly as we possibly can, but of course, to Ms. Mayfield's point, ensuring that the application is open for a reasonable amount of time, those seven days, and that we have the time to review. So, I'd be an advocate for the expedited schedule for Action A. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

**Councilmember Driggs** said I don't know if anybody else got a text from Mr. Bokhari, but his ghost is still in the room. I will read to you, "All I'd ask is that you try to push them," us, "To do this as quickly as possible. May 6, 2025, is not just capital budget workshop, but also SouthPark's Symphony Park vote. So, having a D-Six rep at the table is critical." So, that's his input. Personally, I'm in favor of the expedited schedule. I believe the D-Six representation is important, and the sooner we get a D-Six rep on board to participate in the remainder of the budget process, the better that would be for the people of that district.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said I agree with comments made by Mr. Driggs and Ms. Anderson. I think it's important to have District Six representation, in addition to At-Large, especially as we are looking at the Budget. I'm leaning toward expedited schedule, so we can have someone in as soon as possible, but I also want to comment on personal information. If you go back to slide number four. So, where you have the last bullet point, I know that is something new, we did not have that before when we had filled the vacancy for Councilmember Mitchell. Excuse me.

Ms. Mayfield said I said the reason we're looking at putting it in writing, is because of the conversation when we appointed two years ago, [INAUDIBLE] we've had verbal conversations, we were looking at it being optional of whether or not to support it actually being in writing.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I think that's the reason I wanted to bring this up, because when we ask a candidate whether someone is running or not, it is not certainly something we can enforce, first of all, and if someone says, hey, I'm not going to run for district seat, it opens up a conversation where someone can run for another seat, whether it be At-Large or something else. Because in this case there is not really an enforcement, I personally think regardless of whether we put this or not, it would be an optional for a candidate to complete that question. I just don't think it's necessary, but again, it's optional for a candidate. So, all those candidates that are listening, that is not certainly a factor in my decision making, because ultimately District Six residents will get to choose who should serve them, and not the Council members. So, I wanted to make that very clear, as candidates are looking to apply, that will not be a factor in my decision. In terms of the timeline, I agree with some of my colleagues, expedited schedule is the way to go. That's all I have. Thank you.



**Councilmember Johnson** said I'm open either way. I just want to ask if the public forum, if it will be virtual? Because I know when Councilmember Mitchell, when we interviewed those applicants, it was over 100 applicants. So, I would just request that it be virtual.

Mayor Lyles said I think we can probably do that. I think that if I were a candidate, and is it virtual for the Council, or would it be okay for the candidate to come in, and say, I'd like to speak to you personally? How do we deal with that? Tell me what you think would work best.

Ms. Johnson said well, I mean I guess it's up for discussion.

Ms. James said the Council meeting probably has to be in person.

Mayor Lyles said it's in person, right, okay.

Ms. Johnson said well, the vote needs to be in person, but the meeting does not have to be in person.

Mayor Lyles said I think it would be a regular meeting. It's a called meeting. It would be a meeting that's just added to the schedule, so it would be a meeting.

Ms. Anderson said Ms. Johnson.

Ms. Johnson said yes, I was just going to say, you were a candidate before.

Ms. Anderson said I was. So, yes, I submitted an application for Mr. Mitchell's vacated seat, and I did present to the Council, and I was remote. However, I believe that the Council was remote. I can't remember that definitively, but I remember seeing Mr. Braxton Winston's face up on the Webex screen, so that's why I thought that the Council members were remote, but that was my experience.

Ms. Johnson said it was also during the pandemic, so that was fair. Do you think it matters? I mean, I'm open either way. I was asking if it could be virtual. Thank you.

**Councilmember Molina** said I've actually also gone through that process. I was one of the candidates for consideration in 2017, and I remember I was kind of a late entry, because I was doing the work of the 2016 Presidential Campaign. I had an office. I worked for the North Carolina Democratic Party. What I find with this process is, in some cases it's people that the Council has never worked with. So, the people who are interested in those positions, they meet the existing Council members. I remember I went way across town to CPCC (Central Piedmont Community College), an event with Ms. Mayfield. I spent three hours with Ed Driggs. That's one of the reasons why we have the relationship we have now, and that was many, many years ago. The appointment in my mind is not the vote of the people, it is the will of the Council. It's about a person who can come into our vacancy until the void is filled, and then we allow the people to decide, through a democratic process, who they would like to have represent them. So, we have to be careful, because I was fully on board with not doing this gig again. I was asked by the sitting representative to consider it, is the only reason why I did it at that time. That question right there is important, and we can't hold anybody to it, because it's not legal either. So, even if someone checked that box, we all know that if they say they're not going to do it, they still can. If they say they are going to do it, they decide not, and we all know that, but the challenge is, is that they earn the trust of people without having earned it through the vote of the people, by having the opportunity to work with them up front, and then using the weight of incumbency to run. So, it is somewhat having to make a really good choice up front, because we're putting someone in front of District Six, that District Six for the next few months is going to get to know who's going to be at their meetings, who's going to engage with the residents, in a way that someone who is seeking that office can't do until they make it through a primary election to get to a general election. So, we're going into budget season. I remember for the 2021 election, that weighed heavily, because you wanted someone

who could go into budget season and adjust to some of the really, really heavy decisions we have to make at that time. So, although we can't enforce that, I think it's important to note, especially for the community members, that the Council will need to be intentional about whatever decision we make, because again, that is an opportunity for someone through our appointment to earn trust from the community members in District Six. I mean, we have a recommendation, and I'm sure we're going to talk about what that recommendation looks like, but that's all I have, Madam Mayor. Thank you.

**Councilmember Graham** said yes, very quickly. I think either/or the expedited schedule makes sense. We can get started tomorrow and get someone seated as soon as possible, but I do believe that the last question is important, hopefully, that we will select a caretaker that will not run and make that pledge not to run, and if that person breaks their word, it speaks to character, and that's an ingredient the voters can take into consideration at the ballot box. So, I would hope that we would expedite the schedule, select a caretaker for a short period of time, and have the voters make the decision about who's going to represent that particular district for the long-term. Thank you.

Mr. Driggs said I'll just mention, I go all the way back to 2014, and at that time, Dan Clodfelter was a candidate. He had different conversations with people about whether he intended to run or not. At the end of the day, there was a lack of clarity about what had been agreed. I think it's something that's interesting to all of us, because of the implications of having a person that wasn't elected, then in a position as an incumbent. I'll point out also the irony of the fact that nine democrats and one republican are going to choose the replacement for their parting republican. This is without precedent in anybody's memory. So, I would like for us to ask that question, understanding that the answer is not binding. It's not binding on us, nor do we have any legal authority. It's not illegal, when you said, "It's not legal." The point is, it doesn't have legal force, but I would still like to know, and I would like to be able to consider that when I make my choice, because I do think, particularly in District Six, having somebody chosen by this group with an advantage in fairness, I think we really ought to just be aware and make our decision knowing about that.

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, and seconded by Councilmember Anderson to proceed on the expedited schedule, and that we include the last bullet and the three questions that have been traditionally asked by the Council.
--

Mr. Fox said Madam Mayor, just for point of clarity, the application will, though, also include the three questions that have been traditionally asked by Council. Those questions are, state your interest in serving as the District Six representative, Mayor and Council have the status [INAUDIBLE] focus areas and it talks about, as a Council member, what principles would you consider most important to shaping these policies as it goes through those focus areas.

Ms. Watlington said I've got a couple of questions, as I've listened to the conversation. Just real quick, Mr. Fox, can you please, just for the record, speak to the validity of this idea of enforcement for this particular question about intention to seek office?

Mr. Fox said is not illegal, but it's not legally enforceable. It is just a statement. The purpose of the application, for you guys, is to inform you, to help you make the best decision that you want to with regards to who is your colleague, and your vote on that will indicate whether or not you believe it's more valuable probative or not. So, you have that luxury if you have the question on there. If you don't have it on there then you just don't have that additional information that may inform your decision.

Ms. Watlington said thank you, and then my second question. I seem to remember there were questions related to your previous experience or related experience. I just want to confirm that that's on the application. That we'll have a view of what kinds of skills and experience that the people bring.

Mr. Fox said yes, the third one was, describe your previous experience, volunteer, professional, or advocacy, that has prepared you for a City Council appointment.

Ms. Watlington said thank you for that. The other thing I'll say, I'm still not quite sure what the rationale is behind the expedited schedule. I hear this idea of needing representation for District Six, and while I'll understand and appreciate that, what I don't want to do is sacrifice quality of the process, or an opportunity for folks to actually apply, because this expedited schedule would require a vote today, and then the application process opens tomorrow for one week. What I don't hear is what the communication plan is. What does advertising look like? I don't have a high level of confidence that there's going to be enough exposure to the people who might be interested to even know this is going on before the application closes. So, that, for me, feels like an access gap so I'm not comfortable with that. Also, I've got a lot of concern about their first meeting being in the middle of budget adjustments. I think that's a disservice to the people of District Six, as well as to the person who ends up in this seat. So, for me, I'm not a fan of the expedited schedule for those reasons. So, I don't believe I'll be supporting the motion as it stands, and I would also like to have some information about the communication. In addition to that question, I have a question about the actual Council appointment process and what that specifically looks like. I see it captured here as a Business Meeting, but I would like to understand what is the mechanics of that decision. Is it going to function like a regular City Council commission or board or is it going to look like something else? Without that information I would not be able to support beginning a process tomorrow.

Mayor Lyles said so let me start on your first one about how fast and whatever. I had a conversation with the Republican Committee Chair, to let him know and inform him that this is what we were doing today. Now, I know there are several people that are the committee chairs in this, but the way that we would address that would be to get it to the Republican outreach and have that go out as well as [INAUDIBLE]. I mean, you have to be Republican to be in the seat, and so we could give that to the Republican various groups, and that would be the way that we would try to get that word out. That would be my suggestion.

Ms. James said Madam Mayor, if I may add, it would also be posted on the City's website, email, and all those pieces of it as well, which is typically what we've done in the past.

Ms. Watlington said yes, if you don't mind publishing that, because I can appreciate it going to the Republican party, but we often understand that everybody's not necessarily active in the party on their list served beyond say the precinct chairs, or someone of that nature. So, I'll be very interested to see what that broader communication plan would be to make sure that we're touching folks. Then, the question regarding the appointment process itself. Are you able to speak to that?

Mayor Lyles said well, my experience has been that the Council basically votes. We would have Council meetings, and we would just narrow, I guess, the number of people that we would have and then we would continue to do that. It's kind of like a choice of how we've done, because it's really the choice of people that send in their applications. Now, is there any other reason?

Mr. Fox said no. The appointment process is really the vote of the Council. After you have heard from the potential candidates, then it's going to be a nomination and vote process, until you achieve a candidate that has six or more votes.

Ms. Watlington said that makes sense to me. I'm just thinking about every month when we have applications, and say there's 40 people who have applied, there is some round of people, if you didn't get to six, then you come back the next week, and with the narrowed choices, people may change their minds and that kind of thing, and I don't see that accounted for in this schedule. I'd also just like to see it formalized, so we all know what we're voting on in terms of what we're actually agreeing to go do, because I want that to be clear for the people who are applying as well.

Ms. Anderson said so, Madam Mayor, I believe that Interim Attorney Fox added that into the packet that we received, I believe, over a week ago. It went through that process of the nomination voting process, to your point, Ms. Watlington, if a candidate doesn't get to six, then here's the next step. It's step through step by step of what that process looks like.

Mayor Lyles said it's in that document. We can send it out again.

Mr. Fox said it was an initial document about the vacancy process. The intent, quite frankly, is that Council appointment action to be taken at that meeting and to leave that meeting knowing who the appointee is going to be. It's through an initial vote or a round of votes until a candidate gets to at least six.

Ms. Watlington said I guess that's where I'm struggling, and I don't want to belabor the point, because I've already said where I intend to vote, and I don't want to hold up the rest of the group. It feels like between a Friday and a Monday there's not sufficient information there to have heard from the candidates, reviewed, got down to a number of folks, then to come into a meeting and make a decision. So, thank you. I appreciate your responses.

Mr. Driggs said very briefly, I'm pretty well connected in the Republican community here in Charlotte. Everybody's aware of Mr. Bokhari's departure. I've had a lot of calls. We're not going to start cold with this process. I mean, most of the people that we're likely to consider seriously, are alert, and number of them have indicated an interest to me in applying. As soon as we get the word out that it's time, we'll start to hear from them. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said that's one of the reasons I put on the vacation schedule, as well as, like if you want to run for office. I mean, filing starts so quickly now. So, there's a lot of information out there for people that are interested in this.

Ms. Mayfield said so, this isn't new. So, I'm not understanding why, outside of the language, I have helped to appoint two different Mayors, two different Council members, one for District seats. We have done this. I think we're trying to clarify. The challenge I have is the fact there is even an expedited that was even mentioned. One week is not enough time for us to be able to truly give respect to the process. I also have a challenge of having someone come in during our budget cycle and them being plopped in the middle of that chaos. Yes, we had two members on this Council representing the Republican party. There's no reason to expedite. We didn't expedite when our Mayor was appointed to Secretary of Transportation. We didn't expedite it when we had to replace that Mayor. We didn't expedite it any other time. So, the fact that we're creating something new for this conversation is concerning, because it is process. Let's just stick with the process. The process has never been, up to this point, of having a week to try to engage the community, read the applications, have conversations for those that want to reach out to Council members, and to make a decision for someone who's going to be filling out the next few months. That's where I feel a challenge in this. It's like we're trying to create something new. Also, I respect the fact that our former colleague has a recommendation. That's not his job. Our job is to receive the applications from the community, from the residents who live in the District, who are part of the party that is being represented, and for us to make the best decision that we can. Because even when we had 100 applications during a previous time, the Council turned around and brought back an elected official who had already served multiple times and who was gone. So, at the end of the day, Andy Dulin could decide, hey, you've already been here, you know it, you understand it, for these couple of months will you come out? Because we also did outreach to individuals. When we replaced for District Two, for Councilmember Austin, when he accepted his opportunity, we outreached, and spoke to individuals, and a number of us spoke to former Councilmember Ivory, now Ivory-Cantey, to ask her to step into the role, because we were very clear that she was not interested in running versus having a conversation and then turning around and doing it anyway.

So, if we're going to try to do this, I want to make sure that we're not trying to create something new. One week, I do not believe, is enough time. I'm disappointed that there's even an expedited versus just start today, if we can get enough support to approve it, open it up, give it the two weeks that it needs and that it deserves, and we move on from there, but trying to rush it, especially while we're in the middle of our budget cycle, I think is a bit disingenuous, unless it's already been decided that only one person is going to be the person that is expected for us to appoint based off of recommendation versus truly opening the process up to the community for them to apply and for us to then review their applications.

Ms. Molina said I appreciate that, colleague. I know that you've been on the Council for some time. You've seen some different appointments. My challenge is, is that we do, we have the vacancy sitting there with no one to represent District Six there. Respectively, from a District seat perspective, the person that they're probably calling more often than they are reaching out to the At-Large members. I've seen varying degrees of what the community members that we represent believe about who does what, and I've seen people think there's a hierarchy, so to speak, or they don't know when to contact. I mean, it's just varying degrees of understanding, and I believe honestly, based on what my experience is, is that people tend to reach out directly when they have an issue to their District rep first, and then they'll reach out to an At-Large member if they don't get a resolution at that level, is what I've found. So, right now, those people are sending emails and there's no one there to contend with their requests, immediately, from their understanding. I don't want to make any type of assumption on the basis that there's a level of ignorance. I don't want to say that, but I do know that the seat is just sitting vacant. So, I'm inclined to move towards the expedited one. I've never been a registered Republican before, so I don't have relationships outside of just friends that I've made here or there over the years, but I don't understand, and so I would say that you would have a better grasp, Mr. Driggs, on where the party stands, and the understanding of where people would be prepared to move if we were to go forward with the expedition of this decision. So, I do feel comfortable expediting it. I did have, initially, questions about how fast we move, but I do, I believe that we could move this forward, and I think we could do both at the same time. I think we can get the word out, and we can go ahead and start to solicit this process to prepare.

Mayor Lyles said so, we have a motion on the floor to approve the expedited schedule. We've had some conversations about making sure that everybody knows what the process is and how it is. We will have a closed session at the end of this meeting, and so that gives us an opportunity to maybe perhaps think about some of the things that we're doing. I would just say that we need to have some way to move forward on this, because people are expecting that we will have a District representative. I think the representative asked that we actually try to have a District representative done quickly.

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, and Molina

NAYS: Councilmembers Johnson, Mayfield, and Watlington

Mr. Driggs said is there a substitute motion? Can we get something done tonight, please?

Ms. Watlington said so, like I said, the things that concern me I've mentioned. I think Councilmember Mayfield was fine to approve a process tonight, but not for the full expedited schedule. Me personally, I still want to see an adequate communication plan, but I will trust that we will see that very shortly. I'd like to see us make an adjustment to at least give time for those announcements to go out to give you time to speak to the Republican Party Chair. So, I'd love to see a shift in the application process opening perhaps on Wednesday. Then, as it relates to the final swearing in date, I would be more supportive of this June 2, 2025, or June 9, 2025, because I think that helps clean up some of the [INAUDIBLE].

pti:pk

Mr. Fox said I think, to interject, you have a limited Council tonight. You have only eight members, and five is a majority.

Ms. Watlington said it requires six per our rules of procedure. It's not based on quorum.

Ms. Ajmera said it needs six regardless.

Mayor Lyles said yes, regardless. I know, you were just trying. That's all very helpful, Mr. Fox, thank you.

Motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, and seconded by Councilmember Mayfield to adopt Plan B today, April 28, 2025, with applications open Wednesday, April 30, 2025 for two weeks, to close May 13, 2025. The appointment would be made May 19, 2025 and swearing in June 2, 2025.

Ms. Watlington said yes. So, it would be that we adopt today, April 28, 2025. Wednesday, April 30, 2025, then applications would open. Then I'm hearing that there is support for a longer application process of two weeks. So, May 13, 2025, for application close. Then, what I see from here is that after the application process closes, there's plus one week. I would push that, because, like I mentioned before, the concerns around that public forum to the actual appointment. Alright, May 19, 2025, for the appointment, and that'll give us an adjustment. So, that will be my proposal as it stands. Certainly, open to friendly amendments, but that would be my motion.

Ms. Molina said what was the end date?

Ms. Mayfield said May 19, 2025.

Ms. James said I'm sorry, May 19, 2025, for the appointment, and then you'd do the swear in. Their first meeting would be after that.

Mr. Driggs said so that's in between the two that we've seen, right?

Ms. Mayfield said yes.

Mr. Driggs said it's a compromise.

Mayor Lyles said it is a compromise, right.

Ms. Mayfield said all I'm saying is just give it two weeks.

Mayor Lyles said I know, we just have to decide if there are additional questions. Has everybody looked at their calendar? Lena, can you read the dates. I just want to make sure everybody understands the new proposed dates.

Ms. James said I'm sorry, I didn't catch all the new proposed dates. So, I'm going refer to Councilmember Watlington.

Ms. Watlington said alright. So, we've got April 28, 2025, Council votes to adopt the process, that's today. Wednesday, April 30, 2025, applications open. That process will then be open for two weeks, so that May 13, 2025, applications would close. We'd then push the next steps to line up with a Council appointment on May 19, 2025, which would then give us a swearing in date of June 9, 2025.

Ms. James said with no public forum.

Ms. Watlington said no, those items would remain.

Ms. Molina said so, June 2, 2025, then. May 19, 2025, and June 2, 2025.

Ms. Watlington said I'm fine with June 2, 2025. That's like you said a compromise between the two.

Ms. Mayfield said well, June 2, 2025, is committee day, so if we want to do it, because that's what June 2, 2025, is.

Ms. Watlington said I think that'd be fine actually.

Mr. Driggs said we can do it.

Ms. Watlington said June 2, 2025, swearing in, yes.

Ms. Molina said so, you want, just to be clear, Wednesday, April 30, 2025, for the application to open, for the application to close on May 13, 2025, and then you want May 19, 2025, to be the appointment date, and then June 2, 2025, to be the swearing in date?

Ms. Watlington said correct.

Ms. Molina said okay.

Mayor Lyles said and that includes the public forum on what day? May 9, 2025?

Ms. Ajmera said that's stays as is.

Mayor Lyles said as is.

Ms. Watlington said well, the applications don't close until May 13, 2025, so May 9, 2025, wouldn't work for public forum. So, it would just get pushed.

Mayor Lyles said so, then how do we deal with the public forum? We could be flexible, and if we get ten versus 100, and I'm expecting that we will not be getting 100. So, maybe upon closing we could all come together and figure out how many people that will be needed, and then maybe if we can have folks come into the office to do that.

Ms. Ajmera said so, when is the public forum?

Ms. Watlington said that's what I believe the Mayor was just saying, that pending the number of qualified applicants that meet the eligibility requirements, we could make a determination of when the best time for that forum would be between the May 13, 2025, and May 19, 2025.

Ms. Anderson said so, why push the opening of the application from May 29, 2025, to May 30, 2025?

Ms. Watlington said so that there is an opportunity, because I'm not comfortable with the communication plan. So, I wouldn't want us to vote today, and then it open up at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow. I want to make sure that there is time for there to be some thought given to how we are sending this message out to everyone before the application actually opens.

Ms. Anderson said is there an ask that you see, or review a communication plan?

Ms. Watlington said I would like to review it, but I'm extending some trust in our staff here that they're going to have that conversation and get it done.

Ms. James said we'll work closely with communications. My recollection in the past is, it's posted on the City site, it's posted on the City social, and other opportunities. So, every way in which we would typically push out city-related communications, it would go out in all those ways, and the Clerk's Office, Communications, and the Attorney's Office work very closely on that.

Ms. Anderson said perfect, thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said so, the swearing in would be on June 2, 2025?

Mr. Fox said right.

Ms. Ajmera said so, what Councilmember Watlington is suggesting, there is longer application period for more applicants to apply? That's the gist of it?

Ms. Watlington said right. Not so much for more to apply, but just to make sure people are aware.

Ms. Ajmera said but people have opportunity to apply? Like there is enough time for people to apply?

Ms. Watlington said exactly.

Mayor Lyles said but I would say that if, after everything is done, and the deadline is, we could probably revisit and see how many people we would have, because I just don't believe that it's going to be 50 to 100 people.

Mr. Fox said if I can try this on for you, what I'm hearing is you would start with Plan A, with the application process opening on April 30, 2025, and then you would close it and pick up on Plan B with the closure of the application, and then run the rest of Plan B out.

Ms. Watlington said I like the way you said that actually.

Ms. Molina said that actually looks like exactly what it is.

Mr. Fox said all that does is changes the opening and closing.

Ms. Watlington said plus the two-week window of the application process. That's the other part and it's a feature that's a variation of Plan B.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

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

Mayor Lyles said thank you all for the ability to do that. We are not going to be able to address the other items that we had on the agenda tonight. Thank you, team, for being present, but I think that we've got people downstairs, and we've got those folks to work with. So, we will go, and if everybody can get downstairs as quickly as possible. Mr. Jones, where are we going next?

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so, to make sure we're all on the same page. We are not going to do the minimum housing code. I've talked to the chair of the committee, as well as ACM (Assistant City Manager) Heath, and I could use my Manager's time to keep us on schedule with the community area planning process.

\* \* \* \* \*

The meeting was recessed at 6:59 p.m. to move to the Meeting Chamber for the regularly scheduled Business Meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina reconvened for a Business Meeting on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 7:08 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council

pti:pk



members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, Marjorie Molina, and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT:** Councilmembers Tiawana Brown and James Mitchell

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mayor Lyles** said good afternoon, I think it's maybe afternoon right now. It might be good evening to everyone. So, I want to call the Charlotte City Council Business Meeting to introductions, and we're going to go ahead and call ourselves to order. Thank you very much for being present and allowing us to take the time that we had for the other deliberations that we had earlier this afternoon. So, we will begin with our introductions.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

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

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you very much for that remembrance. We were very fortunate to have a ceremony with Mayor Pro Tem and I, when we had the towers and the climbing activity on Sunday. It was truly something that we should all be proud of, the way that we are supportive of our law enforcement officers, and especially those who have to deal with the loss of their lives, all of the families, the wives, the children. So, we're grateful for that commemoration. Thank you very much, Mayor Pro Tem.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

#### **ITEM NO. 6: REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP DAY**

**Councilmember Watlington** read the following proclamation:

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Labor has declared April 30, 2025, National Apprenticeship Day, to celebrate the successes of registered apprenticeship programs and raise awareness of their importance; and

**WHEREAS**, this day will highlight the crucial role of registered apprenticeships in creating opportunities for apprentices to earn while they learn, paving the way to quality jobs and well-paying careers within the City of Charlotte and across the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Charlotte recognizes the opportunity, through registered apprenticeships, to cultivate and maintain an inclusive and highly skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of the City's diverse departments that serve our community and strengthen our local economy; and

**WHEREAS**, registered apprenticeship programs empower employers to develop and train their future workforce, while offering career seekers pathways to rewarding jobs and careers, the City of Charlotte acknowledges the role of registered apprenticeship programs in expanding workforce opportunities, and our nation's economic strength in fostering innovation and competitiveness in key industry occupations; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Charlotte recognizes registered apprenticeship as a proven industry-driven training model and a key strategy for improving job quality and creating access to good paying family sustaining jobs for all, while addressing pressing workforce challenges, such as rebuilding infrastructure, training and skill development, sustainability, knowledge transfer and workforce readiness:

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Vi Alexander Lyles, Mayor of Charlotte do hereby proclaim April 30, 2025, as

**“REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP DAY”**

in Charlotte and commend its observance to all citizens.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 7: PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY**

**Councilmember Ajmera** read the following proclamation:

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

**WHEREAS**, the childcare system supports children’s growth, development, and educational advancement, and creates a positive economic impact for families and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, childcare providers are essential to the health of our communities by fostering welcoming spaces, supporting working families, and creating positive and reaching environments where children can develop lifelong skills; and

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

**WHEREAS**, support for affordable accessible high-quality child care represents a worthy commitment to help families work, support children’s healthy development and learning, and keep our economy growing:

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Vi Alexander Lyles, Mayor of Charlotte, do hereby proclaim May 9, 2025, as

**“PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY”**

in Charlotte and commend its observance to all citizens.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 8: NATIONAL DRINKING WATER WEEK**

**Mayor Lyles** said and before we have the reading of our last proclamation, I’d like to ask Angela Charles to come down and be the recipient of this recognition, and we will have the recognition done by Councilmember LaWana Mayfield.

**Councilmember Mayfield** read the following proclamation:

**WHEREAS**, clean and reliable drinking water is essential for the health and wellbeing of everyone in Charlotte, and protecting our water supply is a shared responsibility; and

**WHEREAS**, Charlotte Water provides over 117 million gallons of clean drinking water daily to more than 1 million people in the region, Charlotte Water’s dedicated staff work 24/7 to deliver safe water to homes, schools, businesses, and hospitals, meeting the highest public health standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the City’s three water treatment plants have earned top awards for their outstanding performance and water quality; and

**WHEREAS**, Charlotte Water has a strong safety record with no water quality violations and full compliance with all regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, continued investment and water infrastructure ensures long-term reliability, sustainability, and performance. Water is crucial, not only for everyday use, but also for public safety, including firefighting; and

**WHEREAS**, Charlotte joins communities nationwide in celebrating Drinking Water Week, to honor the importance of water and the people who make it safe:

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Vi Alexander Lyles, Mayor of Charlotte, do hereby proclaim May 4, 2025, to May 10, 2025, as

**“DRINKING WATER WEEK”**

in Charlotte, and commend its observance to all citizens.

Mayor Lyles said thank you to the entire team. Sometimes we fail to recognize how important it is to have a great team that works in this organization, and this great team, you deserve every bit of your standup of applause, and we are so grateful for what you do. Thank you very much.

\* \* \* \* \*

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**Mayor Lyles** said so, we are now moving into our public forum portion of the meeting, and I wanted to express the program that we have for maintaining order. So, on behalf of the entire City Council, I ask that all speakers and audience members be civil and courteous in their use of language. Neither insults, profanity, gestures, inappropriate behavior, nor comments, questions, or jeers will be tolerated in the Council chambers. Speakers are encouraged to address Council, and not necessarily speak to the audience members. Likewise, the audience members should not jeer, applaud, or interrupt speakers. All attenders should be polite, respectful, and listen to each other, so everyone can be heard. Thank you for your presence and your interest and thank you for allowing us to have this opportunity to speak with everyone. So, we are now going to begin with our speakers list and let me give you a little bit about the speaking. We will have the list of speakers that have been signed up by the Clerk. They will have two minutes for their remarks, and then following that, we will have no more than 15 speakers in the lineup, so that we can have those folks come down. I will call two people at a time, because we have a podium on both sides of the dais.

**Animal Care and Control**

**Carrie Klamut, 7100 Cornerstone Drive** said good evening, my name is Carrie Klamut. I live in the Browns Ferry neighborhood for over ten years, and I also serve as a leader with Halfway There Rescue. Every day our volunteer's step into situations that many would find unbearable. Dogs that are injured and dumped at the shelter, litters of sick puppies left to die, senior pets discarded after a lifetime of loyalty. We open our hearts and homes, sacrificing our time, our money, and sometimes even our hope, because we refuse to be numb to their suffering, but the reality is, we're drowning, and we are doing it largely alone. Charlotte, for all of its growth and prosperity, when it comes to animal welfare, our laws lag behind those of our sister cities, places like Asheville, Dallas, even Atlanta, cities that have made bold commitments to protecting their animals through stronger legislation, comprehensive spay and neuter programs, and proactive enforcement. Here, we have loopholes and weak policies that leave animals vulnerable, and rescues like ours are left to pick up the pieces.

It's not just an animal issue. It's a public safety issue. Numerous studies have shown that communities that tolerate animal neglect also see higher rates of violence and crime. When we turn a blind eye to cruelty, we normalize a culture of apathy, which spills over into how we treat each other. Compassion isn't optional, it's a foundation to a safe and thriving city. Tonight, I urge you to prioritize animal welfare in this budget cycle, invest in enforcement, fund programs that prevent suffering before it starts. Give the

Charlotte shelter, that does an amazing job, the laws, the resources and the leadership that its animals and its citizens deserve. We are doing our part, and we need you to do yours.

**Katie Ferraioli, 703 McAlway Road** said good evening, Council, and thank you for having me. My name is Katie Ferraioli, and I live in District Six. I am here as a volunteer and foster with Char-Meck Animal Care and Control. I want to reiterate the main request that we have been bringing to you for over two years now while ensuring we do not lose sight of the why. Last year, over 10,600 animals entered the shelter. We are averaging 127 dog intakes per week in 2025, which is up from 117 in 2024. Staff and volunteers work tirelessly to reduce the pain and suffering of these shelter pets, but despite our best efforts, the incoming tide of animals is too high. Euthanasia rates are up as we struggle to make space, keep animal stress levels as low as possible, and meet this ever-increasing need. City workers are exhausted. Volunteers are demoralized, and healthy and loving pets are dying because we cannot keep up. Our first ask is for ACC (Animal Care and Control) to be moved out from under the police department, in a transition that is meaningful in regard to its impact on staff salaries. In order to ensure adequate shelter staffing, employee positions and titles must accurately reflect the difficult work they do, to be comparable to other cities the size of Charlotte. Additionally, moving the department out from under CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department) will allow for an easier volunteer application process, as well as a direct line from the Shelter Director to the City Manager. More autonomy, less red tape, and salary increases will ensure the shelter is more efficient and dynamic in its processes and missions. Secondly, a new and state-of-the-art shelter is needed. With best practices in place regarding animal welfare and community support, we can reduce some of the stress, trauma and anxiety of animals and people alike while at the facility. We must ensure a new facility supports the dramatic increase and intake numbers we've seen as Charlotte continues to grow. We recognize that these solutions are just some of many that we need to address. We recognize the need for ongoing discussion and innovative thinking must continue in order to alleviate the stress and pain of these pets. Thank you for keeping us in mind.

**Krystin Lasprilla, 11626 Scottish Kilt Court** said good evening, Council members. My name is Krystin Lasprilla, and I'm from District Seven. I'm here tonight to urge you to approve funding to expand the shelter and make Animal Care and Control independent from CMPD. In just the first few months of 2025, foster families like mine have received more than 25 emails and urgent pleas from ACC, desperate calls to save animals who aren't coping well in the shelter environment, and often have days left before euthanasia. Those 25 emails represent hundreds of animals who are loved and cared for by staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to save every animal that they encounter. I want to paint a real picture of what it's like right now. On March 14, 2025, we had 43 dogs surrendered to the shelter. Four days later, on March 18, 2025, we had a typical day where 11 dogs went to foster homes and 13 were adopted. Yet, that left us with only 18 kennels open. Just three days later, on March 21, 2025, an additional 43 dogs were brought in as strays or surrendered. So, 40 plus dogs a day coming in, and less than 25 going out, it's easy to do the math, and this is not an unusual cycle. So far this year, the shelter has been under an emergency space shortage more than 13 times, that's an urgent crisis every other week. The shelter staff and volunteers work miracles with what they have, but the truth is the system is stretched to a breaking point. Foster families open their homes to these animals, because there simply isn't room in our current shelter. Every message that our families receive is another life on the line. ACC desperately needs the additional space that the shelter expansion project would provide. The staff also need the ability to manage its resources, make fast decisions, and tailor solutions specifically for the animals and the people who care for them, and that cannot fully happen while tied to CMPD. We appreciate your support. Thank you.

**Jason Swierczynski, 2826 Barcan Court** said good evening, Charlotte leaders. My name is Jason Swierczynski, and I've had the privilege of calling Charlotte my home for nearly nine years now. Tonight, I'm here to advocate for moving Animal Control out from the CMPD umbrella, and to request additional funding for Animal Control. The data is clear. As cities grow, the increased support for animal welfare services is needed. More

people mean more animals, and more that Animal Control must manage and house. To illustrate my point on this urgent issue, as Charlotte has continued to grow, between 2020 and 2024, the intake of animals grew by an average of 7.5 percent annually. Based off the first quarter of 2025, we're on track to see more than a 17 percent increase to the number of animals taken in compared to 2024. The last time kennel space was added to Charlotte's Animal Control system, was 1993, more than three decades ago. Since then, the City's population has grown 114 percent, yet, not one single, permanent, additional kennel has been added to this rising demand. The funding allocated for Animal Control has failed to keep up with the pace of the City's rapid growth. Here's another sobering fact. Without outside donations, the Animal Control would only have the resources to house animals, as legally required to, for four months out of the year. Currently, only approximately two-thirds of the dogs under the Charlotte Animal Control system are not even housed in one of their facilities. They're in foster's homes. No other municipality in the country operates with this ratio of foster dogs. This speaks volumes about the commitment that Charlotte residents have shown to prevent euthanasia. The question now is, will you as leaders do the same. Euthanasia cannot be the answer, and unfortunately it has been far too often. The handout that you guys have been given is about a dog that, myself and my partner currently foster, named Farah. Recently she had surgery to remove her leg.

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.

**Barrett Blackburn, [bb@cambridgeprop.com](mailto:bb@cambridgeprop.com)**

**Nancy Rios, [nancygrios11@gmail.com](mailto:nancygrios11@gmail.com)**

**Meredith Richmond, [meredithlynnerichmond@gmail.com](mailto:meredithlynnerichmond@gmail.com)**

### **Hispanic Homeownership**

**Diana Pollard, 13840 Ballantyne Corporate Place, Suite 185** said good evening, Mayor and Council members. My name is Diana Pollard, and I proudly serve as the President of NAHREP Charlotte, the local chapter of the National Association of Hispanic and Real Estate Professionals, the largest Latino business organization in the country. Tonight, I'm not here alone. I'm joined by my fellow NAHREP members, industry partners and community leaders who are united by the [INAUDIBLE] commitment to expand access to the American dream through homeownership, and I would like for them to please join me and stand up to please be recognized. These are professionals working every day with families who dream of putting down roots in Charlotte. Families who are driven, contributing, and building our city's future. We're here to share a key finding from the 2024 State of Hispanic Homeownership Report, which one of you will receive it individually by our partner. The Hispanic homeownership rate has now increased for nine consecutive years, reaching 49.5 percent, and that growth is not accidental. It's the result of the hard work, sacrifice, and resilience. However, progress does not mean the work is done. Many of our communities still face steep challenges, rising prices, limited inventory, and a struggle [INAUDIBLE] to credit and lending, and these are not just numbers to us. These are clients, our neighbors, our family, and the people that are here today. We support your initiative, like affordable housing development and the City-owned properties for development of the affordable housing. NAHREP Charlotte stands ready to be partner to bring insight data and lived experience to the table. We want to work with you to help shape housing policy that is inclusive, forward thinking, and [INAUDIBLE] equally. Thank you for everything you have done.

### **Autism Awareness Month**

**La Becky Roe, 5825 Falls Ridge Lane** said good evening, Mayor Lyles and City Council members. My name is La Becky Roe. I am the founder and Executive Director of Let's Talk About It - The Autism Center, but more importantly, I am a parent, an advocate, and a voice for thousands of families in Charlotte living with autism. Autism is

not a disability. It is a different ability. When my son was diagnosed with autism, the rate was 1 in 179. Today, it's 1 in 131. Yet, resources, especially for adults, have not kept pace. Look around this room. Autism has no look. Statistically, at least two people here are on the spectrum, even more are undiagnosed and countless families are walking this journey often feeling unseen. Let that sink in. In Mecklenburg County alone, more than 10,000 individuals are on the spectrum. Over 80 percent of adults are unemployed. It's not that they can't work, but it's because they haven't been given the opportunity. Charlotte has an incredible chance to lead in inclusion to show the nation what's possible when we invest in training and community programs that welcome neurodivergent people. Over the last 20 years, I have worked with CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools), United Way and Mecklenburg County's Crisis Intervention team. I've seen Charlotte's heart, and I know what we are capable of. I ask you tonight, not only to support these efforts, but to allow Let's Talk About It - The Autism Center, to be at the table as part of this important conversation. Together, we can build a city where every ability is valued, every voice is heard, and no one is left behind. Let's Talk About It - The Autism Center is keeping autism on the table and in the conversation. Thank you for the opportunity.

### **Alternatives to Violence Program (ATV)**

**LaVeisha Cummings, 205 Regency Executive Park Drive, Suite 450** said good evening, Mayor Vi Lyles, City Council, all present tonight. I am Dr. LaVeisha Cummings, Vice President of Youth Advocate Programs (YAP). Tonight, I'm here to advocate for continued funding for our ATV (Alternatives to Violence) Beatties Ford location. Joining me tonight are both our ATV teams from Beatties Ford and West Boulevard. In 2021, two years after partnering with Mecklenburg County, YAP also became the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County's first ATV partner, launching our Beatties Ford Road work, and later helping to develop programs to expand in West Boulevard and Remount Road in 2023. Our YAPWrap model, which is also used in our Mecklenburg County Youth Justice Program, helps program participants to see and nurture their strengths and connect them and their parents with needed resources to help them put their lives on a positive track. The YAP Beatties Ford Road ATV team does what YAP has done nationally for over 50 years, but with a slightly different approach. Across the country and here in Mecklenburg County, YAP contracts with communities to hire neighborhood-based experts to deliver individualized services to young people in trouble or crisis, as alternatives to having them placed in correctional or care facilities. From July 2023 to June 2024, our Beatties Ford Road location provided 25 program participants with wraparound support, had 20 violence interruptions, engaged 1,462 key individuals, and hosted ten community events, 26 community meetings. I want to thank the Mayor, the City Council, Mecklenburg County, the GreenLight Fund, Wells Fargo, The Just Trust, and every town, and all of our partners, for continuing to support this initiative. ATV is a national public safety model, and we hope that we're able to continue to support Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Thank you very much for your time.

### **Quality of Life**

**Timothy Lowe II, 3433 Axar Road** said greetings. My name is Timothy Lowe II. I am a wheelchair agent at the Charlotte Airport, and just a few months ago, I was living in a storage unit. You might've heard my story back in November 2024, and sadly not much has changed since then. After being forced out of the storage unit, I tried to stay in extended stays and hotels until I couldn't afford it anymore. Now, I'm facing homelessness again, and I'm living in my car right now. How is that I'm responsible for helping elderly passengers and people with disabilities navigate the airport safely and securely, yet the company that employs me doesn't think that I deserve a living wage. We are suffering. People are leaving, because this is not a stable job. The turnover rate is so high. The pay is too low for the amount of work that we do. We're also exposed to injuries, pushing two passengers at once sometimes, handling their luggage, and walking miles through the airport. By the end of the day, I'm exhausted. Our workload has doubled, and we barely get our breaks. The situation isn't safe for us as workers, and it's definitely not safe for the passengers we serve. We're asking for more than just talk. We need actions. We're asking you, City Council, to recognize the value we bring,

not just in words, but in fair wages, proper staffing, and safe dignified working conditions. We submitted a letter today explaining why the ordinance is legal. Now, we need you to hold a committee hearing, ensure the airport has standards that help retain experienced workers like me, because the truth is, when you invest in us, you invest in a city that works for everyone.

### **Hope in Charlotte**

**Denisha Branch, 301 Gainey Road** said good evening. First and foremost, I would like to thank God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit for protecting me, and I would also like to thank you guys for allowing me speak on today. My name is Denisha Branch, a native of Raeford, North Carolina, who made Charlotte my place of residency over 14 years ago. In a city that is rapidly expanding in various sectors, Charlotte is a beautiful city, a very dynamic city, with a population of over 2 million, a city I chose to call home, raise a family, have a children's [INAUDIBLE], and so much more. On May 13, 2023, I spoke at Mayor Pro Tem Braxton Winston's town hall meeting, held at the ImagOn Library about hope. Hope that as a community, we would come together as one and show the world that Charlotte is attractive, not only due to its economic prospects, southern charm, sports team and diversity, but it's a city where Council members diligently work to give hope to the hopeless, opportunities for the underprivileged, a home to the homeless, a voice to those that have been silenced, and hope to all that experience this vibrant city. It's now April 28, 2025, and I'm speaking about hope from a different spectrum. On July 17, 2023, I was wrongfully shot by CMPD while in my home with my then 8-year-old daughter. This incident changed the s of my life in many ways. The lucrative financial stability I once knew was snatched away. Daily mommy/daughter time was snatched away. Our home and the life we were building were all snatched away. Where's the hope that I once saw in this vibrant city? As a person who has now experienced homelessness and living in my vehicle, and rejection for resources that's designed to help those in need, where is the hope? Where's the hope in your emails to Mayor and City Council members, but no one acknowledges it, and the City you once saw as a beacon of light, has turned into a beacon of darkness. In a city for [INAUDIBLE], let's be a city of light, and see that there's hope again.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. Ms. Branch, we've asked Shawn to come and speak with you, so that we can get your story, and understand, because we do believe in hope in this community, so thank you very much. Shawn, would you go with Ms. Branch and help her walk through her concerns. Thank you so much.

### **Investing in the Community**

**Dorothy Griffin, 809 High Meadow Lane** said hello. My name is Dorothy Griffin, and I've been working at the airport for eight years. I have worked as a terminal cleaner, a cabin cleaner, and now I'm working inside of the pro shop for ABM (American Building Maintenance), ensuring that the workers who clean American Airline planes have the proper material. I play an important role in ensuring safe travel for passengers, but it is hard to do my job when I run out of equipment to give them. My co-workers, they sometimes don't have enough supplies to clean properly, they barely get breaks, and are constantly rushed. On top of all of that, we are making poverty wages, that's why we have such a high turnover. I am tired of not being appreciated for all our hard work, even in difficult conditions. It's a never-ending struggle, not making ends meet. I am always half a month behind on my rent, because it takes both checks to pay my rent. I just had to give up my car, because I couldn't afford the payments. It was either a car or a place to stay, and I can't stay in my car, so I chose a place to stay. Sometimes I don't even have money to buy groceries for the week, and sadly, I am not the only one at the airport that's living like that. Council members, you can make a difference to high turnover rates at CLT (Charlotte Douglas International Airport), and make the airport safer. Introduce case into committee, find a solution, and act now. Keep experienced workers like me on the job with proper pay, good benefits, and trainings, ensure that the passengers at CLT are safe and in good hands.

### **Air Conditioning**

**June Blotnick, 2517 Belvedere Avenue** said okay. I'm June Blotnick. I'm Co-Founder of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Climate Leaders, a broad coalition of 15 environmental and health-related organizations, including Charlotte Heat Mappers. While the City continues to make progress reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the dangerous impacts of our quickly warming planet threaten many lives in the Queen City. We strongly support The People's Budget request related to the proposed new code requirement for air conditioning. Specifically, we ask the City to fund a pilot program providing \$2 million for energy-efficient air conditioning units for 400 rental apartments. Dr. Aaron Levy, of Wake Forest University School of Medicine here in Charlotte, shared his concern with me about this yesterday. "With the increasing trend of extreme heat, the health of our community faces increased risks for heat-related illness, including heat stroke, especially vulnerable populations, including infants and young children, the elderly, pregnant women, outdoor workers, and athletes, people with chronic medical conditions, low-income populations and marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Air conditioning can reduce the risk of heat-related illness and mortality. For example, infants can have difficulty regulating their body temperature, and exposure to extreme heat puts them at greater risk for health effects than the general population. Installing energy-efficient air conditioning units is an important preventative measure to reduce the risk of heat-related illness, especially for these vulnerable populations. Air conditioning equals climate justice." Thank you.

### **Airport**

**Justine Lamoglia, 820 Tyvola Road** said good evening. My name is Justine Lamoglia. I proudly serve as a flight attendant with 12 years of service, and a representative of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants at American Airlines. Today, I stand in solidarity with the hardworking members of 32BJ SEIU (Service Employees International Union). People who are the spirit of our airport. They are wheelchair agents, cabin cleaners, workers who assist the elderly and disabled, maintain facilities and aircrafts, load bags, and help keep our operation running smoothly every single day. CLT recently became the sixth busiest airport in the world bypassing LAX (Los Angeles International Airport). American Airlines employees over 15,000 employees at CLT, and we are welcoming and growing more each year, but with that growth comes responsibility, to not just meet the demands of passengers, but to support the people who make growth possible. Right now, many of these essential workers are making poverty wages. Some are even experiencing homelessness. They don't receive fair benefits or get paid time off. This has contributed to high turnover rates and understaffing. With increasingly unaffordable cost of living and housing, we are pushing out the very workers who make the airport thrive, the contracted airline workers who ready your aircraft for the next journey, or the contracted wheelchair agents who assist passengers with disabilities and care for unaccompanied minors, those who maintain safety and efficiency behind the scenes, and who have assisted me and many other flight crew. Introducing case into committee is one step towards addressing this injustice. It creates better wages, benefits and working conditions, while also helping CLT scale up to growing travel demands and addressing housing and wage disparity. Say yes to case. Thank you.

### **Safe Alliance**

**Lisa Diefenderfer, 8125 Strawberry Lane** said good evening. My name is Lisa Diefenderfer. I am Suzi Canali's loyal steed, who had to be out of town tonight. I am the Senior Attorney at Safe Alliance and the Victim Assistance Court Program, where Suzi Canali is the Chief Legal Officer. I'm joined here tonight by our Chief Program Officer, Cori Goldstein. We'd like to express our deep concern for the projected funding reduction from the Financial Partners Grant. Victim Assistance and the City of Charlotte have a long history of working together. We've actually received funding from the City of Charlotte since 2008. This long-term funding has helped Victim Assistance provide critical services to those experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault. We view this funding as a partnership between Safe Alliance and the City of Charlotte, given the



crucial lifesaving impact our services provide each year. More specifically, we see our work as a supplement to that of our community partners that directly ties into your strategic priority of establishing safe communities. We closely partner with law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, local hospitals, and other community partners, to not only increase safety for survivors, but also for the entire City, especially that of our law enforcement officers. There is research tying domestic violence to community safety initiatives, including correlations between domestic violence and mass shootings, and identified crime data showing that domestic violence offenders present extreme risk to law enforcement officers. This funding also helps Safe Alliance staff our crisis hotline, ensuring that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, community members, such as yourself and law enforcement officers, have immediate access to learn about and connect to services provided by Safe Alliance. Hotline staff work in partnership with CMPD to utilize the evidence-based Lethality Assessment Protocol or LAP. LAP is a resource officers use within the field to assessment a victim's risk of being killed or seriously injured. Law enforcement then connect with Safe Alliance while physically with the victim to offer immediate safety.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you. So, we have a little bit of an issue here, because you need to sign up before you're going to speak, and if she was not here to speak, she should've said that to you. So, please go over to our clerk's section, and sign up with your name and appropriate. This is one time, but do not expect this kind of hospitality again, thank you. Please, if you'd join the clerk.

### **Tree Protection**

**Dave Molinaro, 7115 Chartwell Lane** said Dave Molinaro, Leader of Mason Wallace Park Advocates, here speaking on behalf of trees. Trees are steadfast guardians of shade on scorching days, architects of fresh and clean air, and upon occasion the quiet listeners to our personal woes, but currently in Charlotte, blink and they're gone. In 1970, singer/songwriter, Joni Mitchell, lamented "They Paved Paradise and Put Up a Parking Lot. They took all the trees, put them in a tree museum, and they charged all the people a dollar and a half just to see them." It would be an exaggeration to say that Charlotte will end up putting trees in a museum, wouldn't it? But stroll past any lot, cleaned of trees, any single-family home and you might wonder. We watch as bulldozers roll in, cleaning entire lots down to bare earth before construction begins. Destruction before construction. The photos I've sent you, taken over the past week, tell a woeful story about the quiet listeners to our personal woes. They say without doubt that our tree save ordinances are insufficient to the task of maintaining our community's health. Our trees are not safe, therefore, nor are we. I ask that you revisit our tree safety ordinances. For example, if a builder strips a lot of trees, that builder is asked only to replace one eight-foot tree per 50 square feet of lot. Thank you.

### **Strategic Energy Action Plan**

**Jennifer Roberts, 619 Clement Avenue** said good to see you, my former colleagues. Glad to be here. I am here as one who started the City on its clean energy path and zero carbon goals, called the SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan), while I was Mayor, and I'm also on behalf of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Climate Leaders, which I co-founded and represents dozens of nonprofits and advocates for sustainability, clean energy, and climate solutions. Thank you for the dashboard for the SEAP, which measures our greenhouse gas reductions, fleet updates, clean energy. It's great.

I've got three things for you tonight. Continue to support the SEAP. We're going to be voting on SEAP+ later in May 2025, and this is great because it's changing the goals to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 72 percent by 2035, and reach net zero by 2050. That's a new stretch goal, it's awesome. You're going to vote on 600 megawatts of distributable renewable energy to be installed by 2035, you're going to get 100 percent of electricity use in your buildings from zero carbon sources by 2030, and you're going get net zero emissions in light duty fleet by 2035, and the entire fleet by 2050. We know that it takes longer to get the heavy-duty vehicles to be electric vehicles, but you've got the goal, let's keep it, that's number one.

Number two, heat kills. You heard from the airport workers on that hot tarmac. Support The People's Budget with subsidies or mandates for those 7,500 apartments that don't have air conditioning. The last five years have been the hottest years on record.

Third, prioritize environmental justice in your Corridors of Opportunity, whether its transportation, extending bus service, getting shelters for bus stops, neighborhood improvements, green infrastructure, reducing heat, grants, residential building upfits, and solar panels, all those things in the Corridors, where the most vulnerable folks are located, and do support your airport workers too.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, everyone for being patient and listening and hearing and seeing the people in this community that spoke tonight. We do this on a regular basis, so if you didn't get a chance to speak tonight, please come back again.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **ITEM NO. 10: PUBLIC HEARING AND DECISION ON DIXIE RIVER ROAD FIREHOUSE NO. 44 VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Mayfield, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing, and (B) Adopt Annexation Ordinance 966-X with an effective date of April 28, 2025, to extend the corporate limits to include this property and assign it to the adjacent City Council District 3.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 68, at Page(s) 041-044.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 11: PUBLIC HEARING ON A RESOLUTION TO CLOSE A PORTION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY OFF SOUTH GARDNER AVENUE**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing, and (B) Adopt a resolution and close a Portion of Right-of-Way off South Gardner Avenue.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 559-564.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 12: PUBLIC HEARING ON AIRPORT 2025 GENERAL AIRPORT REVENUE BONDS**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Ajmera, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing, and (B) Adopt resolutions authorizing and approving the issuance of General Airport Revenue Bonds up to \$350,000,000 and calling for the execution and delivery of various documents necessary to complete the sale.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 565-625.

\* \* \* \* \*

## POLICY

### ITEM NO. 13: CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

**Mayor Lyles** said next, we're going to move into the policy section of our agenda, and I believe that I would turn it over to the Manager, so that we can discuss the information that he has on community areas.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said thank you, Mayor, members of Council. We weren't able to get this done in 267, so as I mentioned at the end of the meeting, we will have Monica Holmes and her team come up to provide you the next step of our community area planning. I guess the spoiler alert is, at the end, we're going forward to get to the end of May 2025, for a Council action, and this keeps us on track with that discussion. So, Mayor, unless there are questions, I'd like to turn it over to Monica.

**Monica Holmes, Interim Planning Director** said thank you for having us here tonight, and I am actually going to keep my remarks pretty short, and then turn it over to my wonderful staff to talk through the presentation. So, high-level is we released the Community Area Plans on April 3, 2025, the drafts, all 14 of them. This was a huge effort two years in the making, built on the adoption of the 2040 Plan from June 2021, and the adoption of the Policy Map in 2022. It refines and provides further guidance on both the Policy Map and the area plans. There are 14 of them. They provide both assessments, an updated Policy Map and a clear roadmap, as to how we would like to grow as a city. So, tonight, I'm going to turn it over to Kathy Cornett, who is our Long Range Division Manager, and Catherine Mahoney, who is the Project Manager for the Community Area Plans. We also have Dave Pettine here for any additional questions, as we talk about how these area plans impact the work that you do and impact our residents. So, with that, I'll turn it over to Kathy.

**Kathy Cornett, Planning, Design and Development** said thanks, Monica, and thanks very much for the opportunity to present the Community Area Plans as an information item. So, we released the plans, as Monica said, on April 3, 2025, and we've had a chance to walk through them and the content with many of you individually, which has been very helpful. As you can see, we've provided updates to Council's Transportation, Planning and Development Committee, pretty much monthly, and we were at Action Review at the end of last year. We'll be back at TPD (Transportation, Planning and Development) on Monday and before Council, on May 12, 2025, for a public hearing, and we're hoping for a Council decision later this month.

Tonight, we'll provide an overview of Community Area Planning, walk through the documents, and provide some applications examples, and we'll discuss the review and adoption process, and next steps. So, in a nutshell, these plans are about creating complete communities, and by complete communities, we mean places that integrate all the elements you need on a daily basis in close proximity. As Monica said, this has been a two-year process. It's the second major implementation item from the Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2021, the first being the Policy Map, which was adopted in 2022, and it's a five-step process to deliver 14 area plans over a two-year time period, with key deliverables at the end of each phase.

So, in phase one, setting the stage. We identified each geography's greatest needs, in terms of access to housing, jobs, goods and services, and reducing environmental impacts, and that deliverable was the community profile or community workbooks that have been available on our website. In phase two, creating great places. We focused on needed adjustments to the Policy Map, and we discussed that with the community over 42 workshops. In phase three, setting the stage. We focused on our interdepartmental partners, and their planned projects and needs, which were available in an interactive

web tool on our website as well. So, in phase four, we've packaged all the community's great work into one document to help tell the complete story.

So, these plans have been developed through a systematic process, meaning they were developed in the same way, have the same components and format, but the components are unique to each geography. So, as Monica stated, they build upon the goals from the Comprehensive Plan, and then they apply those goals at the community level. So, each area has a community profile that outlines who lives, works, and plays in the area, what growth is expected by 2040, and what each community's greatest needs are to ensure that expected growth benefits everyone, and we'll walk through this in more detail as we move through the presentation.

So, I've mentioned that these plans were created through a systematic process, and that they have both common and unique content, and this is a breakdown of what we mean by common and unique. So, for chapter one, the community profile, which I've mentioned a couple of times, existing conditions, demographics, projected growth. That's obviously unique to each geography, as are the priority goals and needs for each geography. That's unique content in each of the plans. When you get to chapter three, creating complete communities, the policies for evaluating development requests, that's common across all of the plans, but the recommended development pattern and types of change would be unique to each geography. Similarly, in supporting the vision, the policies for integrating open spaces and mobility choices in all areas, is common for all 14 plans, but there are mobility, open space, placemaking, and environmental impact assessments that are contained in each plan that are unique to each geography.

On the implementation side, there's an implementation guide that outlines action steps, roles and responsibilities, and timeframes that are common across all 14 plans. Each geography also has two, what we call, illustrative concepts that are aspiration examples of, if all of these things come into place, here's an example of how one unique place in this geography could develop over time. The plans also provide a common set of considerations for all decision makers to ensure that we're evaluating options in line with the City's vision, and these considerations are very important, but it's important to also remember that these are policies. They don't create regulations, laws, or ordinances. They don't solve all tradeoffs between competing needs and goals that may exist, they don't stop development, and they don't provide funding for implementation.

So, the rezoning process and the capital investment process are two of the most familiar ways that you'll see the area plans applied, and I'll turn it over to Catherine in just a minute, to walk through a couple of examples of those things. So, we know that plans are implemented in multiple ways, and those ways involve both the private sector and the public sector. For example, future development, the rezoning process, another way would be capital improvements and investments, and then also public and private partnerships, and finally the future alignment rezoning process. So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Catherine, and she'll share a few examples.

**Catherine Mahoney, Planning, Design and Development** said good evening. As Kathy mentioned, the plans offer a common set of considerations to ensure that decisions are consistently evaluated in line with our city's vision. Over the next few slides, I'll demonstrate how these plans offer considerations for the rezoning and the capital investment efforts. On this slide, you'll see a series of questions that point to considerations in the area plans for rezonings that are either consistent or inconsistent with the Policy Map. As a reminder, the Policy Map portrays the type of development that we'd like to see in the future. It was developed with guidance from the Comprehensive Plan and updated through this planning effort. While the map provides better guidance than our old land use map, there's still inherent limitations within that single document, and so these plans provide more guidance for decision making.

In the first example, I'm going to reference the image shown on the right. Let's imagine that a petitioner wants to rezone four single-family parcels that are highlighted in teal. You'll notice that the parcels are designated as Neighborhood-1, as indicated by the yellow color, and a lot of the surrounding area is also recommended for that

Neighborhood-1 type of development. The parcels in question, however, are adjacent to an area recommended to become a Neighborhood Center, as shown in the pink, which is envisioned to be a Mixed-Use walkable place. The parcels are currently zoned N-1A, and the petitioner is asking for a more intense zoning district, such as maybe N-1D or N-1F. Those two zoning districts are consistent with the N-1 Place Type. However, we know additional considerations are helpful when evaluating intensity in neighborhoods, and so these plans provide those considerations to help in decision making. I won't dive into the details of those considerations, but they touch upon things, such as lot size, lot access, and recommendations for adjacent development. For rezoning petitions that are inconsistent, the area plans start by offering guidance about the community's greatest needs and goals, as Kathy mentioned. They also outline criteria, that if met, would essentially qualify a request as being compatible with our Policy Map and in line with our growth strategy. Again, I won't go into the details, but they touch upon things, such as lot size, access, and adjacency. Finally, the plans outline mobility choices and open space needs, as well as design expectations to ensure that all future development is helping to provide those important elements that create complete communities.

The next example is an example of capital investments and how the plans can help inform mobility improvements. I'll note that these plans were developed in coordination with our partners, and so the recommendations within them are consistent with the priorities and recent efforts of departments, such as C-DOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation) and CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System). In this example, the City is considering investments along Harrisburg Road, near 485. The area plans restate that goal five, to create safe and equitable mobility, is important across Charlotte, and then they summarize the mobility choices that are expected, per the Place Type designations within our Policy Map, and the street classifications in Charlotte's Streets Map. So, in this example, the area shown in blue is expected to become a Community Activity Center, which is envisioned to be one of our most walkable Mixed-Use places, in part because of the mixture of land uses and intensity of development there, and then the Charlotte Streets Map provides a very clear guidance for the future cross-section of Harrisburg Road. So, after summarizing our mobility policies within the Policy Map and Streets Map, these area plans also summarize potential projects that have been identified through the strategic investment area work. They also summarize existing programs that will help address our infrastructure needs. So, at this point, these plans are really consolidating adopted policies, identifying potential projects, and existing programs, in an effort to really provide a very clear expectation of what we want for the future and what's planned.

Then, the plans go a step further to provide new information in the form of what we call mobility assessments. These assessments focus on areas that are recommended to evolve into some sort of Mixed-Use place, like a Neighborhood Center or Community Activity Center. The reason why the assessments focus on those types of places, is because they're expected to see the most change and accommodate the most growth over time. So, these assessments are expected to help inform both private and public investments. In this example, I'm moving from Harrisburg Road over to the south in our geography and looking at the intersection of Park Road and Ideal Way. You can see by the pink the area is recommended to become a Neighborhood Center, which is a Mixed-Use walkable place, and the assessment essentially evaluates how well our current mobility network is meeting our aspirations for the future. So, for example, how is a pedestrian network functioning, are there enough crossings, etc.? The expectation is that this information becomes a data point, say for a developer putting together a project proposal, or for an existing mobility program that is in need of prioritizing projects for those dollars. I'll mention that this example, it's outside of a strategic investment area, but if it was, it would function in the same way. It would become a data point to help prioritize those potential projects that have been identified. So, with that, I'll turn it back to Kathy.

Ms. Cornett said thanks Catherine. So, we know that planning is an iterative process and it requires a layered approach, so the Comprehensive Plan does lay out that approach for us, with the Comprehensive Plan being the umbrella document that really guides all of the other documents and all the other planning work that we do Charlotte.

The second layer under the Comprehensive Plan would be strategic and action plans, and you've seen some examples of those with the Strategic Mobility Plan and the Strategic Energy Action Plan, the third layer being Community Area Plans, which we're talking about tonight, and then the fourth being specific plans, which are more targeted in their considerations, smaller geographies, and really more implementation focused. So, that is another tool in our toolbox, as we move and continue the great planning work that we're doing in Charlotte.

There are a variety of ways to comment on the plans in keeping with our constant coordinated and collaborative approach that we've had throughout the process. So, there's a virtual open house that's available 24/7. The draft plans are also online, and they include a comment feature where you can comment online and you can also see comments that other folks have made, and even vote them up and down if you like. Staff is hosting office hours. We've been doing that for about the past month, Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons virtually, and we have hard copies of the plans available at libraries and upon request. So far, we've spread the word in a variety of different ways, and you can see on the left-hand side, the government channel, press releases, email blasts, social media posts, media interviews, etc. We have over 275 comments so far, and you can pretty much categorize those into the broad categories of questions, suggestions, and comments, but all of these comments are tracked and cataloged and will be responded to as well. This is just a sample of the types of things that we are hearing in each of those different categories, some are supporting, some are asking for specifics, some are not supporting specific elements.

As next steps, we'll be back at TPD next week, as I mentioned. Council and Planning Committee will hold a public hearing on May 12, 2025. We expect Planning Committee will make a recommendation at their May 20, 2025, regular meeting, and we're hoping for a Council decision by May 27, 2025. That is all we have, and we're happy to answer any questions that you might have.

**Councilmember Johnson** said thank you for the presentation. Can you go back to the slide that lists the stats that started with the Comp Plan, the Strategic Plans, and then the Community Area Plan? Yes, I just want to leave that up while we're talking. Let's see, it's in my slides. Okay, I just want to be able to look at it. There we go, okay. Thank you, again, for the presentation. We've spoken offline, and you know my biggest concern is outreach and communication to the public on these plans, because what happens, when people don't know about them, we hear about it afterwards. So, my question is, what percentage of the population did we hear from before the plans were developed?

Ms. Cornett said I don't have that number off the top of my head. I could certainly work something up for you percentage wise, but I would say the numbers that come to mind in this particular process, over the three processes, we've had over 1,000 comments. Specifically in the Community Area Plan process, we had 50 workshops, a combination of in person and virtual, we had over 700 participants, and we had a few thousand interactions, I want to say.

Ms. Johnson said the number I recall was less than one percent. Does that sound about right?

Ms. Cornett said it could be.

Mr. Driggs said a fraction of a percent.

Ms. Johnson said okay. How many residents on average are affected by each plan?

Ms. Cornett said how many residents are affected by each?

Ms. Johnson said how many households? Do you have numbers for each plan?

Ms. Cornett said I don't have the households off the top of my head. The growth that's expected, we have those numbers, but I don't have the figure off the top of my head of the population right now.

Ms. Johnson said okay, thank you. What's the communication plan for residents? What I would like to see is for the different areas to have a public meeting, where you go through the plan. Is that a part of the plan for communication?

Ms. Cornett said our communication strategy, you can see we've used government channel, YouTube, live stream. We have a variety of different means of commenting on our website. The plans are available on our website. They're available hard copies by request. We've done press releases, email blasts. Our email list that we have is almost 5,000 residents, a variety of social media posts. We've done television interviews, newspaper interviews, a variety of interviews that way. We have newsletters, and we've used a variety of different newsletters, not just our department newsletters. We've also met with a variety of groups in person, either at meetings that they host, or in a couple of cases, folks wanted to take advantage of the office hours, but they prefer to do that in person and we're happy to do that as well.

Ms. Johnson said but I mean a session where you go through the detail for each particular area?

Ms. Cornett said so, we've done that through the phases. So, really, folks have seen each of the elements of the plan at the end of each phase. So, in phase two, we focused on the Policy Map and tweaks to the Policy Map, and we had discussions around focus areas in each of the geographies. There were three opportunities for folks at each of those, so it totaled out to about 42 meetings. So, there two in-person opportunities and one virtual opportunity. In phase three, where we were talking about projects and programs, we used the cardinal geographies, and we had two opportunities, one in person and one virtual at each of those, and that was an open house forum where folks could walk around and ask questions. There wasn't a formal presentation at those particular meetings. So, we've had a variety of different options that were actually in the geographies.

Ms. Johnson said okay, but even with that, that was before the plan was developed, right, and there were less than [INAUDIBLE] percent of people.

Ms. Carnett said that was producing the plan, yes.

Ms. Johnson said so, what I'd like to do, and maybe we can talk offline, I definitely would like for the District Four areas, where you go through the plan with residents, so they actually understand how it affects or impacts them at their level, at their front door, if we can do that. Is that okay, Mr. Jones? I think that that will be helpful if residents understood how it impacted them directly. Like anything in life, how does this apply to me? People are busy. So, if we had some type of town hall or something, where you're in the actual area, and you're saying this is the West Side, or whatever, this is the actual plan, this is how this area's looking, this is our plan, what we want to see, and speak to people on their level. I know you all do a phenomenal job as planners, but this is a lot of information, so I think if it's specific for the residents in their area, I think that that will be very helpful. I think you'd get some input and feedback, so that it's not, the plan's developed, it's finalized, and then residents are finding out about it afterwards. So, I think that will be very helpful. Then, I need more plans. I've reached out to someone. I gave my plans to the District Four Coalition, the hard copies, so I do need three more copies.

Ms. Cornett said okay, yes, we're happy to provide that.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. That's all I have.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said so just before the Council meeting started, I had a conversation with Monica, Kathy and Catherine. Thank you for this comprehensive 14

Community Area Plan. It took me a couple of days to get through all of them. It certainly speaks to overall the needs of each area. For an example, we looked a few examples where we looked at areas near Inner East where economic justice was definitely high on the priority list versus other areas where we needed to get more jobs and housing. So, it really aligns overall with what I hear in the community, but there are couple of things that I had requested, so I just want to go on record explicitly requesting those items. One is to overlay neighborhoods on top of it, so that area plans are pretty clear, and to Councilmember Johnson's point, also highlight on the map, rather than just in the text, where we are looking at significant changes. So, to Councilmember Johnson's point, when we are looking at 14 Community Area Plans, residents are going to look at the one that they live in. So, in the map, if we are showing where there would be significant growth, whether it's Mixed-Use or whether it's Community Activity Center, people can understand that this is where it will be more walkable, or this is where our future investment dollars will go towards, to make it more pedestrian friendly. I think in our conversation I gave you an example where you have been highlighting that, W.T. Harris and Plaza, where we are looking at a more pedestrian friendly environment, going from drive-thrus to pedestrian friendly, it will change significantly. So, I think highlighting that on the map would certainly go a step further than just putting it in a text. So, those two items.

Lastly, I appreciate how you can go to each Community Area Plan on the website, and you have a comment section, where you can actually point to certain segments, and say, hey, this is where I need clarification, or it wouldn't fit here, it would fit somewhere else. I would be interested in seeing how many comments are actually making to the final plan, because I hear from community, yes, we can submit comments, but do you actually take that into consideration? So, obviously we're not going to be able to put everything that's in the comment into the plan, but what is the translation rate we are looking at? So, if you're seeing one comment over and over and over again, are we really seeing that being translated into a plan? So, ultimately that's what I'm looking at. On the slide, if we can look at the adoption schedule, okay. So, the decision is on May 27, 2025. If we can get at least this comment and how many of these comments finally made it to the plan, and what did not make it to the plan, and here is the reason why. If can that, at least a week or ten days in advance, that would be very helpful.

Ms. Cornett said yes, I'm so glad you mentioned that, because you will see all of the comments and how staff has responded to them. So, we do have a plan to do that, and you will see all of that, yes.

Ms. Ajmera said well, great job with Community Area Plan. I learned a lot about the City that I did not know, especially about the Brownfields and how many acres of Brownfields exist in each Community Area Plan. So, it was really a learning experience for me. Certainly, it's a great way to learn everything about the City, in terms of zoning and area plans. So, great job, Monica, and your team.

Ms. Cornett said thank you.

**Councilmember Driggs** said so as Chair of the Committee, of course, I've been following this pretty closely, and I appreciate Councilmember Johnson, your points and the concerns. I'll just reiterate what I've said a number of times, and that is that the great majority of the public does not have the time or the inclination to take to study this in such a way as to have an informed opinion. They're relying on us to do that. I think we've seen from past experience, you start to hear what people think when it makes its way into the zoning process and it starts happening near me. Then, at that point, it's interesting, members of the community suddenly become students, and they start reading our ordinance back to us, and they're experts. So, I will repeat what I've said before, which is each of us should read this with care and anticipate that it is going to come up during zoning conversations, and this is the time that we still have a chance to avoid things that might seem strange later. I'll just put it like that. I'm struggling myself, frankly, with the outlook, the practical implications. So, we know that there's going to be a Policy Map update, and that will then essentially establish what our reference is for planned consistency, is that right?



Ms. Cornett said that's right.

Mr. Driggs said okay, and that will be done in conjunction with the area plan adoption. So, you're going to see the Policy Map get changed. What is the extent of the expected changes? I know we've got a draft, so how much will change on the Policy Map with the adoption of the final changes?

Ms. Cornett said about six percent, and of that six percent, it was not only the community commenting, but it was also our own staff within the City. So, probably more of it came from our own staff's adjustments, but there was a total of a six percent change, and you can right now online look at the adopted Policy Map from 2022, and the proposed revised Policy Map, and the changes are outlined in yellow.

Mr. Driggs said so, if you remember, for example, the Trianon conversation. We were talking about, okay, this is what's here now, but what's going to happen later? What's that going to look like? Because then comes the alignment process, and I want to make sure everybody is aware and focused on that. The alignment process, as I understand it, is like what we have done before, where we basically assign new zoning categories consistent with our plan, but it's a large-scale effective rezoning, is that right?

Ms. Cornett said that's right, and it'll happen in multiple phases.

Mr. Driggs said so, that will define what you can do by-right at each location, in many instances different from now. Again, you're going to start hearing, as that process moves forward, from people who are affected by it. So, please, in the big picture, just be aware. We've got the Policy Map update. We've got the alignment going on. Then, we need to think about, when you look at the area plan document, how does that enter into our zoning decision process? Especially, if you're one of us district people, you're kind of looking at a staff recommendation, and there are explanations in the staff recommendation. Are they going to be informed by the area plan? The area plan does not modify the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance). The UDO is still the same. It's just an application guide. Is that a fair characterization?

Ms. Cornett said we're working closely with the Entitlement Services staff to incorporate how you will see the area plans and the examples that Catherine described into the rezoning staff analysis that you receive.

Mr. Driggs said so, I will just say that for now I expect there to be a lot more conversations about it.

Mayor Lyles said we have to wait for Dave now.

Mr. Driggs said oh, Dave, go ahead.

**David Pettine, Planning, Design & Development** said how you doing, everybody. I think Kathy did a great job answering that, but yes, to clarify just a few things. We will start to use those area plans after adoption as the basis for our consistency statement. Right now, you see consistent with the 2040 Plan. What you'll see moving forward, once these plans are adopted, is how does it line up or consistent or inconsistent with that geography's area plan. So, that's where that consistency will be derived from, because it'll be specific to that geography that the rezoning is occurring in, and you'll see that reflected in your staff analysis. So, you'll still get whether it's consistent or inconsistent. It'll just reference now the East Inner Plan or whatever area plan is applicable in that rezoning.

Mr. Driggs said sorry, Dave, I thought we were going to hear from you at a later date. So, thank you. That means then, when you put the staff recommendation, that there could be references in there to the Community Area Plan.

Mr. Pettine said yes, that's where all those references will come from. We may still point back to some of the overarching goals of the Comprehensive Plan as a whole, but the

point of these plans is to really boil down to what the needs are for that geography, understand what the general desired outcomes are, and how that request aligns with those. So, you'll see a lot more specificity in that, based on those 14 area plans.

Mr. Driggs said because I think it's fair to say, we're still processing what we've got. I look forward to talking to some of my colleagues about work that may still be needed on the plan as it exists today, and now this comes. So, it's a lot to get our arms around, but I do want to conclude by emphasizing what an amazing undertaking this has been, and magnificent job by you guys, wonderful work, and I'm excited about what it means. I mean, when I look at our Mobility Plan, and I look at what we're doing here, we are thinking ahead. We're not just reacting. We're not dealing with rules that are 30 years old. So, we are actively putting in place a vision for the City over the next 20 or 30 years, and I'm really excited to be here while we're doing that. Thank you very much.

**Councilmember Anderson** said thank you, both of you, for these plans. They are incredibly comprehensive and interconnected as well. I've had the comments from several neighborhood leaders that it's a great asset for them to utilize when thinking about their neighborhoods, in particular, the neighborhood of Cherry and the neighborhood of Dilworth. Both their leaders have really dug into these area plans and have thought about what does it mean for us, to the comments earlier. Also, just thinking about the previous area plans for certain areas, I used the example of Cherry. So, there was a Cherry Small Area Plan back in the 1990s, and then there was the Midtown Morehead Cherry Plan, and they want to, as an example, just ensure that the characteristics of that neighborhood are protected in this new plan. So, I'm working with them, meeting with them, and will continue to engage, but I just wanted to first give you all kudos on these plans. They're great assets for us to have.

You brought up the area of Park Road and Ideal Way on slide 14, and that's a really great example of something that sits outside of a strategic area investment. It's in District One, but it is an area that needs improved mobility, access to sidewalks, crossing intersections. You have Ideal Way and Park Road, which are two very busy roads, and yet you have a grocery store that sits there, several restaurants, and so there's a lot of foot traffic there, and at times some accidents, and so that's one area that I look forward to seeing how we can focus on.

The last comment I wanted to say was, on your next steps, and I know I've already invited all three of you, both you and Ms. Holmes, to our Third Annual East Side Intergovernmental Summit, which is on May 17, 2025, and that's going to be an opportunity to literally hear from hundreds of East Side residents. We've already socialized the fact that you all will be there, that the plans will be there, and it's a great touch point for you to gather the information. So, just add that to your next steps, because you will get input on May 17, 2025, from the Third Annual East Side Intergovernmental Summit. Thank you, all three of you. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Ms. Cornett said thank you.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said thank you, Madam Mayor. Thank you for the presentation. Just for clarification, the community input period was September 2024 to November 2024?

Ms. Cornett said there were multiple phases.

Ms. Mayfield said well, that's what we have on the website. So, as we direct people to the website, I want to ensure that what we're talking about now, as we're moving forward, as was mentioned, if we want to at least have the opportunity for as much engagement as possible. So, I know there's a lot more engagement that is happening for residents over on the north side off of Mount Holly and Mountain Island Lake area. They're getting much more engaged, because there's been a number of rezonings on this two-lane road. So, as we're talking about the area plans, looking at aligning our transportation, whether it's road widening, ensuring that we're not creating the problems through our approval of multiple multi-family, specifically, projects in areas that don't

have the infrastructure. You have two-lane roads we potentially have to widen. That's a year plus with negotiating for land and other things. So, as we work on these, I think it's also helpful, as my colleague mentioned, to create as many opportunities as possible for community to be engaged, because if they just go to the website and look, it would give the impression that there's not opportunities currently to see what's happening, and it also will direct you to a [INAUDIBLE] link that has a QR Code on it. That QR Code is not an active QR Code. When you click on it, you receive an error message saying, employee's only [INAUDIBLE] online, so to update that so that we don't have confusion. For me, when I think about, we just had a conversation regarding a data center, the impact of data centers environmentally. When we look at a Comprehensive Plan and we look at areas that were identified for residential, whether its multi-family, single-family, whatever versus industrial space, clearly identifying for partners, because it really seems like we're going in a direction of, as long as you have it in writing, whatever is presented, if it falls in this category, the expectation is a yes. I would like to make sure that we have very clear language of, communication with Council, not just us signing off on it, but an idea of what is the plan of growth for our City? How are we really looking to grow neighborhoods and community, certain types of industrial businesses, warehouse spaces, that are not in proximity of residential, and the potential environmental impacts of that? To me, that is all also a part of the Comprehensive Plan, when we talk about Charlotte's future, and I think it will be helpful, whether it's this Council or future Councils, to clearly be able to track the timeline of what's anticipated, 25, 30 years ago, where we are today, and what our goal is for the next 25, 30. Thank you.

Ms. Cornett said thank you.

**Councilmember Graham** said I just want to take this opportunity, again, to thank the ladies for the work you've done over the last several months and years, going back to 2040 Plan. I serve on the Transportation and Planning Committee with Ed, so I've seen this a number of times, and the one-on-one session that you guys had with me, I guess about two weeks ago, was really, really helpful, and I appreciate it. For those in District Two who really want to kind of get a deep dive into this, we'll actually be having our town hall meeting tomorrow, where staff will be there talking about the review of the West Outer and Middle Community Plans, key priorities, opportunities, and looking for resident feedback. That is the Mountain Island Lake area. We'll be at Christ United Methodist Church on Bellhaven Boulevard, and also C-DOT will be there talking about road crossings and local infrastructure projects, as well as NC-DOT giving updates on Mount Holly-Huntersville Road, Bellhaven and Rozzelles Ferry, Highway 16, Mount Holly Road and Highway 27. So, all that kind of connects together, and so we look forward to a really good meeting tomorrow. So, if residents want to kind of learn more about the plan, specifically on that side of the community, we'll be there tomorrow night. Thank you.

**Councilmember Molina** said I'll be quick. First of all, thank you. I guess, for those of us that get to hear it on a regular basis, I don't want to sound redundant. I'm actually the Vice Chair of Transportation, but Ed does a good job of really steering that ship in the right direction, being the senior statesman that he is. So, team, thank you guys for all the work that you've done. I was on a call yesterday, and actually Councilwoman Johnson was on the call, with the Black Political Caucus of Mecklenburg County, and Chair Nolley, we were talking about ways to kind of get people in the loop to make sure that the residents across our City are aware of the plans. The conversation started with transportation, of course, because there's now inquisition across the City, with regard to transportation. People are really interested in learning more, but then that led to our Community Area Plans, and she was really looking for that specific information on how we can spread that word. So, we're still, if I'm not mistaken, in the survey period. We are still taking feedback.

Ms. Cornett said yes. We would like the online feedback to close on May 9, 2025, so there's still plenty of time.

Ms. Molina said okay, because I was actually talking to Councilwoman Johnson during the meeting, and we attempted to kind of drop something in the chat that encouraged

pti:pk

people to participate in the survey, so that we could get their feedback. Again, this would be broad. This would be across the spectrum of those represented in this particular caucus, to gain their feedback. So, if you don't mind, what's the website?

Ms. Cornett said it's CLTfuture2040.

Ms. Molina said CLTfuture2040.com. Okay, and I'll make sure that all of us, if there are people who would like to give their feedback, learn more. I think we've all had, at some point, a town hall, and there's always so much to cover in a town hall, so the level of specificity, where we can really delve down and offer this information is a challenge, but like I said, I think we're doing a good job. We've always got the area of opportunity for getting our residence as engaged as we'd like them to be and I don't think that's on you. I think that's a work in progress. I do think we just have to keep working at ways to be as creative as we possibly can to get as many of our residents engaged as possible. So, that's all I have, but thank you.

Ms. Cornett said thank you.

Ms. Johnson said thank you, and I was just thinking that 14 town halls or community meetings might not be realistic by May 9, 2025. So, I was talking to the City Manager, and webinars, if you did webinars for each area plan, like the West Middle and Northeast Middle, and just go through those steps. That could be a webinar, and then on demand, so that residents could see the plan that applies to their neighborhood in detail. I think we underestimate our residents, that they don't want to be engaged. I definitely will speak for District Four. I know they're engaged, and don't just listen to what a personality might tell them. So, I want them to have that information. So, I think an on-demand webinar would be great for the residents, and I've spoken to the City Manager, who is committed to that, right? Thank you.

Ms. Cornett said okay, we'll certainly look into that, and we do have the virtual hours every Tuesday and Thursday, and we're happy to meet with folks virtually, or some folks have preferred to do it in person, and we're happy to do that as well.

Ms. Johnson said and we can talk offline. I mean a level of specificity for each area, so that they understand how their area is changing, because the City has a vision for an area that the residents are unaware, and may be opposed to, and I can speak specifically to the whole Mallard Creek area. I never hear anyone that's happy about all of the growth and the apartments, but I know how dense that plan is. So, for District Four, especially for me, I want to ensure that residents have the details. Thank you.

Ms. Cornett said okay.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **BUSINESS**

### **ITEM NO. 14: REGIONAL EXPRESS BUS SERVICE AGREEMENT RENEWAL WITH THE CITY OF GASTONIA**

<p>Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Graham, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt a resolution ratifying an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Gastonia for Regional Express Bus Service for an initial term of one year, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the agreement for up to four, one-year terms and to amend the agreement consistent with the purpose for which the agreement was approved.</p>
---

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 55, at Page(s) 626-627.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 15: AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT REQUESTS**

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to (A) Approve up to \$30,104,000 in Housing Trust Fund allocations for the following affordable housing developments contingent upon their receiving a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit award from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, where applicable: Baker Crossing, \$1,972,000 (nine percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 1, The Barton South, \$3,000,000 (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 3, Havenridge at Sharon Amity, \$6,000,000 (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 5, Union at Graham, \$4,400,000 (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 1, Woodward Apartments, \$4,550,000 (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 1, Aveline Newell Townhomes, \$2,430,000 (Homeownership) in Council District 4, Carya Pond Townhomes, \$1,632,000 (Homeownership) in Council District 5, Frew Road Townhomes, \$315,000 (Homeownership) in Council District 1, Tom Hunter Homes, \$405,000 (Homeownership) in Council District 1, Woodford Estates, \$5,400,000 (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) in Council District 5, (B) Approve up to \$800,000 in federal fund allocations for the Long Creek Commons nine percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit multi-family affordable housing development in Huntersville, (C) Approve up to \$1,500,000 in Transit Oriented Development Affordable Housing Development Bonus Program fee-in-lieu revenue to support Urban Trends acquisition of approximately 0.45 acres in Council District 2, for the future development of affordable housing, (D) Approve an annual reimbursement to Housing Collaborative in an amount not to exceed the Woodford Estates development's city tax bill for a Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Rental Subsidy Program over a 20-year period for 34 new long-term rental subsidies for households earning 30 percent and below the area median income, and (E) Authorize the City Manager or his designee to execute, amend, modify, and renew contracts and other required documents to complete the transactions.

**Councilmember Molina** said actually what I'm wanting to present to my colleague's tonight is, me and the four At-Large members, you had some residents in District Five to contact you. I organized a meeting last week to make the community aware of the affordable property. That is the one, Havenridge at Sharon Amity. So, I wanted to be clear, the community raised some concerns after we held the meeting, and I think we can get to a good spot, but I need more time with them, and I think it's only fitting for me to ask you to allow me to defer that particular one maybe until our next Business Meeting.

Substitute motion was made by Councilmember Molina, and seconded by Councilmember Mayfield to approve Item No. 15 with the exception of deferring Havenridge at Sharon Amity to the next Business Meeting on May 12, 2025.

Ms. Molina said Everything's fine, but if you'll allow me to have some more time with the residents, because they raised some concerns that I'd like to make sure that we get addressed. I have already told the community that it's pretty much by-right, and I've explained that this not a zoning petition, that this is one of our four percent noncompetitive loans. I explained as much as I can, but it was such a parenthesis of time, that I know that with a little bit more time, we could address those concerns, we could get some equilibrium and get to a good spot. So, it's definitely not a denial. I'm in communication with the development. Rebecca's been helping me with this, she's been absolutely fantastic, and I thought we could get there today, that's why I normally would do really good and send you emails and all of that, and I'm telling you we worked until the last minute, but it wasn't at that spot where we're good. So, I want to make sure that I just ask you guys to allow me to send that.

**Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney** said so for clarity, is the motion to approve Item No. 15, except for the Havenridge on it?

Ms. Molina said yes, sir.

Mr. Fox said okay, I just wanted to make sure.

**Councilmember Watlington** said two questions. The first one is, as far as it relates to the motion language, I think you said defer to, so I want to make sure the deferral was captured in there, and there was a timeframe, because my followup question to that would just be, I just want to understand what the impact might be, if any, to the project?

Ms. Molina said and she would be great at explaining that, because I can't do it justice, the four percent and the nine percent and she got that. I don't even want to try.

**Rebecca Hefner, HNS Director** said good evening. Rebecca Hefner, Housing and Neighborhood Services. Thank you, Councilmember Molina. We were working hard today on this one. So, the timing impact, if this is deferred and a vote occurs at your next Business Meeting, because this is a four percent application, not a nine percent application, this will not have that significant impact to the development timeline. There is a rolling application period for four percent bond allocation and tax credit applications, that runs actually from May 1, 2025, through October 2025. So, if this is deferred and then approved, the developer will have time to put forward their four percent application to the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency.

Ms. Watlington said thank you. Those are all my questions.

Mr. Fox said you still need to identify. So, the motion is to approve Item No. 15, except for the Haveridge item, which will be deferred until the next Business Meeting.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said I agree with Councilmember Molina, because there were five issues that we heard from the community, and they were very specific. So, one was the restriction on specifying 55 plus, and Rebecca, great job. You respond to emails in no time with so much detail. I certainly appreciate it. The community member reached out and you laid out pretty much all the concerns that they had and how to address them. So, I think some of those requirements would address Coventry Woods neighborhood's concern. So, certainly the restrictions around age, making sure there is accessibility for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirement, and then obviously there was concern around mental health providers, and there were some concerns around the property management based on the reviews of the other property. I think if we can just close the loop on those issues that would be great, but I certainly appreciate the work that you did. I mean, we got this email on certainly Monday, and you responded literally within three hours addressing every single bullet point. I very much appreciate that.

Ms. Hefner said that's called having a great team. So, all kudos over there.

Ms. Molina said and Madam Mayor, just for clarity, I want to make sure that I'm clear. She's been on the phone with me all weekend about this. I've been in communication with John Autry, and like I said, we set up a meeting at the Charlotte Museum of History. I knew the concerns were coming. It just was really about getting all the feedback that we could from the community. So, they did put that in writing, and they copied the At-Large Council members, and they wanted to make sure that they guaranteed stronger accessibility and some esthetics, and so I think we can get there, I really do.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I was just going to ask, and since you're up there it's good. What is the Area Median Income?

Ms. Hefner said the Area Median Income for 2025 for a family of four is \$112,000.

Ms. Johnson said okay, and then if I could get a copy of that chart that we're using. Then, just to clarify, the next Business Meeting, is that a month from today, or what's the date for this.

Mayor Lyles said our next meeting, Madam Clerk, is when?

**Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk** said May 12, 2025.

Mayor Lyles said May 12, 2025.

Ms. Johnson said okay, alright, that's all I had. Thank you.

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

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 16: CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to Authorize the City Manager and staff to work with recommended affordable housing developers to finalize the preliminary affordable housing proposals and negotiate conveyance of the following vacant city-owned properties for the development of affordable housing: 3924 and 3932 Freedom Drive, (parcel identification numbers 063-052-04 and 063-052- 05), conveyance to True Homes and Prosperity Alliance, and 7825 Tyner Street (parcel identification number 047-221-11), conveyance to Camino Community Development Corporation.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said so, when we're looking at these two, we're looking at a for-rent product of townhomes, as well as a potential for a sale product. I think it's a little misleading, because both products are, in essence, in partnership with True Homes, because even with the second property, it's still with True Homes. I would like for us to have some very clear language in there. I have said it on more than one occasion, as the only City member who actually has a new product by this particular developer, and is in the community where next door there are multiple concerns and complaints regarding the quality of the development, as well as the quality of the product, including if you say new, you have this expectation that there are certain out-of-pocket expenses that you would not have within a certain number of years. In less than a four or five-year period, I have had a neighbor that has had to replace the roof on their brand new home. There have been multiple electrical, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) related challenges that residents have had. So, if we're going to be using tax dollars to bring a product into our community, I want to make sure that above minimum standards, the highest standards, so that also we do not run into the challenge that one of our development partners has run into with a different developer, where they're now looking at a \$59 million short fall, because honestly of shoddy construction that was not caught. So, if this Council is going to forward with this developer, I want to ensure that the product that our community is getting is going to be a product that is not only going to gain equity for them, but also create a better quality of life, so that they do not run into the challenges that I see a lot of my neighbors going through on a daily basis.

**Councilmember Johnson** said thank you, Councilwoman Mayfield. I would support doing that. I was at a meeting today with apartment Manager's in District Four, and CMPD and the fire department and code enforcement and Solid Waste was there. It was a great meeting, but one of the things the apartments Manager's talked about was the quality of construction. The quality of constructions, or lack of quality, leads to code enforcement violations. So, I would say, we as a city, they're taxpayer dollars, the subsidies, but just as a standard, we really have to do something, and we can talk about this later, but lighting and cameras for apartment complexes. There are things that we can do in our standards that would improve the quality of life. So, I totally support

whatever we need to do. I'm excited about the True Home and Prosperity partnership. It's a good project for affordable housing or attainable housing, but we still have to ensure quality. So, whatever we have to do, Mr. Manager, during the permitting process, or something, or maybe a revision to the ordinance, but we should be able to have certain requirements and standards. Especially with this explosive growth in the City. We need to ensure quality, because in ten years we have to imagine what all of these units are going to look like. So, it's our responsibility to do that. So, I agree and support what Councilmember Mayfield is saying. Thank you.

**Councilmember Driggs** said so, I don't have any personal knowledge about the quality or the maintenance, or anything like that. I would invite True Homes to write to us, perhaps, if they would like to tell their side of the story. I think it's a little unfair that they can't respond. I will note that they do commit resources to construction, which they make available at their cost. So, they actually make an investment of equity in terms of managing certain projects, on which they have no markup at all, and that's their kind of community engagement on affordable housing, it's unusual. So, I'd like to just acknowledge that, and then to hear, as I say, their side of the story, because this picture that we're painting right now is not very flattering and it may not be fair.

Ms. Johnson said well, I'm not talking about True Homes specifically. I'm talking about development standards overall.

Mr. Driggs said I'm just saying they're not here. If we're going to talk like this about somebody, they should be able to defend themselves. So, I hope they will, and I just want to acknowledge the fact that they do have a sense of mission about trying to create affordable housing. Thank you.

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Molina, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmember Mayfield

\* \* \* \* \*

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, to go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the City Attorney to preserve the attorney/client privilege, and pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of employment or conditions of initial employment of an individual as an officer or employee, or prospective public officer or employee, or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I thought we were going to allow the attorney to respond to the union or the case. I mentioned that earlier. Is that okay if he does that?

**Mayor Lyles** said well, it's not on the agenda, so it would take a unanimous vote for us to do that.

Ms. Johnson said I think the fact that we're getting dozens and dozens of calls, and the union came out, if there's something that the attorney has to say or respond to all the folks that came out today, I think that that would be okay. I mean, I would make a motion to add it to the agenda.



Mayor Lyles said you're making a motion to add the response for the public hearing?

Motion was made by Councilmember Johnson to allow the City Attorney to address the speakers and address the case with his legal opinion today, and put this on today's Agenda.

Ms. Johnson said I'd like for the attorney to address the speakers and address the case with his legal opinion today, and put that on today's agenda.

**Councilmember Watlington** said I did have a question. If it was brought up in the public forum, isn't it already on the agenda?

Mayor Lyles said no, but we'll ask the attorney about that.

**Councilmember Driggs** said that doesn't make it an agenda item for our consideration. We sit and we listen.

Mayor Lyles said it wasn't on the printed agenda item for this meeting.

Ms. Johnson said but normally when people come and speak to us, they would expect a response. I mean, it's just our practice that we don't say anything. So, that's why she's saying it's [INAUDIBLE].

**Councilmember Ajmera** said in the past, we have responded to public without having a motion. So, I don't think we need a motion, because there are times where the Manager or the Mayor have responded. For an example, we had questions come up about Animal Care and Control, where we responded, "Here is what we are doing, here is where we're adding capacity." So, I don't even think we need a motion. It's up to the Manager or the attorney to just go ahead and provide an update.

**Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney** said there's no action item on the Council's agenda to do this, but as your City Attorney, I can just share with you where we stand at this point, and I'll do that. I have met with the union. I've communicated with their Chief Legal Counsel. They provided a 30-some page memorandum. We provided a response to their memorandum. Today, I received a letter from them responding to our response. Our opinion on this issue regarding case, and the ability to adopt an ordinance to mandate a livable wage be assigned to anyone contracting or being permitted to operate at our facilities, is that that is preempted by state law, and it's not allowed. There are two specific provisions that address it. It's the Wage and Hour Act, that prohibits a city from interfering with the compensation of any employees other than its own. Then, there's a 168.21 provision of the statute that addresses contractors that also prohibits cities from attempting to regulate and impose upon contractors a certain livable wage or wage concessions, and it also refers back to the Wage and Hour Act. In terms of the authority of the City, our authority only was given to us by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has not seen fit to confer upon us authority to regulate the wages of employees who are not our own. Specifically, under the Wage and Hour Act, it prohibits and preempts the interference with wages and compensation of individuals and companies, except, and there's an exception that says, except that a city may regulate the rate wages of its employees. It doesn't specifically grant the authority to regulate the wages of other's employees. You've got to read, under statutory construction, that if the General Assembly intended for us to have a broader implication on the ability to influence wages, it would have done so in that carved out exception. This is an effort, simply because individuals are working and offering services at our airport, to require us, as the owner of the airport, to impose upon the employers of those individual's certain wage concessions. So, it wants for us to insert ourselves in the relationship between the employee and its employer, and that is what the existing case law prohibits.

Mayor Lyles said alright. I see a lot of hands up.

Mr. Fox said and I have provided that opinion to the union as well.

Mayor Lyles said I think it was just a matter of a question. I mean, the attorney has said this is what he would proprot to us, and there are questions for it, so is that something that we can do tonight?

Mr. Fox said we do have a motion to go into closed session.

Mayor Lyles said we do have to go to closed session tonight, I promise you that. That's really something we have to do.

Ms. Johnson said I asked him to respond during the public hearing, and it was put off. So, I think it's okay. We serve the people, so when they come out, I think it's inappropriate that we don't respond to them anyway, but you all know how I feel about that. So, I think this is appropriate that we have a discussion about it when we had, I don't know the number, lots of people that were here.

Mayor Lyles said I'm not sure it's a discussion, as much as I thought, is there a question for the attorney. We don't have it on the agenda, so I don't think a discussion is appropriate, and we also have a motion on the floor right now.

Mr. Fox said and I'm available to talk to the representatives at any time. They have my number, they have my contact information, as well as, I'm available to talk to you offline.

Ms. Watlington said I'm sorry, I'm going to push back on that. If the public forum is on the agenda, the topics that come up in public forum are on the agenda. I don't see anywhere in our rules of procedure that say it's not, nor do I see anything that says that an action item has to be listed in terms of a vote to discuss something.

Mr. Driggs said do you realize that that implies anybody could get up there and say anything and thereby create a debate on this Council.

Ms. Watlington said it's a public forum, that's what it's for.

Mayor Lyles said I understand this, but I think we have rules, and the public forum, even that has rules inside of it.

Ms. Watlington said yes, but nowhere in our rules does it say that we cannot respond to the topic.

Mayor Lyles said I didn't say that there was a rule, but what I'm asking is the City Attorney has really been giving us good guidance on a lot of these things. So, what he's just said, what do we do in this regard?

Mr. Fox said I think the question to me was, give an oversight of where it stands. I think I've done that now. So, I don't know if there's anything else that needs to be stated, other than if there are questions, I'm available to answer questions offline.

Ms. Watlington said we have questions right here, and we haven't voted to go into closed session, so this body is still meeting.

Mayor Lyles said that's true. So, if there's a question, and there's no answer to the question, is that what we're doing in that regard? Is it just repetitive?

Ms. Watlington said well, let's ask our questions, and then we'll know whether it needs followup.

Mr. Fox said what's the question?

Mayor Lyles said what is the question?

**Councilmember Mayfield** said we haven't had a chance to ask them yet. I mean, we raised our hands, and were waiting, and then another conversation started. So, Mayor, I don't know if you had a chance to capture those of us that raised our hands.

Mayor Lyles said well, yes, I did see that. We still have a closed session, and it has to be done tonight.

Ms. Ajmera said I know, Mr. Fox, you had sent us a memo, and then we got a response back from the union's attorney, who sent us a memo, and they're citing General Statute 160A-20, where it states a city may contract with an appropriate money to any person, association, or a corporation, in order to carry out any public purpose that the City's authorized by law to engage in. A city may not require a private contractor, under this section, to abide by any restriction that the city could not impose on all employers in the city, such as paying minimum wage higher than the statewide range in Chapter 95, or providing paid sick leave to its employees as a condition of bidding on a contract. So, I know that they are citing certain statutes, you are citing general statutes. So, I feel like it's subjective interpretation.

Mr. Fox said it's not.

Ms. Ajmera said okay.

Mr. Fox said what were citing is 160A-21.1. If you read that statute, it really says that a city may not, as a condition of a contract, impose wage and hour requirements, that refers back to the Wage and Hour Act, that says that you are preempted. You're preempted which means you are prohibited from adopting ordinances, and I'll read that language to you. That specifically relates to the wages of employees other than your own. I implore you to read the statute in 95.25.1. First of all, the premise of the statute is to maintain a competitive position in North Carolina for business and industry. That's why it's adopted. It's adopted to maintain that integrity and that relationship, and then it goes on, to specifically provides that the provisions of this statute supersede and preempt any ordinance, regulation, resolution. That's what you guys do, you adopt those kind of things, or policy adopted or imposed by a unit of local government, which you are, or other political subdivision of the state that regulates and imposes any requirement on an employer pertaining to compensation of employees, such as wage levels of employees, hours of labor, payment of earned wages, benefits, leave, or well-being of minors in the workplace. That's pretty broad to me, and pretty much says it all.

Ms. Ajmera said I'm not arguing. I'm not an attorney, but I just think that we are getting a memo from their attorney.

Mayor Lyles said it's not an argument.

Ms. Watlington said thank you, Mr. Fox. I only had two questions, and I wrote them on the paper earlier after I read the letter. It seems clear to me what you're saying in regard to the general statutes and what you just read. The two pieces that seem new, if you will, from the letter that we got today, was this idea that the case ordinance is not actually trying to impose wages, but it was doing something else. So, I wanted to understand that piece, and then I wanted to also understand, it says, the case ordinance applies when the city acts as a seller in the marketplace. So, those are the two points that I wanted clarity on. What does this mean in regard to the city acting as a seller? Because, in my opinion, the money was going in the other direction, but those are the two points for me that I want to be clear about.

Mr. Fox said they are parts of an argument where they attempt to say, that because the operation of the airport is proprietary, offering services again to a private industry provides that, therefore, the preemption doesn't apply, because they're saying it's not a regulated service that you're providing, but what is attempted to be achieved here, guys, is that they are wanting you to insert yourself in the employee/employer relationship as it relates to compensation, simply because that relationship exists on property that you own, and they want you to do that, insert yourselves into that arena. Remember in North

Carolina, you're prohibited from recognizing and negotiating with unions. So, that's off the table, and to insert yourself into a represented employee base, is also problematic for you as well, and the distinction between proprietary and regulated is not one that I find persuasive, and the cases they've cited to support that position, are cases that are not North Carolina cases. They've cited, I believe, a West Virginia case and another jurisdiction, and that jurisdiction related to the Natural Labor Relations Board, and the preemption under the NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) Act, and that doesn't apply here either.

You're in an environment where you have a clear statute, and you have limited authority, and that's where you sit. We're not in West Virginia. We're not in another jurisdiction. We're not covered by the National Labor Relations Board or the Act, we're governed by the statute and the powers that are granted to us by the General Assembly.

Ms. Watlington said those are my questions, thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said Manager Jones, I actually have a question for you in this, or Mayor. I would like for us to be able to have a discussion in Budget and Intergovernmental Relation. The way our current RFP policy works. So, let's look at one of the companies at the airport. Well, there's a company that's at the airport that one of our airline partners works with. We also, as the City, have a contract with them. If our current process and policy is lowest responsive bidder, we take out responsive. We usually just go with lowest bidder. Lowest bidder tends to have lower wages. I have seen proposals over the years that may have had a higher number, but with that breakdown of how those funds were allocated, they actually had a different payrate for their employees. We do not have the ability, if I am understanding our Interim Attorney correctly, to mandate outside of City of Charlotte employees, which is why we haven't been able to increase their wages, but we do have an ability, when we are looking at contracts and when we are approving contracts, and I would like for it to be referred to Committee, for us to be able to have real discussion, and look at potential policy language that will remove that lowest, in order to get to responsive bidder, based on the needs of our community, and making sure that that contract and that bid is responsive to the residents that we have.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so, Councilmember Mayfield, I would say that, in all due respect, it's the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. We just don't take the lowest number.

Ms. Mayfield said it does not feel that way, and we can go back, and I'm not going to challenge that. I would like to have it referred to Committee, so that we can actually look at the numbers, because unfortunately, I can go in and pull up X number of proposals, and the ones where we do have the bid sheet attached, where we actually can see, it is not necessarily perceived as lowest responsible responsive bidder. It is that lowest dollar amount. I'm just asking if we can have a real conversation around what does that look like, and to see if we have the ability to put more emphasis on responsive versus a greater emphasis being on lowest.

Mr. Fox said it's a creature of statute. The statute spells out [INAUDIBLE].

Ms. Mayfield said but the statute is lowest responsible responsive bidder.

Mr. Fox said taking into consideration price, quality, performance, other factors that go into it, but that's the limitation that we have, and there are some other things afoot that you may want to delay having a discussion on.

Ms. Mayfield said I want to make sure that I'm understanding, as we're getting this on record, and we're also trying to adhere to the limitations we have. We are in [INAUDIBLE] state. We are in a pro-business state. Lowest responsive bidder, whatever amount that I can offer someone to work regardless of what is happening in the actual community that they live in, the only control Charlotte City Council has is directly with

Charlotte employees that we hire under this Manager. So, we can control the salaries of the employees of Charlotte Douglas International Airport, but not any other subcontractors within Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

Mr. Fox said yes, but you need to applaud what you've done. You have adopted a livable wage for the employees that you do control. I mean, that's to be applauded guys.

Ms. Mayfield said I was just asking for clarification to make sure that I'm understanding, and I appreciate that, because we did a lot of work to get there. That work started in 2012, 2013. I want to make sure that I'm understanding where we have authority. You're telling me, based on legislative policy, it's only on our employees. So, for me to ask for the Manager and the Mayor to refer to Committee for us to have a discussion, that that is something that we do not have the ability to do, because of legislative language out of Raleigh that sets the minimum standard of wages.

Mr. Fox said I'll say it a different way. You don't have the ability to do it, because the statute's pretty restrictive, in terms of what you can do regarding the compensation of individuals that are not your own.

Ms. Mayfield said so, the subcontractors, okay.

Ms. Johnson said I do have just one question. I've spoken to the Attorney about the contract and our ability for consideration. We can talk offline, but it was my understanding that there is some flexibility from the lowest and responsive bid, because there's other standards, right?

Mr. Fox said yes, it's the lowest responsible bidder, taking into consideration the quality, performance, timing. There's some other factors that trail that provision in the statute, which gives you a little bit of flexibility, but there's a bunch of law and procurement on how far you go, and what's the breadth of that language, and you still are restricted by the body of law that's made interpretations on that from time to time.

Ms. Johnson said okay. So, yes, I agree if went to Committee, because our conversation, I think, was a different one. When we spoke, we also spoke about the ability for termination of the contract and everything. So, I agree if we could send that to Committee to take a deeper dive on what the options are.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you ya'll for this, the conversation tonight. What I would like to do is have the attorney actually give us something in writing, and then if it's something that could move forward to Committee, then we'll do that. If it's something that we're still hearing these concerns, then we'll have that same conversation, but I think sending it to Committee is not helping us until we actually know what question we're asking. I think that putting Anthony on the spot to do it right away, I think, I would want us to do it in a way that's thoughtful and we have something documented from our attorney.

**Councilmember Graham** said and I'm not sure if the answer's going to change, I'm just not sure. I'm sure that we have an affordability problem in Charlotte, I'm sure about that, whether you work at the airport or you work anywhere in Charlotte, affordability in Charlotte housing, costs of high daycare, everybody is struggling, our frontline workers, so I get it, but I also get the fact that we have an attorney, and I've spoken with Mr. Fox on two occasions about this topic, met with Mr. Winston, read the incoming communications back and forth, and I understand the ask. I also understand the importance of the enterprise, the airport. I understand that it is not just a Charlotte thing, it's a regional thing. I'm not sure what we're trying to answer. I know specifically what they're asking. I'm not sure what we're trying to do around the dais tonight. We really need to think about what it is that we're trying to accomplish. I hear language about lowest responsible bidder. I hear what their request is. It's all convoluted to me right now. So, I'm not sure what the objective is. I think I'm certain that the response will not change. I'm not a lawyer, I'm not going to pretend to be one, but I'm wise enough to listen to one, in reference to what is being asked, or where the road that some would

like to go to, how it impacts the enterprise, and I think we ought to be really, really careful before we step in some quicksand that we all will regret in one form or another.

Ms. Watlington said if I may, I want to provide a little bit of clarity, at least from where I sit, because what I don't want is folks to walk away from here thinking that when we don't already know the answer to the end, that we're not willing to have a conversation. That was the point of this conversation, for me, was to understand with the new information, what and how or if that might have changed what Mr. Fox had given us. What I heard around dais, and it was very helpful for me to hear some of the other folk's questions and some of the other conversation, is that it doesn't sound like there's a persuasive argument to go down the road of trying to regulate wages. What I think I heard here, and to me what the objective was then to find out is, does it make sense for us to look at our procurement practices in a way that makes sure that we're prioritizing all the things that we find important, just like we do for small business participation and the like. So, what I would like or what I would expect to see, is that what comes out of the Attorney's Office is a response, if you will, to the new information, as well as some kind of assessment of where the boundaries might lie that we might be able to influence our procurement processes for the outcomes we desire, not because any one person has said this is what they want or they don't want, but to me, this is a policy question of how can we use or leverage our procurement process to drive the results that we want for the community. To me, that's the policy question that we would answer in committee.

Mayor Lyles said so, I agree that it is a policy question. I don't think that we have had a vote that says that this is what the Council wants to do.

Ms. Watlington said and I'm not saying we have either. He said he wasn't clear about what the objective was. So, I'm just making it clear about where I sit is what that is. I'm not asking you to go write something. We don't need a vote for you to make [INAUDIBLE] committee.

Mr. Graham said I'm not sure what the new information is.

Mayor Lyles said I'm not going to write anything or anything like that. What I'm saying is that the information has to come from the source that has the ability to analyze what these remarks are, and that's what we're asking for, but that doesn't mean that it means that it's a policy item that the Council would adopt. So, I think we could continue to do that. So, right now, we really do need to have a closed session, guys, no matter how tough this is. I think someone has a formulative reason for what we're going to do, and I think that the attorney is our first step.

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

The meeting was recessed at 9:38 p.m. to go into closed session.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:59 p.m. at the conclusion of the closed session.

  
Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk MMC/NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 4 Hours, 17 Minutes  
Minutes completed: May 27, 2025