

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Annual Strategy Session on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, at 10:05 a.m. with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding at the UNC Charlotte Marriott Conference Center and Hotel, Charlotte, North Carolina. Council Members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, James Mitchell, Marjorie Molina, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston II.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmember Lawana Mayfield

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DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said yes means that you are agreeing to these strategic priorities over the next two years as a Council together. Again, you will not have all the information that you need, but we are agreeing at 50,000 level that you're agreeing to work with a team to implement these priorities over the next two years. That's what yes means. No, means that you are asking them to not work on these priorities over the next two years. Does that make sense?

Councilmember Ajmera said this will only be one year because we're in an election this year.

Ms. Arnold said well I don't do elections. So, I'm just saying.

Ms. Ajmera said yes. So, next Council will set their priorities.

Councilmember Driggs said obviously, we're going to work on all of this? I mean one of the problems I have with this. Every single one of these is a Council priority in progress. We are not going to discontinue working on our UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) because it's not among the top three.

Ms. Arnold said no, no, no. Let me get there please. I completely agree with what you're saying.

Mr. Driggs said okay, but what you just said was you're not going to work on those.

Ms. Arnold said no, but I need you all to trust the process. It literally is my next step. I have it written right here.

Mr. Driggs said okay.

Ms. Arnold said okay. So, there were questions about what yes and no meant. So, I was answering that question.

Mr. Driggs said I'm responding to your explanation of what no means. We are not going to discontinue work on our UDO which is not among the top three.

Ms. Arnold said no, that's not how we're voting.

Mr. Driggs said tell me again what no means because I thought I heard you just say no meant [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said let me also say it again. We're going to vote on the priorities. Forget the top three over here. That was yesterday in terms of getting us further down the conversation to see where everybody is. Today you're actually going to vote on your priorities. I'm going to ask you about the UDO, affordable housing, corridors and HIRE Charlotte because I think from what we heard in the room, we don't need to spend a lot of time on that, to your point, and there may be others in terms of questions and those kinds of things. So, I'm going to ask you about that today because they are further down the road, certainly they're not coming off.

Mr. Driggs said if they are taken further down the road, the UDO is effective on June 1st.

Unknown said I think what she's saying is we're not going to have a vote on the level of specificity about a specific thing that's not already a priority. That's already a priority.

Mr. Driggs said [inaudible].

Unknown said [inaudible] that we're not going to add to the list.

Unknown said [inaudible]?

Unknown said the UDO is already on the list.

Ms. Arnold said please, please.

Mayor Lyles said so, let's just say that everything we've listed is important. It wouldn't be up here if it weren't important. I think what DeAlva is saying, and this is something we've done consistently when we talk about in public to communicate, to listen to this community, what we're trying to do, is we have a list of things that we're working on more actionably. If it's in [inaudible] implementation, I think that what you want to say is that it's not dropping off of the list because it is implementation. Who said this yesterday? Danté, you said you wanted to be included in the updates on this.

Councilmember Anderson said right.

Mayor Lyles said so, that's not a no that we're not going to get updates on these things that are implementations. So, maybe the word is it's not a policy decision, it is an implementation. So, why don't we go with these are our priorities and here are the things we expect for implementation. Would that be a better fit?

Mr. Driggs said I think the corridors are already well established.

Mayor Lyles said I think that they are established as a policy, but I also think we have a discussion on them that's on this list about what the dynamics are for each of them. I don't know that I would say that we have policy plans and playbooks for everything.

Ms. Arnold said we're going to discuss that today and your vote would be a no, and that's fine.

Mayor Lyles said we're going to discuss it, yes.

Mr. Driggs said if you guys think you're clear on what we're doing, I'm fine.

Councilmember Anderson said I'm clear.

Ms. Ajmera said yes. I think what she's trying to do is really level set, but then also take out implementation items from the policy. A lot of things, for an example SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan), 2040 Plan, digital divide plan, all of that is really under implementation. Really the policy items that we have, for an example housing, mobility, all of those will probably get more discussion because we need to discuss priorities and policy. We already decided on whether we're going to do it or not.

Mr. Driggs said okay, but I thought I heard that affordable housing, corridors and jobs were the three that we said.

Ms. Arnold said yes, I was just trying to level set on the day. The only other thing is I'm also going to ask you to limit your comments to two minutes if possible. I'm going to use a blue mat today to get your attention.

Ms. Ajmera said I thought you were going to say one minute.

Ms. Arnold said I don't know if that's possible. Two is going to be hard enough, but we'll get there. We want everybody's voice to be heard and everybody to share appropriately.

So, just be succinct and I'll be clear to recognize people today and move forward. Let's move forward and have a great productive meeting. Thank you.

Councilmember Johnson said I do want to ask about the two minutes.

Ms. Arnold said yes?

Unknown said this is an annual strategy meeting and it's an opportunity for Council to discuss things. I think that two minutes is almost unfair if you will.

Ms. Arnold said okay.

Unknown said just because this is what this meeting is about, for Council to come together.

Ms. Arnold said so, I will have a two-minute watch here and based on how the conversation is going, I'll do that, but I was going to do that anyway. Thank you, I should've said that.

Unknown said thank you.

Ms. Arnold said thank you for saying that.

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ITEM NO. 1: WELCOME AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said good morning. Thank you all for coming back. We've had a slight change in the agenda. We're going to revisit strategic priorities and initiatives for the Council then move to the legislative agenda items. Hopefully we will be on track still for the 11:00 tourism panel. Then we'll move to closed session and then move to the remaining items on the agenda. So, thank you for your patience with the changes. Today we're going to put a slide for the priorities that were old from yesterday, then we're going to put up a new view of the priorities. It is only there for the purposes of beginning and kickstarting the conversation, not intended to be a recommendation or anything that is directional. It does reflect what we think we heard in the conversation on yesterday, but the discussion should certainly be about what is there.

Each of the Council members will be asked to vote on their perspective on what they believe the strategic priorities as a Council should be. Before the vote, we'll ask for clarifying questions on some of these items. The Council may want to consider whether it's feasible to limit the priorities to five so that the staff can actually move to strategies that are actionable and a very clear implementation plan in light of all the work that is already ongoing. Certainly, a lot of the initiatives that we'll talk about are already underway, already committed as policy for the Council. So, those may be shorter conversations. I didn't clarify with the Council if you want to vote on each item as we go through them or go through everything at first and then vote. That is my recommendation, but I didn't ask for clarification.

Mayor Lyles said let's go through everything. Is it okay to go through everything first so that everybody gets [inaudible] at one time [inaudible]?

Ms. Arnold said very good. Thank you. Is it correct that we do not need to discuss affordable housing, Charlotte 2040 UDO, Corridors of Opportunity or HIRE Charlotte at length today?

Mayor Lyles said I wanted to say on affordable housing, it's always been a priority that we've had, but I think the question is more specific. We have a new \$50 million allocation. Are there changes that are needed or recommended? So, a discussion around how we spend that. I think if you're looking specifically at this, how do you spend the \$50 million that the voters approved last November? So, I would like to be that kind of specific as an

example of what we're trying to achieve as we put this up, because affordable housing, we've been doing this and doing it well.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said Shawn, there's an additional \$22 million that's still out there on top of the \$50 million?

Mayor Lyles said right.

Shawn Heath, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services said yes. For ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) right now based on Council's recent action, it's about \$25ish million.

Mayor Lyles said so, specifically we'll have the opportunity to smudge in. I talked to Shawn yesterday. He's gotten the RFP (Request for Proposal) out. These things are going to come in and we're going to have to prioritize what comes in to be available. So, it's like NOAHs (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) versus new construction, 9 percent versus 4 percent. That's the question on affordable housing. Is there anything that I left out? Okay.

Ms. Arnold said okay. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I was thinking and asking Council to affirm or if I've left something out. So, in Corridors of Opportunity we've had a lot of research done by the team. There's a cross departmental focus on these teams and what I think we're trying to do on Corridors of Opportunity is continuing to emphasize those areas that we had historic disinvestment, to have positive investment. I believe you have some recommendations, but I think that the question really is how do we get that out of the staff recommendations and that's referred to economic development as a committee item. So, that would be consistent. The mobility network I'm going to skip.

SEAP, we see that as an overarching, and we've talked about that. SEAP is overarching. So, we've got well managed government, we've got equity and engagement environment. Engagement, is that up there?

Unknown said no it's not.

Mayor Lyles said okay, we need to put the engagement part up there as well.

Ms. Arnold said okay. Yes.

Mayor Lyles said HIRE Charlotte I think is one that we probably need to have a discussion here to have clarity. The small business, minority business development needs discussion. Digital divide I think is an implementation item just like our UDO. UDO is going to be effective in June, so we have implementation issues that are being discussed in the team with development and we're just going to have to have communication on that. Digital divide is the same way. Did I miss anything that you would add to or help define better? Okay. So, I'm going to say affordable housing would be a vote. Corridors of Opportunity, discussion and a vote. HIRE Charlotte, discussion and a vote. Small business, minority business, discussion and a vote. Okay? Anybody disagree or do we want to add or subtract anything? Okay. Thank you.

Councilmember Anderson said thank you for the summary. We're voting on number one, number three, number five, and number six. Is that correct? Okay. I just wanted to make sure on five that after the vote potentially we can discuss this, but the added dimension of workforce development that's not present in HIRE Charlotte today. We can have a conversation about that. We don't need to necessarily vote on it, but I just want to make sure that we're building that out. That's something that we're going to actually build out as we go forward.

Mayor Lyles said Ms. Anderson, that's really a good question. The question isn't about necessarily HIRE Charlotte, it's what do we feel there's a gap that needs to be addressed

and that's important. The how it would be addressed is a discussion that follows what is the gap. We ought to be appropriately planning for those things that we have questions that we want to resolve. So, I would say the question here is what is our gap that we see in HIRE Charlotte? So, that's a really helpful way of looking at it because the Manager ultimately would have to staff, budget, ED (Economic Development) Committee has this as well.

Councilmember Winston said I think a couple of years ago the Council and the community decided to reprioritize not necessarily based on specific silos of work. We recognize the community based on the equity report that was referenced several times yesterday, that in order to achieve the outcomes that are needed, we agreed to a strategy, a systems change approaching our work from a plan perspective not simply a deal making perspective. As I thought about the conversations that we had yesterday, and the conversations that we've been having as Council throughout this term, I fear that we're kind of reverting back to a kind of deal-making approach and not having fidelity to that systems approach. So, I think it was kind of what was the DNA of trying to figure out how to define our priorities. I think we need to prioritize what our approach is.

Are we going to figure out, "What can you do for me? What is going to be in my district? What is most important to me?" Are we going to kind of have a fidelity to that systems approach? So, it's hard for me to vote yes for any of these because it feels like voting yes means that [inaudible] the approaches that we've been on as an organization for the past six years. So, I just want to put that out there. I would suggest that we find a way, as it was said, how do we elevate the way we're having these conversations and the way we're prioritizing to our partners and our city and in our region at large. I think it's dangerous if we revert back to the deal making approaches, the way we were doing it.

Mayor Lyles said I agree with you Mayor Pro Tem. I think that you're right. We have to elevate this which is probably why I'm concerned about having the discussion around mobility, because we've got to elevate it around the planning and what are we trying to accomplish. I think that discussion needs to be just as important as the discussions around this. I think we can always come back and talk about where this fits in our priorities, but the discussion has be elevated. I don't know how the remainder of the Council feels about it, but I do think that in terms of a systems approach, if you look, the ones that we're talking about, that have more clarity about what we're trying to define, they fit in our priorities of neighborhoods, safety, economic development, and planning. In some ways a small amount of transportation or mobility in there, but I think that we have to have a different discussion around mobility because I don't think that's as clear as a systems approach that you talked about.

Councilmember Driggs said I think one of the strengths of this Council has been that we have been advancing on a bunch of different fronts. So, we have worked on mobility, we have worked on the UDO, and we have in our committees work that's being done on a variety of things. So, I just want to be clear that we may be deciding right now on emphasis or on what requires the most immediate attention, but it doesn't mean that we are not going to sustain the effort that we've established in some important areas. I'll mention for example, economic development, public safety environment. They're not even up there. So, let's just be clear that our commitment to the areas that do not get identified as being priorities remains and that the work will continue. I think we have a lot to talk about still on mobility, especially after yesterday's conversation. We have Council level work to do on exactly what that means and how we go about it. So, I think to sort of demonstrate to the public the urgency that we see around our top priorities is okay, just want us to be very clear that it doesn't mean that our efforts in some of these other very important areas are going to be neglected. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I would agree with Mr. Driggs. Does anyone have any comment to add to it or not? I think in general that's what we understand this to be.

Councilmember Watlington said I think in response to the ask, from my perspective, I think we have to remember fundamentally we are a representative democracy and making sure that our policy reflects what our constituents actually want is our job, not to

create a vision separate and apart from what the people who elected us want. So, we can do both. I don't think that they are mutually exclusive and if we're doing it right, they're not mutually exclusive. They have to go together. We are not individual agents building a city the way we ourselves decide we think is important. We are responsible and accountable to our electorate and without understanding how our decisions impact them and if they even want the decisions that we're making to happen, we are doing a disservice to our role as representatives.

Mayor Lyles said are we ready to move to the next step?

Ms. Arnold said are there any other questions about the vote? Which we are putting forth for votes? Affordable housing, corridors, HIRE Charlotte, and small business, minority business development? No further discussion? Okay. Are you ready for the vote?

Mayor Lyles said is there any unreadiness?

Councilmember Mitchell said I do think what the Mayor alluded to earlier about affordable housing; I want to know if Council is open to have some discussion. We just got the good report from Shawn. \$22 million left over, we have \$50 million. I agree with the Mayor. I think we need to talk about how much we want to spend on NOAH because that's about preserving those in place and how much new construction we would like to do.

Mr. Driggs said I just wanted to clarify exactly what the question is. Are we voting on whether or not affordable housing is one of our personal top three or whether we think it's important? How many times do we get to vote and how does it work?

Mayor Lyles said in the past you had five priorities. Well, you can see the up there, excluding the new ones. I would say we are trying to send a message to the community that these are things that have a very strong focus and commitment when you make this vote. So, I think that we can go up to five. I can't remember in the book, in our pre-read, I think it includes everything on the top. First it talks about the priorities, which are the long-term things. Then it says I think five or six initiatives. So, we've been mixing our language a little bit, but these are things the committees would work on and address to be responsive to the entire Council using the bar to define does it help us to have great neighborhoods? Are we making the community safer? Are we creating economic development? Are we doing transportation and planning for that community? So, I think it goes to this idea of a systems approach is to you want to be able to accomplish those goals or explain why. So, I would say no more than five, but it's completely kind of just a thing that threes and fives always seem to work. So, I say vote and if it's six, then it's six. I don't see any limit to it.

Ms. Arnold said Councilmember Driggs, makes sense? Okay. I have four up for vote.

Mayor Lyles said up to four.

Ms. Arnold said no, let me just clarify. I'm seeking clarification. I thought I heard mobility. We're not voting on mobility. I heard that we need to have discussion about the spin for NOAH versus new construction. Do we need to discuss that now or is that an expectation for discussion later?

Mayor Lyles said I don't think that we need to discuss the affordable housing. I didn't hear anyone object to it. On mobility I think we need to have a discussion.

Ms. Arnold said okay.

Mayor Lyles said that's my opinion.

Ms. Arnold said okay.

Mayor Lyles said anyone else have a different opinion? Okay.

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Ms. Arnold said alright. Then we move to discussion around corridors, HIRE Charlotte and mobility. Okay, starting with corridors.

Mr. Jones said I guess before the Council starts voting, just a little bit about the initiatives you have before you stepped in on Monday. Some of these evolved over time. For instance, under corridors, Safe Charlotte is under corridors. So, I don't want anybody to think that Safe Charlotte is not an initiative. The same concept with the 2040 Plan and the UDO, the SEAP became a part of that. Then we start to go over to the far right of the chart and you'll see under well managed government the Triple E Committee's work became a part of that. So, just as you go through it, I don't want someone to walk away with five of these or four or six, whatever the number is and then someone says, "Well we don't have safety as a priority or an initiative," because some of these things have already been lumped into other initiatives.

Councilmember Bokhari said what happens when something gets voted down? What happens to Corridors of Opportunity?

Ms. Arnold said I think the discussion is about the fact that some of the initiatives that are here are "well baked" in different stages. There are previous commitments that have been made. Can we go back to the previous slide please which reflects the priorities and initiatives coming into the room. So, some of the are obviously on the new slide that we just saw. So, I think the reaction is why are some of them even up for discussion or for a vote when there's so much there that has already happened.

Mayor Lyles said it's on page 12 of our pre-read book.

Ms. Arnold said yes. So, as you can see all of these that are on this slide are also reflected on the second slide, but the second slide is more reflective of the conversation from yesterday. So, we took your feedback and put it in a different view. Then we added some that were new. This is what you're already working on. These things are already here. So, certainly you can understand the question about why are we discussing or voting on things that are already committed to. That's the discussion.

If we go to the next slide, this view reflects the conversation from yesterday. It also has everything that was on the previous slide. So, all the commitments that have already been made as it relates to priorities, policy and initiatives are still reflected. They're still there. So, the question is should you be voting on them, I think is the question.

Ms. Watlington said yes. So, here's how I see it. I think there's two discussions. I think there's a budgetary discussion and budget priorities and I think there's a policy focused discussion and policy priorities. So, there are things that are already being executed that are in the budget that are going to be funded that we don't need to spend Council committee time, for instance, talking about. We don't need to spend staff energy doing research to find our best practice is in those kinds of things. So, my perspective going into this is if somebody asked me, "What are we going to do about arts or is arts a priority?" I'm voting no. Not because I think we should stop the arts funding, but because I don't think that needs anymore committee discussion. There's not a policy question that needs to be answered. So, that's the delineation for me. It's not about the budget at this point, it is about what are we focusing on from a policy standpoint.

Ms. Arnold said are their other questions or responses to the point about voting on initiatives from the previous page?

Mayor Lyles said I think when you actually see a policy change like the affordable housing, we may be talking about going from nines and fours to NOAHs. It's a priority question, but it's a policy question. On the UDO, I think we've already decided that. Corridors of Opportunity I think is a discussion point because I think everybody needs to level set on this one. It may mean that it will stay as is, but there needs to be an agreement. Am I saying this correct Malcolm?

Councilmember Graham said I think you're good.

Mayor Lyles said I want everybody to know that we're good.

Mr. Graham said I'm good. I just think we've just rethought the work we've already done. We're going to be here for 10 months. I think the priorities have already been set. I think there's some further along than others. There's a lot of good work being done in all the committees already. I'm just extremely frustrated that I'm just not knowing where we're going or why we're doing what we're doing. I'm just frustrated. I'll be honest with you.

Ms. Arnold said may I ask a different question? Is there opposition if we don't vote on UDO, corridors, mobility and affordable? I think that was the only one.

Unknown said no.

Mayor Lyles said I would say even on HIRE Charlotte.

Ms. Arnold said HIRE Charlotte, that's the other. Discussion on corridors, mobility and HIRE Charlotte is set, but no vote because of everything that's already been discussed.

Councilmember Johnson said I just had a question on whether or not we vote. There's been things that have been, for instance, when we talk about affordable housing or the tax credit, there's been a lot of mention about NOAH, but I thought as a Council, and we've decided that we are only going to focus on the [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said we have not.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Mayor Lyles said that's why we would want to vote to make sure that Council does have the discussion. So, that would be appropriate.

Ms. Johnson said I just wanted to make sure that was clear [inaudible] that's not been decided. Also, for HIRE Charlotte, whether or not we vote for it, we are going to take a deeper dive to discuss its direction.

Mayor Lyles said right.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Thank you.

Mr. Jones said if I could try one more think that I think.

Mayor Lyles said yes. Go ahead.

Mr. Jones said so, I'll try one more thing I think may be helpful. Julia, can you go back to the other presentation and just do slide three? So, we didn't have a chance to go through this yesterday, but I think it'll be helpful because these have been added over the years.

Ms. Arnold said what page is it in the book Manager?

Mr. Jones said it's a slide.

Mayor Lyles said it's not in the book.

Ms. Arnold said okay.

Mr. Jones said so, it's all about your annual strategy meetings. At annual strategy meetings you reaffirm some of your priorities or you introduce new ones. So, if we go back to FY19 (fiscal year). In your annual strategy meeting, you had housing as a focus. In FY20 you had corridors, you had the UDO, you had mobility and some of these other subtitles were either before or during. We got to FY21 and brought in arts and culture and HIRE Charlotte. Last year we did not have a typical annual strategy meeting which is why I think we have this big gap with arts and culture and HIRE. They're infants in this stage,

not like housing. So, if you were to add two more, it wouldn't be inconsistent with what you've done in the past and if you were to say, you know what? Arts and culture, there's a three-year runway. We're in the last year of the three-year runway. There needs to be a decision from this Council, but how you will be a part of the funding ecosystem for arts and culture and that thing may just drop off. Or you can roll it into whatever you want to [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said it rolled into HIRE Charlotte.

Mr. Jones said just like we rolled SEAP in Safe Charlotte and the corridors. So, I'm not so sure you need to take anything off. I think there's some new concepts that you're exploring whether you add them and how you add them.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, I think we have two choices. We can vote on the things that we've been having about it, but I also wonder if what the Manager has said and I think what Ed has said, a lot of us understand. These are all important initiatives. So, there's nothing on here that wouldn't go further and have more discussion and come back for implementation. So, are we in a place where we talked ourselves into what we've said. Any of these are all valuable conversations, valuable for committee discussion and initiatives. So, do you want to vote, or do we say a consensus, this sheet that we had before, understanding what some of the policy debates are. Understanding where implementation is and report it.

Ms. Watlington said I think we vote [inaudible]. I think [inaudible] the process has always been we either affirm or make an adjustment. So, let's just do our jobs and do that and keep it moving. If everybody votes for everything, then that's the answer. If some things fall off then they fall off, but I think that it's something we can just go ahead and execute. When we think about committee meetings, we're going to have probably 8 to 10 meetings. So, the real question is what do you want to talk about in those meetings, and that's what this is. So, if you want to talk about arts and culture, then we'll talk about it. If you want to talk about HIRE Charlotte, then we'll talk about it. I just think this is something that may be a quick thing and we keep going. We're not going to decide the policy here, that's for the committee meetings and the Council meetings for the rest of the year. The question is what's at the top of folk's minds.

Mr. Driggs said I just want to emphasize. I think we were in a good place before. I think we were doing a lot of work in these areas. So, I think we're rocking a boat unnecessarily by now deciding which of our children matters most to us. So, we can vote, I'm fine, but I really just think what we don't want to do is downgrade any of these important missions that we have as a result of having identified a couple of them as having some special urgency. Thank you.

Ms. Anderson said I'm ready to vote at this time.

Ms. Arnold said okay. We're ready to vote. Okay. So, all in favor of affordable housing? Hand raise is that how you vote?

Mayor Lyles said okay, we'll go ahead and do this by raising our hand.

Ms. Arnold said it's your preference. I'm not sure how you've done it in the past.

Mayor Lyles said let's raise our hands.

Ms. Arnold said okay. Also, to confirm and make sure we're on the same page, we're voting on affordable housing, corridors, HIRE Charlotte, small business and minority business development. Am I adding mobility to the vote? Is everything here? I think the conversation was shifted a little bit.

Patrick Baker, City Attorney said if I could just be clear with everybody, usually when there's a default yes, with this, you need to raise your hand if you're going to be a yes.

It's not going to be assumed that if you don't raise your hand, you're a yes. Just to be clear about the voting.

Ms. Arnold said okay. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I know that I skipped over mobility, but I think we ought to have a vote on a mobility because that's the only way to continue the discussion. Okay? So, is there any objection to mobility?

Unknown said no.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Anderson said I just have a question. I just have a point of clarification. So, we have seven items up here but we're not voting on seven items? There was a discussion about digital divide, back to the point about updates from yesterday. I know there was a discussion also at the end of the day yesterday about it coming back on and that's why it's here in terms of discussion around an initiative. Small business development is also the new one here. So, those two are represented as new in comparison to the previous set of priorities and initiatives. So, from my perspective, my first strategy session with Council, many strategy sessions throughout my career, this is a time to affirm what we've had previously and add items that we believe should be an added focus, an area of focus.

So, for me I do believe that the small business and the digital divide should be specific added focal points for us to discuss and make sure we're giving the proper energy as a Council and staff. So, if we're not going to vote for those, okay, but they're recurring themes that we talk about every month and they're about three or four of them. I would like to put a spotlight on small business which is the job engine for the City of Charlotte and bridging the digital divide which cuts through all of our priorities effectively. We can't do them well if we don't address the digital divide. So, I'd advocate for having those added to our key initiatives for this year.

Ms. Arnold said very good. Is there any response?

Mayor Lyles said I think that's a great idea.

Ms. Arnold said okay.

Mayor Lyles said everybody gets to express the seven.

Ms. Arnold said there's agreement that we also vote on the bridging the digital divide. Ms. Johnson said yes, I have a question. I just wanted clarification or a point of order regarding the vote and the affirmative presumption. Mr. Baker, can you clarify the difference in today's meeting versus a normal Council meeting?

Mr. Baker said so, you're not voting on agenda items that have a legal binding contract, which is what you do on all your meetings. So, I'm suggesting that when it comes to priorities and you all chiming in on your priorities that you do it affirmatively as opposed to if nobody raises their hand, you're going to be an affirmative vote.

Ms. Johnson said thank you.

Ms. Arnold said very good. Thank you.

Councilmember Ajmera said okay, I would also like us to include mobility as we're going through this list. I don't think we have taken an official show of hands on that. So, I think it would help. So, I think we're all ready to move forward to the next step. If we can just go ahead with the show of hands on each one.

Councilmember Molina said really quickly. I actually agree wholeheartedly with what Councilmember Anderson said. So, my assessment of this is that we've already said that

the top five are items that we want to focus on. We've all said that right? So, then we have six and seven that came out of that discussion. So, today is a second day of priority. What we're deciding in my opinion is how do we implement then number six and seven? Like Councilmember Anderson said, I would actually almost consider seven a subset because it's connected to absolutely every one of the priorities that we already deal with as a body. So, for the sake of time, I'm just wondering. The only thing that we left that was based on yesterday's discussion that we wide open in my opinion is mobility. I think right now we don't understand as a Council whether we want to continue those efforts, and actually when we left the discussion yesterday where it was on pause, it was literally based on mobility. So, I would understand it as we are kind of finishing that, putting a punctuation mark and then we're continuing with the day. That's my assessment and understanding.

Mayor Lyles said I think what we're going to do is your assessment fits in. We're going to vote and raise your hand for an affirmative yes and we're going to go through each one, and the majority we'll weed from that and then we will have a conversation on how to write this up for action or more additional work. So, I think we're consistent including all of that, but everyone gets to raise their hand. Patrick says I need to say, "Number one, affordable housing," and ask Council members to raise their hands and be affirmative. So, can we start with that?

Ms. Arnold said yes.

Mayor Lyles said alright.

Mr. Driggs said I just want to caution you colleagues. If you don't raise your hand for all of these, you're going to get calls from people asking you why you didn't raise your hand for some of them. I think we should just raise our hands for all of them. Seriously, I don't want to explain to people if affordable housing happens to be in my opinion not the thing that's going to make the biggest difference to our city. Personal view, it's important. I don't oppose it but I don't want to then not raise my hand for that and then have people say, "Oh he doesn't want affordable housing." It's like choosing among our children here. I just don't understand.

Mr. Bokhari said I'm personally going to abstain on one through five and not vote because they're already stated priorities as it's been said multiple times. I don't want it to be construed that I support one iteration of mobility versus another. I support it as a whole. It's already our stated goal and we have active millions of dollars being invested in it. I will vote yes for the two new ones, small business and digital divide because I think that would be a nice add to what we're doing and over time they may end up getting bundled under other things, but we're going to say that's something we're calling out. I think that's a no brainer and I don't understand the other stuff and why. So, they're already our priorities.

Ms. Arnold said Manager, correct me if I'm wrong please. I think what this is indicating a set of strategic imperatives that are important to the Council and that the Council is reaffirming their commitment to, not a particular program, process. None of the detail, none of the how, none of the implementation approaches, but simply that the Council collectively is committing to these set of initiatives. That's what we're voting on. Not a particular condition or program or implementation option of any of these initiatives. Does that make sense? Is that correct?

Mr. Jones said yes. So, that's why it only had an hour yesterday and the title is reaffirming. Maybe I just misread the room, was that you were going to reaffirm everything that we've been working on, but then if there were some new items like six and seven, we'd spend the rest of the time on that. I think you guys are there to reaffirm and add to, but I think you're trying to figure out the process of how.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Winston, and carried unanimously to reaffirm initiatives 1-5 and add 6 and 7 (Small Biz and Digital Divide).

Mayor Lyles said okay. I have been to a lot of these retreats, and this was the hardest one on priority setting and I hope it was a valuable idea so that as we think about this going forward that we're really clear on what we really mean by priorities, reaffirmation of them and strategic efforts. So, it may have been tough to have to go through all of this, but at the same time I hope that it did provide us a place that we got to that will be helpful as we take the next steps towards implementation and definition.

Ms. Arnold said very good. Thank you. We will take a quick five-minute break. We're waiting on some of our guests to join us for the impact of tourism. Are they here?

Ms. Johnson said so, when are we going to have a deeper discussion regarding HIRE Charlotte?

Mayor Lyles said that will go into the committee. We're going to have to follow up with discussion. It will likely go into a committee discussion. Working with what I have heard as well as the staff, how do we do that and what are we're trying to accomplish. We'll talk about that.

Mr. Jones said it'll be next Monday.

Mayor Lyles said so, it'll be next Monday. In the committee sessions on Monday.

Ms. Johnson said in the committee sessions on Monday?

Mr. Jones said yes, and at the report out that night at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Johnson said okay. During the strategy meeting I wanted to discuss, like I said yesterday, being more intentional about programs for justice involved individuals. Okay. Alright. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said so, all of these committees meet on Monday. So, we can figure that out by then.

Ms. Johnson said can you make a referral to committee specifically regarding that issue?

Mr. Jones said so, I believe Monday, HIRE Charlotte will be discussed at the committee as well as a funding strategy for it and a report out that night.

Mayor Lyles said that's already on the agenda, that material that's now going out.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, our next step is going to be our legislative agenda item. So, we're going to take a break?

Ms. Arnold said let's reconvene at 11:05. If we could take a quick break. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said 11:05.

Ms. Arnold said thank you.

The meeting was recessed at 10:58 a.m. and reconvened at 11:07 a.m.

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ITEM NO. 5: LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said next, we'll discuss the legislative agenda. I'd like Councilmember Ajmera to come up accompanied by Dana Fenton.

Councilmember Ajmera said thank you. Alright, are we all ready to get started? We're going to discuss federal and state legislative priorities next. I just want to first introduce our committee that's been putting in a lot of work. Our Vice Chair James Mitchell, Danté Anderson, a committee member, Tariq Bokhari a committee member and LaWana Mayfield who is not here, but I'm sure she'll be watching later.

So, what we want to do is level set, give everyone an opportunity to provide feedback on legislative items, federal and state, both items so that the committee can discuss all the feedback that is being gathered today. Our next meeting is actually next Monday. So, we will be taking all of your feedback that you'd like to see being added, modified, wordsmithing. We will take that at our next committee meeting and discuss and bring it back to you on February the 13th. So, that's the plan. So, I'm going to turn it over to Dana to just walk you through a couple of slides that we have on the committee work that's been done so far, then we will also go over some of the feedback that we have received to date after the committee approved our first draft. Then we'll just go around the table. So, that's the plan. Dana, feel free to add if I missed anything here.

Dana Fenton, City Manager's Office said thank you Councilmember Ajmera and members of the committee for being up here. For the record, my name is Dana Fenton, I'm with the City Manager's Office and I'd like to say hello to all of our residents of our city and region who are tuning in. As it turns out, I have a lot of friends and acquaintances in Raleigh who like to tune in to these meetings when I'm present. So, I'd like to say hello to them too. The goals for today's session. I think Councilmember Ajmera put it very nicely. We'd like to get your direction on the 2023 federal, state and legislative agendas. A second one is to receive feedback from you on the use of language and the proposed legislative positions. The ones that were presented both on January 3rd and also the ones that were part of the January 23rd packet.

Let's do a little bit of level setting now. Just a couple of past dates. The committee came before the Council on January 3rd to talk about their proposed agendas. Council provided a lot of feedback that evening and we worked over the next few weeks to try to incorporate that into something that would be acceptable for Council to rally around. On the 23rd a few hours before the meeting, the Mayor referred the issue back to the committee and then next week the committee will meet at 12 noon. Next Monday night it'll be presented, and it's calendared for consideration and adoption by the Council on February 13th.

Real quick, these are the legislative issues that were part of the proposed BGIR (Budget, Governance, and Intergovernmental Relations) federal and state legislative agendas that were presented on the 3rd.

These were some additional issues that were brought up that evening. I don't need to go through each one, but we did try to incorporate as much as we could, and some we couldn't. For the January 23rd agenda, we came out with this list of legislative issues for the Council to consider.

These are the ones that were not addressed but as I understand it, the committee will be taking these up next week. I believe that does it for the level setting. So, I just want to make sure that you all know where we are right now. As I heard Chairman Ajmera say, there may be some additional issues that the committee may need to consider for the agendas next week. The committee is willing to hear that input from City Council.

Then we have several slides here with side-by-side comparisons of the language in the agendas for both January 3rd and January 23rd. We did receive some questions about it on the evening of the 3rd. So, I think the committee and also staff would like to know what in particular with these items that Council may have issue with. So, the first one we have here is from the federal legislative agenda, the Destination CLT (Charlotte) position. Just to remind you all, basically Destination CLT is the capital improvements plan for the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. This year the airport will be submitting a letter of intent to try to get a federal funding commitment for the fourth parallel runway and some other projects. That's a really big thing that we've all been working on for the last several years. Then there's also some other opportunities to get funding for airport projects.

So, I just want to go around the room just to see whether anybody has any observations on these positions, any suggestions for change or whatever.

Mr. Winston said I shared my thoughts about the legislative agenda with you all in an email. I think whether it's a Homestead Act or another housing option, I think it would be a mistake not to have a housing priority on our State Legislative Agenda.

Mr. Fenton said Mr. Winston, we're talking just about the Destination CLT position now. Any other thoughts on Destination CLT?

Councilmember Driggs said could you just comment on exactly what the differences are and what they mean? Like why did we make any changes that we have made?

Mr. Fenton said yes. Really the big change is in the second bullet down below. In the first one we identified grant funding through a particular program for the airport, but there are other programs the airport can seek funding through. So, we thought we'd try to make it broader. That's the only change that was made.

Mr. Driggs said thank you.

Mr. Fenton said you're welcome. So, I think we're good on that one. Great. This is the 2030 Transit System Plan for the Federal Legislative Agenda and the first part of this without the bullets, that is essentially what the Metropolitan Transit Commission and its localities try to work from when they advocate for federal funding. So, it serves as a regional position right now. We've been using this in the legislative agendas for maybe almost 10 years now.

Under that, we have a couple of bullets. In the first bullet on both sides, we're really trying to capture what we're trying to do to get multiyear funding for the 2030 projects. Right now of course a lot of those funding opportunities, we're going to need to have a local source of revenue to match it and that's what we're trying to work from on the state's side. On the second one, there are some single year grant commitments we can get. Like the RAISE Grant recently for the Charlotte Transportation Center and things like that. So, let me just go around the tables again to see whether anybody has any questions or observations on these.

Mayor Lyles said can we call it our 2030 Mobility Plan?

Mr. Fenton said I suppose we could but it's not going to cover all forms of mobility. It only covers public transportation.

Mr. Winston said that's actually my question. At this point in time, I understand we've had this for 10 years or whatever, we know that it needs a local match. That's what we've been going up to D.C. and talking about ever since I've been on Council since 2018. The response always from the senators and the congressman are, "Well you got to do your work to get that local match." So, what is really the utility of continuing to do this if we're not going to have on our State Legislative Agenda what the motion for asking for local revenues. What is the actual utility of this position at this point in time?

Mr. Fenton said well the 2030 Plan will always be in effect even if you don't address mobility in the State Legislative Agenda. We need to keep these projects in front of the delegation and let them know what we're doing. Like for example, CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) right now is doing some planning and design for each of the three lines. They just started the Lynx Red Line, they've been working on the Silver Line and don't hold me to this, but I think some work is happening on the Blue Line and even the Gold Line. So, it's a work in progress. So, we need to keep that in front of them on a continuous basis.

Mr. Winston said can we get past 30 percent funding for planning without a local match?

Mr. Fenton said I would have to defer that question to somebody from CATS.

Mayor Lyles said we're going to come back and do a mobility discussion, and I know that I probably disrupted the flow of this.

Mr. Winston said no you didn't. That was my question.

Mayor Lyles said what I would like to say is can we have a mobility discussion on the agenda and come back to some of the questions that we have.

Councilmember Bokhari said let me just say I think this needs to change. I think we need to have a transit conversation.

Mr. Driggs said so, I just wanted to respond to the comment that Mr. Winston made. We can satisfy the matching grant requirement with the sales tax we're proposing to raise locally. So, it doesn't make it pointless to talk to the feds if we don't have a state commitment and I think the judgment has been that our highest priority with the state is to get approval for the referendum. We have heard that we are unlikely to get those other funds. So, I do think the best course of action is exactly what we're talking about here. To go ahead and try to keep that federal funding warmed up and continue to work on our local match meaning here, and then we could always see later about what we might be able to get from the state.

As it stands right now, they have a general policy about 10 percent, but the magnitude of the things we want to do and the implication that we would need a billion dollars from them in order to realize our plan would make it unproductive to include that in our state agenda. Is that fair Dana?

Ms. Ajmera said I just want to respond to Mr. Winston's question. Really, I think you're trying to figure out what is our plan for our State Legislative Agenda to get a local match. Well after this, we are going to discuss State Legislative Agenda and we are going to have mobility on there. So, Dana is going to go over the State Legislative Agenda after we are done with federal. The committee is going to take a deeper dive on the engagement strategy that will be followed after the federal and legislative agenda is approved on how we go about that.

Mr. Fenton said also Ms. Ajmera I would just add in, we don't even really need to have the bullets underneath here. We can just take those out if you all desire.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said Dana, I guess I'm trying to be helpful. So, in your first column, this is what came out of committee?

Mr. Fenton said yes sir.

Mr. Jones said then after a strategy session I guess, you turned out the January 23rd revised positions. I'm trying to look out for Council in the room. It's almost as if you need a strike through because things change, and I think people are struggling with why the change and what was behind it. So, I don't know how you want to proceed with this, but I think it's important there's a better understanding of why the change has happened for the January 23rd [inaudible].

Ms. Ajmera said so, I can comment on that. So, after our meeting on January 3rd, we actually had a strategy session that night. Feedback was provided to the committee. So, Dana took some of that feedback and included it under the January 23rd column. However, this is not adopted by the committee. So, the committee is going to take a look at all the changes that were recommended at our last strategy session and will bring forward what is the final product.

Mr. Fenton said also I would add to that is what I heard that evening were questions about the wording. De-risking was one of the comments made. I tried to reduce the number of words. You've heard of less is more. Which is of lesser quantity is of higher quality. So, that's what I was trying to practice for the January 23rd.

Alright, let's move on. Immigration. On the left of course is the immigration position that was presented. On the right is after some wordsmithing. Trying to reduce the quantity of words in there and it addresses basically three major issues. One is the H-1B Visa program. It's the work program for immigrants. The second is the pathways to citizenship and the third is an emerging issue and that is the need for more funding for resettlement organizations. That's something we talked about at committee, as there being a need in our community. Especially with the influx of refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

The next one is sustainability and resilience. This is one that the committee did propose. I took the liberty, the difference between the two is that I just tried to add a little bit more language this time instead of decreasing. The ones to the left didn't really say too much. So, I wanted to provide a little bit more context on each of those. So, let me do a scan of the room from this side. Mr. Mitchell. Ms. Anderson. Got two thumbs up. Thank you. Mr. Winston. Thank you very much. I got three thumbs up there. I got another thumbs up from Ms. Molina. Mr. Bokhari, thumbs up?

Mr. Bokhari said [inaudible].

Mr. Fenton said nope. Okay. Back table, I got three thumbs up. I think we're good on that one. Thank you. Now this is the last position proposed by staff. This was not one that was proposed by the committee but listening to the feedback that evening, I think Mr. Bokhari said it, that there needs to be broader forms of infrastructure addressed in there. So, I went back, and I took a look at past agendas. We did address things like roads and bridges, digital inclusion, water and sewer, stormwater and things like that.

So, on the right are essentially those things along with smart policies to help out with the transition of personal mobility and commercial mobility systems. So, any questions, observations from the Council?

Mr. Bokhari said Mr. Manager, I'll just make one comment. We've had a lot of good conversation, challenging conversation on transportation and where we're going. Still a lot to figure out. If we continue to place the same wording and do the same things in these agendas as we have had for the last 10 years, we will continue to get the same results, which is no money and no movement. So, we can't go to D.C. and say, "Transit is one of our big things," and then go to Raleigh and say, "Roads first," and point back to something that says infrastructure. It needs to be seamless, but we have to get our plan right first. So, I think before we approve a single thing here, this is the icing on the cake and it is too premature to have a holistic approach on transit and transportation in this, until we've had the real conversation.

Mr. Fenton said okay. Thank you. We're getting to the state legislative agenda now. The first one is mobility. I think maybe Mr. Bokhari your comments on the previous issue apply to this one as well.

Mr. Bokhari said yes.

Mr. Fenton said okay.

Mr. Driggs said I just want to say I think this is a good change to the extent that we don't want to get ahead of ourselves on the work that we're doing on the plan and therefore we just ask for their continued support and make it clear that we will work with them as we get closer to requesting authority. As far as they're concerned, it's all about the sales tax. So, I think this is a good change.

Councilmember Watlington said I want to understand this one given our conversation yesterday and I assume some conversation we'll be having soon. Let me ask it this way. Based on yesterday and reading what the new language is, am I to assume that the work has stopped on trying to get a local sales tax?

Mr. Fenton said no ma'am. We had some discussion that Monday night January 3rd and Mr. Driggs brought up some points about it. He and I did talk afterwards, and I came up

with that language on the right. Let me go through that language with you. The first part reads of course, "Continue to work with regional stakeholders in the General Assembly to build support." That's one thing. The second thing is advance regional solutions the mobility needs. What advance means in legislative parlance is everything from working with legislators to get through support to bill filing to getting the bill enacted, getting it worked. So, it means everything in there. The previous one, again, we were just trying to practice the less is more approach, but what this tells me is that we're going to still work on it.

Mr. Winston said so, again like I said, in my email to Council and Manager and Mayor and staff, this to me isn't a legislative priority or legislative ask. This is an internal tactic. We're adding it at the beginning of the long session and what we need legislatively is a funding source for our community driven and Council adopted mobility plan to implement it. To get that revenue, it's likely going to be a journey. So, if we ask tomorrow for it, it's not likely that we get it on the November ballot. We're going to have to work to do things like this. Work with folks in the region and statewide, in hopes on getting it on the legislation pass next year in the short session.

Now if we wait, we wait, and we wait and we wait, we're not going to have the time because we can't introduce this next year during the short session. Perhaps there's likely not a chance to do that. As we saw yesterday, those federal funds that we need to match are timed. So, we have until 2026 to basically get those funds.

Councilmember Mayfield arrived at 11:30 a.m.

Now 2026 might be the culmination of another long and short session. We don't have time to do this. On the idea of less is more, if we don't tell people what we want specifically, the General Assembly in Raleigh and work towards those things, we run the risk of them telling us what they're going to do if we can't assert that, and we can't talk about that. In the state that we're in, which is tighter than the only rules, we run into the potential for a lot of trouble for not getting the things that we want if we don't have the specific language of what we want.

So, I think we really need to get to this point in this long session where we are asking or requesting the legislative need of a funding source and then do that hard work over these next couple terms of getting there.

Mr. Fenton said okay. I think that's a good observation on your part, but what I would say is that we can't go forward yet with legislation until the region comes to an agreement. If we were to go out there right now to the General Assembly with the bill that this Charlotte City Council wanted, it wouldn't be a regional plan. It would be seen as City of Charlotte, and it would be dead on arrival. It would not go anywhere. So, if we were to do that, I think it would really hurt this effort to get a new source of revenue.

Mr. Driggs said I just wanted to say further to that. They know the question about the referendum is pending. There are of it. This looks like we're putting to the question to them. I think that we need to send the message to them that we're working on this thing that they know about. We're not yet asking for this legislation and further to what you said Dana, I think it would do more harm than good to give them the impression that we were actually sort of lining up the request for the legislation given how far we are and what they know. So, the reason that I like the second version is because we don't want to get ahead of ourselves and have them entrenched in opposition because they think that we're presumptive, that we're being too aggressive about this. So, the other thing. It does not limit our option. If we thought the situation existed where we could ask them for the legislation, if we had everything that we thought we needed, this legislative agenda doesn't limit our ability to go in there and put it to them and get it acted on. It does really run the risk of the opposite effect. Of going, "Hey guys, you are just really way ahead of yourselves, and we don't like it."

Ms. Ajmera said I understand what Mr. Winston is saying. He's right that this is going to require a lot of work and time is of the essence. Amanda shared that with us yesterday

when we had a discussion on mobility. I think one of the important responsibilities that we have is to ensure that we craft a language where we are managing risks, where we are balancing our needs with realistic expectation, especially under Dillon's Rule state, republican leadership in Raleigh as to what really realistically we can accomplish without jeopardizing other items that we have. I think that's the discussion that committee is going to take a deeper dive on to manage risks and craft a language accordingly. Is that right, Mr. Mitchell? Other committee members weigh in if you feel like you need to chime in.

Mr. Bokhari said Councilmember Winston and I have had a lot of conversations. There's a lot of space between us on our view of this, but we agree Charlotte needs a transformational investment and we should unlock that. We also both agree that we need to be having these conversations in Raleigh. We need to be talking to our partners there and getting their feedback and views and letting them know points that we have. This goes back to reiterating a point I made yesterday. I believe based on where we are now, if we all buckle in together and have these tough conversations and figure out a couple really baseline things, not only is there a scenario where we can unlock federal funding in some ways that are not just transit like we saw before, but other creative funds that they've set aside in some of these new bills. Not only can we do that, I think we find, in fact I know. We've had conversations. We will find receptive ears in leadership in Raleigh that could potentially lead in a perfect scenario to a referendum this year in 2023 that everyone gets behind because they understand that it is compromise and it meets the voters where they are with pains they're feeling today.

So, I think again this is just words on a page that will be the exact same outcome that it's been year after year unless we sit down and we do that work, which staff has already been doing. Vi and Marcus have already gone to D.C. multiple times and had conversations. If we can buckle down together, it may not be everything we all want, but the point is we can bring something together to Raleigh that has a chance. I heard from Speaker Moore, I've heard from leadership up there that if there's a couple criteria that are met, they're willing to have the conversation. So, if that is appealing to anyone, I think that should be our first and foremost exercise as a group. To line up as much as we can and then start having those conversations in real time to see if that happens. It's all based on the work we go do from this point, not the words that we craft on a legislative agenda that are somehow going to make it happen or not.

Ms. Arnold said thank you all for the feedback and the discussion this morning.

Mr. Driggs said [inaudible] please.

Unknown said I won't take very long.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, can we just wrap this up. I just have two more slides. [inaudible]

Ms. Arnold said the recommendation is that we move to the impact on tourism panel discussion at this time and then revisit this discussion because there is also some additional slides.

Mayor Lyles said we're fine. We're balancing time.

Mr. Fenton said folks, can I suggest we just move to the next slide? I know there's a lot of comments on mobility. I don't think we're going to solve them here in this session and I think what Mr. Bokhari was saying is there needs to be more discussion about it. I don't want to stop things, but I don't think it would be productive to talk anymore about it.

Ms. Ajmera said I hope everyone will join us at our next committee meeting. I think this is probably going to take the entire committee's time, right Mr. Mitchell? Ms. Anderson said something every wise. She said, "We have to differentiate our priorities from our action items when we are talking about our legislative agenda." So, I just want to say that out loud because I've had that conversation with her. So, if we can just focus on action items here and hopefully, you'll all join us at our next Monday's committee meeting.

Mr. Fenton said thank you. This slide is Safe Charlotte. This is part of the committee's recommendation on January 3rd. On this one I did add a little bit more language to it to be a little bit more descriptive of Safe Charlotte in general. The thrust of civilian traffic accident investigators is still in that bullet.

Here we go, state transportation funds. That has become infrastructure and sustainability because of feedback received on January 3rd. I think it goes along with what Mr. Bokhari had to say there, is to try to get in more forms of infrastructure. It's like the federal position, only for the state side. So, we have the references for the Powell build in the new language on the right, along with broader forms of infrastructure. Whether it's digital inclusion, the smart policies for transportation, clean water, and drinking water. You like it? Okay great. I have thumbs up all over the place. That's the last slide folks. Thank you very much. You've been a great crew.

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ITEM NO. 3: IMPACT OF TOURISM IN CHARLOTTE

DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said thank you. Now we have the dream team of tourism in Charlotte here with us today. We'd like to invite Tom Gabbard of Blumenthal Performing Arts, Tom Murray of CRVA (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority), Vinay Patel of Sree Hotels and Adam Sperling of Quail Hollow Club and Fred Whitfield of Hornet Sports and Entertainment to the front of the room to join us for an engaging panel discussion moderated by our very own Tracy Dodson. Thank you.

Tracy Dodson, Assistant City Manager said so, I want to thank the panel first for being patient with us today, but also for coming in. This panel was fun to put together when I started listing out all of our partners in hospitality, tourism. We have a great list. We're really fortunate in Charlotte to have a lot of great partners. So, again thank you all for leaning in today and giving us some perspective. One of the reasons, when I talked to the Manager about doing this, is it's a great opportunity. A lot of times when we have this conversation, we're in the middle of a deal or we're in the middle of a project and we're trying to explain what this industry is for our community and what tourism and hospitality does for our community. So, I feel like this was a great opportunity to just pause for a second and really have that conversation as we think about things that have recently occurred as well as things in our future.

So, I'm going to kind of bounce around, but I want you guys to interject your thoughts across the board. Tom let's start with you. Great article in the Business Journal last week about the Convention Center. From the perspective of CRVA, maybe you could add a little bit on the Sports Foundation too, talk to us about where you see the industry is coming out of COVID and a little bit about are there areas that we still haven't rebounded.

Tom Murray, Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority said thanks and thanks for noting the article. I really have the City Council to thank as well because of your support for our investment in the expansion in the Convention Center which has led to a lot of that success. So, I think we all can be proud that we continued and maintain our assets in a really competitive way. That helps us be successful. So, I would say on the recovery side, that we've made great progress. We didn't recover all at once in all segments. The beginning of the recovery happened from a leisure segment side and once again, I want to thank you for your support as well because the funding that you put into our marketing side allowed us to go after the leisure traveler and something unusual happened in that timeframe. We finally became the weekend and leisure designation that we had long sought to be. I think it was a combination of a lot of things that were going on in Charlotte, but no small part to the amount of money that we're putting in advertising in a 400-mile radius. That support and particularly some of the support that we got from ARPA funding as well that helped us do that and generate real demand into our market.

So, the leisure segment came back first and really strongly. Our group segment came back really strongly about March last year and we have been booked solid in all of our buildings, but particularly in the Convention Center since March and we continue that

way. Something has happened differently as well and that is attendance at all the events have blown away the meeting planner's expectations. So, where we thought, we were going to spend \$100,000 on this group, their food invoice was originally going to be that today's group, they just walked in my office today and said, "It looks more like \$300,000." So, it's just happening. People are spending more money, more people are showing up at these conventions and that's been a really big thing, and filling hotel rooms.

So, the last thing that's been a bit of a challenge is the business travel return. Business travel is largely returned but it's been uneven, and it's been more recent. What we've made up for in demand, some of the demand is soft particularly in the Uptown market and the urban area. We've made up for that in pricing. So, the taxes generator from the hospitality industry, we're going to receive record levels this year, but there's still a bit of a challenge on that revenue side.

Then all of our buildings have been busy. Every one of the buildings that we all operate have been really busy this year. So, people are interested in attending events and our big events are getting a really strong attendance despite recovering from the pandemic. So, I think that maybe sets the table for the kind of recovery that we're having.

Vinay Patel, Sree Hotels said yes, I remember doing a media piece on March 13, 2020, just when things were coming out. I did a Spectrum news thing. She asked me, "How does it feel?" I said, "Ah, two weeks, I think we'll be fine." That's what it was, two weeks. Then March the 17th happened, and we fell off a cliff. That's exactly what it is. This city went from a Sunday through Thursday city to a Friday-Saturday city and that's where the investment that we made as an industry, the taxes we generate and investments we put back into the community was very helpful. Events that these gentlemen put in their arenas, in their venues at the golf course. It brought people back. It saved jobs, it created jobs. I was at a meeting yesterday. Now this weekend has become a Thursday through Monday. Corporate travel has become leisure travel. Are we back? No. Demand wise, we're not at 2019 levels but revenue wise, we probably are because as Tom said, our pricing has gone up. That doesn't mean profitability is there. We still can't execute to normal because we can't find people to work. That's an industry wide issue.

I know that Council works on this, and I've been on a couple of task forces as well. We're job creators. One out of nine in the heyday was working for this industry and we need to get back to that to be able to execute against it. I will say this leisure led recovery is going to be very beneficial to us and we see it already. We need to continue making investments, so Charlotte stays there. We've created a destination over the years, and we need to make sure that we continue putting resources back into this destination, so we'll be healthy for a long, long time to come.

Ms. Dodson said Tom Gabbard, do you want to talk a little bit about from the arts' perspective?

Tom Gabbard, Blumenthal Performing Arts said great. Well, we are back to equal levels of activity overall, if not in fact a little bit greater than we were pre-pandemic. We really leaned in to finding a way out of the pandemic and that I think has served us well. Two years ago, our board made that decision to do Immersive Van Gogh here in Charlotte. It still ranks as the largest of any of these that have happened in North America, but we did it to get people back to work with an initial goal of 200 people. It eventually rose to 400 people that we got back to work, but also to get the public reacclimated to coming to our facilities. So, then six months later when we went to Ovens Auditorium to open Wicked, we were ready to have people shoulder to shoulder. We had done the work to try to get people reenergized. In our case, I'll put it in bank related terms, if you were to look at three different portfolios, our Broadway portfolio is a hold stock. It's a hold stock because we are basically doing everything at the top tier that can be done. There's no city in the country that announced more Broadway titles than we did last year. Thank you.

So, we're succeeding. We don't want to lower the bar of what we do. So, that's a hold stock for us. Our shell stock are those things that are very traditional. If they're very traditional and they're done in traditional ways, the attendance for those things are

lagging. So, we have to look at those things through that lens that there's a decline in attendance. That's not just in Charlotte, that's all over the country. They buy stock for us are those things that fall in this world of experiential. Consumers have moved more and more to embrace experiences. Things that surprise and delight them, that fit an even higher bar of what's worth their time, their money. We find some consumers are ready to pay more than they every have to have a quality experience. Immersive is that hot new area. Those are the things that we see consumers more and more interested in. Thankfully we have great facilities in Charlotte and so we're very blessed by the city's support to have these great facilities.

I will say in Uptown, since the pandemic, there is an increase in growth of concern in safety and we have heard from our ticket buyers concern about coming out of the Belk Theater and then going down Tryon Street to visit restaurants, which is what we want. We have very little food service in our venues because we want people to go to the restaurants. There is work to be done that we all need to take on to restore that sense of safety and security that existed before the pandemic. So, again, thank you for the city's support to create this vibrancy.

Mr. Murray said I just want to acknowledge Tom. Last week we recognized Tom in the highest award that we give in the hospitality industry on an annual basis called the Destination Impact Award, because of some of the things he talked about, because of the courage to get events open while we were having people attend fully masked. Although that kind of challenge, he really cared so much about our industry, the people that work in it and making sure that there's a future for Charlotte. We recognized him for that. So, congratulations on that Tom. It's interesting. Also, Ovens Auditorium was the ninth busiest theater in the world last year because of the work that Tom placed into Ovens Auditorium. That's a 70-year-old building that we have invested \$50 million in that complex out there recently and it's becoming really viable solution. We just finished renovating the parking lot as well. So, it's just been a really great partnership and I would say that's the same thing with all of us actually is that partnership that we work together on these types of significant achievements within our industry.

Ms. Dodson said Tom congratulations on that. Fred, you were the project of 2022 in my mind. We worked on that for a long time, but it secures the Hornets here until 2045. You did a great interview a week or so ago down in Atlanta talking about what that means for you all and looking forward. Talk to us a little bit about that.

Fred Whitfield, Hornet Sports and Entertainment said yes, thanks Tracy and thanks for having me here. It's an honor to be here and I want to just start Tracy by thanking City Council and our Mayor for really supporting our efforts to continue to maintain and keep our building at the highest level and most competitive. Especially in North and South Carolina. We really take our obligation and duty as part of our operating agreement very seriously in trying to have the Spectrum Center be a real driver of economic impact in Uptown Charlotte and for this region.

So, Tracy's right. Totally unscripted, it was kind of a spur of the moment interview that our television partner Bally Sport asked me to do during our game last Saturday night in Atlanta. It was the first away game I'd been to all year. I of course try to make all of our home games. I missed a few at the beginning of the season because of illness, but at the end of the day, Atlanta invested \$200 million in their building and their CEO, my counterpart there, great guy, Steve Koonin. He and his team Andrew Saltzman just did a phenomenal job in being creative in how they invested in their building to have it be more open, to have it be more welcoming to all, have it be more innovative. I thought there was something to learn by being there. So, Bally's sport team asked me if I'd come on the air and talk about it. My only reason for being there was not to see the game, it was just to look at the building and walk the building. So, I went to our shoot around that morning at 10 a.m. and walked the entire building, all the way up to the top, all the suites, all the different hospitality areas built out just to see what they had done and how creative they were. Then I had an appointment with Andrew Saltzman who is their chief revenue officer at 6:00 to meet him before a 7:30 tip off. Walked the building while it was being activated with their fans actually coming in looking at the different hospitality spaces that had

different amenities, and why here, why there, who their partners were, so we could just basically steal some best practices and ideas on how to invest the \$215 million that City Council here has awarded us.

So, it was a phenomenal experience because I came away saying, wow, if we can do with \$215 million anywhere near what they did in Atlanta with \$200 million, we will have a building that won't be able to be competed against in North and South Carolina for any type of event that hits the road whether it's a family show, a concert. Obviously, we'll have our games but college basketball, the ACC (Atlantic Coast Conference), CIAA (Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association) at the appropriate time if we can figure out how to get that back and just create new events like the Jumpman Invitational which we created with the Sports Foundation. Marcus and I and several others, Tom, are on the executive committee of the Sports Foundation. We're trying to always think about how we can create unique events here that no one else in the country can do.

The Jumpman Invitational was a clear sign of what we could do when we marry two companies that our own Michael Jordan is deeply involved in, Jordan Brand, and our organization, and how we can partner with Danny and his team at the Sports Foundation to create this unique opportunity that no one else in the country can do. No one else has men's and women's basketball. All four teams arguably in the top 10 and 15 in the country year in year out, all want to come to Charlotte to play double header in our building and fill our hotels up. It was a huge success. We sold out both nights of the event. We have to figure out a little better how to keep more people engaged and stay for the women's games, but we realize we have something to build on. So, we're heading out to Portland to Beaverton, Oregon and Nike to meet with the senior team at Jordan brand to figure out how we can take it from four teams to eight teams, and always men and women. It's never going to just be men. It's men and women. They want to do it. Now that Jordan brand is up to 11 schools now, when I worked there, we only had four. Now when you add UCLA (University of California - Los Angeles) and you added Houston and you added Georgetown, all these schools. They just added Howard as one of their HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) schools, their first one. We have an opportunity to continue to do creative events like that here.

Just to take a step back and talk a little bit about what Vinay said and Tom and Tom. Let's take a step back to House Bill 2. I know we don't want to think about it, but we had a hangover coming out of the repeal of House Bill 2 and even though we got the repeal passed and it was a bipartisan effort, a lot of people in this room was responsible for helping it to happen and others like Ned Curran and Andrea Smith and Charles Bowman, we all went to Raleigh for almost a year. To Vinay's point, our all-star game was the first major even that was pulled relative to House Bill 2 and one of the things that I told our commissioner when he called me to tell me he was going to pull our 17 games because of the bill. I said, "Okay, we're all going to lock arms. We're going to go to Raleigh and try to get this repealed with your help and Kathy Behrens help with the NBA (National Basketball Association). Rick Welts who was the open LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) community leader in our league. He was president of the Golden State Warriors. He was my mentor when I started here 17 years ago. We're going to figure out how to get it done, but if we do, please help us get the next available game because that will crank our economy back up." That's exactly what happened.

When we were awarded the 2019 game, the ACC felt like it was okay now to bring their tournament back because they pulled after we pulled. The NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) said, "Wow, we can go back to Charlotte," because they pulled after our all-star game was pulled. Then it's all of us spending more time in Raleigh working on both sides of the aisle trying to make sure that the investments we need in this market are made. Clearly, we're working with Marcus and the Mayor to try to work on transportation and mobility and everything else. At the end of the day, the Spectrum Center has to be one of those economic generators, 100 nights a year plus. We've got to create a district over and around our arena which is what Marcus and Tracy and their consultant talked to us about with our consultant.

I think the smartest thing we did this go round was take the dummies out of the negotiations. Me being one, and whoever they put on the other side of the city, because I didn't do such a good job when you guys awarded us \$33 million. I think once we took the emotion out of it, we realized that's an opportunity that we can partner with everybody here on the panel. Tom has been a phenomenal partner. I'm sure you know CRVA runs the back of the house our arena and there's no way we can have that building cooking like we do if Tom and his team doesn't get it changed over for the next event, help us keep it clean. Work with Levy as our concession there to make sure that the food is hot and the beer is cold. It's a complete partnership.

Then last, at the end of the day, when we were in the pandemic, and I was fortunate that Governor Cooper asked me years ago to serve on his North Carolina Business Council. Then as we rolled into the pandemic, that Council really became more of a "How do we get out of the pandemic alive and well." I was honored. He asked Jack Cecil who runs the Biltmore properties up in Asheville and I to co-chair the hospitality and tourism subcommittee which included a lot of my friends here on this Council. We all worked together because we all were in the mass gatherings business. So, if you think your businesses were out of business, we were out of business. We weren't allowed to gather. We weren't allowed to host the RNC (Republican National Convention), we weren't allowed to bring concerts and family shows in. So, we were dead, and it was 15 percent capacity, then I begged our county manager, "Dena, can we go to 25 percent?" If so, go to Raleigh. "Can we go to 25 percent?" We had to gradually all grow our businesses together and hook arms and do all we could do work on the legislature and the governor to allow us to expand more.

I can't tell you how great a partnership I have with everyone of these people on this panel. There's no way how we at the Hornets do what we do without the support of literally everybody sitting here and of course our City Council, our Mayor, who I think is the best mayor in the country and I've said it publicly. If you ever get a chance to look at the piece that I did, I sent it on to Marcus and Tracy. Not because I wanted them to necessarily see me on camera, but really more about what I had to say about our partnership with the City of Charlotte, with City Council, what we plan to do with the wise investment I think our Council has made in our organization and just what true partnership is about in a private-public situation which I think we've got a great private-public partnership with all of you.

Ms. Dodson said so, I will send out that clip to Council so that you can all see it. I will say just to that partnership. While a lot of us didn't have to stay in the day to day of the negotiation, there was some horse trading going on where there's a couple of times in that negotiation where I said, "Fred, if we do this then I need you to help me with this," that had nothing to do with the Hornets or the arena. It was something completely different, but in the spirit of partnership, Fred was like, "I'm there. We get this deal done, I'll help you with the next thing and the next thing," that doesn't have anything to do with him.

Mr. Whitfield said Tracy let me just add to that point. You're right. One of the good things about going to Raleigh and building really strong relationships with Senator Berger and Speaker Moore and Senator Blue and Darren Jackson and Robert Reives was when we got to go back to Asheville, something on behalf of the city. I promised Tracy and Marcus whatever it is that we can help you with or I can help you with personally, I'm going right there with you, and I see my friend back in the back who's one of the best lobbyists in the country. He knows what it's like building those relationships and not just talking to them when you need something. We need to get sports betting passed, but while I'm there, if you guys give me some talking points, I'll speak on behalf of our city too.

Ms. Dodson said we appreciate that. So, Adam. I don't know if everybody knows but I will consider Adam our latest retention effort. He was a long-time visitor when he was here for the President's Cup and has officially as of today, is a permanent resident. So, we're so excited to have kept him. He's going to be the Director of Professional Golf at Quail. So, Adam, we're so excited. It was a such a great journey to work with you on the President's Cup and to know that you're going to be staying and you'll be that point of contact. We're so glad you stayed. So, talk to us a little bit from the perspective of golf.

Looking back at the President's Cup but then even looking forward of our city's positioned in this space.

Adam Sperling, Quail Hollow said thanks. I appreciate the kind words and thanks to everybody in the room and everybody else in the room for welcoming us like you did five years ago when we moved from the Bay Area. It stands out. I remember my wife identified it. She said, "You know, I thought the Bay Area was really welcoming. It was accepting. Which was great and why we liked it," she said, "But I've never been anywhere that was as welcoming as Charlotte when we arrived and throughout our time here, both personally and professionally." I think that speaks to a lot of the success that the city certainly had both growing and with business recruitment, but for special events as well. I think back, with that welcoming reception that we personally felt, I think the PGA (Professional Golf Association) Tour having been here certainly with an annual event since 2003 but even predating that, the World Seniors and the Kemper Open back in 1969, the PGA Tour has always been welcomed here as well.

When you establish relationships that are built over decades and decades, you stay front and center when new opportunities present themselves or future opportunities need to be considered. I think when we got here in early 2018, we felt a responsibility. We thought we were going to be here for three and a half years. It turned out four and a half years, but we felt a responsibility that if we were going to ask this community to support this global event for so long, that we needed to make sure that we were also supporting this community. We took a lot of direction from those in the room. We took a lot of direction from those up here on the panel, from other community stakeholders and it was important that when Charlotte had this international golf event for four days at the end of September, that we presented it in a way that really reflected Charlotte and that it reflected all of Charlotte.

So, I look back and we spent a lot of time getting to know the community. Our first sort of introduction to the community was really taking our show on the road and focusing not just on activating South Park, but we had watch parties during the 2019 President's Cup throughout the city at various establishments. We started supporting local nonprofits in 2019. Nonprofits that the community had identified. We showed up and we wanted to understand what Charlotte cared about, what was the focus, and it didn't take us long to learn about the work that leading an opportunity task force had done and where we could find our way into supporting the community. So, we took a lot of direction from this community and ultimately, we were able to put on what was the most successful President's Cup in the event's close to 30-year history by leaps and bounds. That would not have happened if it wasn't for the community support and the community leadership that was provided.

Ms. Dodson said I will say I remember a defining moment when you and Walter came to our team and said, "What are the small businesses that we want to engage? What are the community of small businesses? Who are the people?" Not just, "Hey we have a quota to hit," or anything like that. You really took the time to get to know Charlotte or to think about those businesses to elevate and be a part of the events. So, that was a great learning opportunity for us too because it changes the way we approach things going forward. So, thank you for that.

Adam, you kind of brought me into the next question and I'm just going to go down the line. Vinay, I'll start with you. When we talk about hospitality and tourism, there's two sides of it. We talk a lot about, what does the industry generate? All the tourism and all the visitors. Let's talk about the community benefit. The community impact. Whether it's from a perspective of a team or vendors or anything like that.

Mr. Patel said I said it earlier. It's job creators. What tourism does is it allows people to come and enjoy Charlotte for the first time. I think I said that in the conventions article. Bring them here once, it will allow them to come back over and over and over again and spend money in our city, generate taxes in our city so we can do the kinds of things that Council wants to get done. All the events that get put together. I will tell you walking through Uptown in 2020 was painful. Then the clock turned. I think it was the week of the

President's Cup. The International Arts Festival, my wife was performing so I'm going to go down there and watch. Didn't realize it. Elton John was in concert. You had that going on. I think the Hornets had something in the arena. So, it felt like New York City. It felt amazing and that's what tourism does. It elevates the stature of our city; of the destination we've created. Then at the same time, brings in resources, financial resources that the community can then partake in.

Mr. Sperling said I think I'll leave the tourism piece up to the experts on the panel. I'm a little over my skis there, but I think for us, it was looking at how many different ways beyond travel and tourism we could impact the community. Working with small businesses, it spans the gamut when you think about, is it driving direct dollars from a supplier's standpoint? Is it integrating some of these businesses into our onsite program and giving them not only receipts and income generating, but also raising the profile. I know walking around the community after our event, we had close to a dozen food partners, local restaurants that were represented out at our event and the feedback from one was that they had a month's worth of receipts in a week out at Quail Hollow which was phenomenal.

Another one was, "We had people coming into our store for the first time," that had been saying for a long time, "We meant to be down here. We meant to get down here. We tried your fries at Quail Hollow and now we're here." So, it's a little bit of a legacy of support. The third way I would say with respect to small businesses was kind of providing a case study and looking at how we can seed opportunities and then see them grow. Perfect example, our merchandise team doing a modest buy with 704 Shops and allowing 704 Shops to bring what they do to a country club and a global event and doing it in a way where we were very thoughtful and strategic with Chris and Scott and making sure that we were purchasing enough apparel that would create, what you were talking about Tom, that scarcity creates demand.

I know there's people in this room that weren't able to get it because it wasn't there, but we've got a conversation with them this week about how we can keep it going. You've got the 2025 PGA Championship coming in a couple of years. So, making sure that when we do things, we're cushioning and creating a successful narrative to follow. So, future opportunities to grow throughout will remain.

Councilmember Molina said just to inject, it was my first time ever at a golf tournament. So, I'm exploring, learning, but I loved experiencing how we highlighted Charlotte. We had the different areas that are actually important to us as Charlotteans being highlighted on a global scale and I thought that was actually really artful. Just wanted to add that.

Paul said Tracy, when you talk about community, we've always thought about the Spectrum Center as being a community asset and a community gathering place. So, when you see high school graduations at our building, local college graduations, you'll see a very diverse group of events, concerts, that literally hit every demographic and every genre of music. It's not happenstantial. It's purposeful. When you look at our games and our game presentation, when I got here in 2006 our games were quite as welcoming to everybody. We've purposefully changed the music so that the music literally hits every demographic. Our half time acts, our pregame acts, our national anthem singers or performers, all different demographics so that everybody feels at home when they come to the Spectrum Center.

Then one of the interesting things that I saw in State Farm Arena in Atlanta which if any of you visit and if any of you visit up in Brooklyn, their arena is something very similar to what Adam is talking about. A lot of neighborhood restaurants that are in the arena have formed a partnership with Levy, which we're certainly going to try to think about exploring. One of the things that Betsy Mack that runs our community relations did during the pandemic was as we were going out trying to find community events and ways to give back to identify some small restaurants, minority restaurants and caterers and buy food from them to give to the hospital workers or give the people that were out helping people that were suffering during the pandemic. How do we take that and elevate that to a level that we don't just have Chick-fil-A in our building or don't just have a major brand in the

building. A Dunkin Donuts we just added as a partner. How do we get some of these small businesses in town that have great restaurants that we all like to go and visit, enjoy their food and help them elevate their business.

So, again, we're just trying to steal great ideas and what I consider best practices and we consider best practices from a lot of our partners in the NBA and they're willing to help share because they all share Levy as a partner as well. So, if they can do it there's no reason why we can't at least explore doing it.

Mr. Gabbard said I'll just plunge in and just say a lot of things that we're blessed to do in entertainment, sports, these are I would describe, incredible aspirational moments that are a huge range that start at the micro level of critically young people that come into these venues, have those experiences and get a glimpse of what their life might be. That's important to our city. It's also important on a tourism vantage that it expresses what we aspire to be as a city and how we represent ourselves to the world. It was great, totally by coincidence that it aligned. That the President's Cup was here with these international visitors, and we launched the Charlotte International Arts Festival. It was a great opportunity for us to express the breadth of what we aspire to be. I frequently hear from out-of-town guests that come to our theater and say, "When did Charlotte get to be so cool?"

So, when you look at the range of things we're accomplishing, from the way that we're influencing our kids in a positive way, to out of town guests that are saying, "Wow, this is a great place to be. Maybe I should live there. Maybe I should be like Adam and move there because I've made a choice that this is a place to be." I think these are key opportunities for us to define for our ourselves and to define to the world who we are and what we want to be.

Mr. Murray said I'll just wrap up by saying that we're really grateful for these visitors because of what they leave behind for us. Not only do they spend money in our city, but they also leave a tourism tax for us, and we used that tourism tax to build the Spectrum Center, the Convention Center, invest in Ovens and Bojangles, invest in Blumenthal. Those taxes that visitors spend in our market, that result of that spending creates venues for our citizens and for community. So, we have world class buildings because we have a vibrant visitor economy. Our community gets to enjoy that and that's a really important part of why we love visitors and why this industry is so important to our community. Because we can attract them. In our advertising, we just got a new ROI (Return on Investment) study. For every dollar we spend in marketing, somebody came to our city and spent \$71 and left \$4 in taxes behind. So, think about the value of that and how that \$4 in tax is generated. That Multiplier Effect creates opportunities for us to solve some of our most important venue problems as well. So, I'm really grateful for tourism and I'm really grateful for visitors. Often people say things like, "Well why are you so focused on visitors when we have a lot of our problems in our community?" It's because visitors help us solve our problems in our community. That's a really important thing to remember.

Mr. Patel said I'd be jobless without visitors.

Unknown said most of us would be.

Ms. Dodson said so, I want to hit on something Tom Gabbard said about the arts and Charlotte is cool. When we're recruiting businesses, a lot of times we're competing against Austin, we're competing against Nashville and we're faced with that question of, "What's your cool factor?" I always say that we are a city that is built on commerce first and quality of life and those aspects of it, but that we're just now coming into our cool and that's from the work that all of you all are doing.

Mr. Patel said I will tell you. I have a 21-year-old getting ready to graduate. He's coming back home. I said, "Okay, you're going to live at the house?" "No, I'm living in Southend okay." I'm like, "Okay." That's what we have created here. It is cool. It is great. It is destination assets that we have that we've created over time that has put Charlotte on a global scene. When the President's Cup was here, the world woke up and went to bed

with Charlotte on its mind. When the Allstar Game was here, same thing. When the DNC (Democratic National Convention) was here, same thing. The world woke up and the world went to bed with Charlotte, North Carolina in their mind, and that's what this industry creates and that's what venues like Spectrum Center and sports. You name it, we've got everything.

Mr. Whitfield said Tracy let me just add one thing if I could to what Vinay said. Just to share with the group how we think about Charlotte whenever we get an international opportunity. You may remember 8 or 10 years ago we were invited to go to Asia to Beijing and Shanghai and play the Clippers in two games. We purposefully asked Eileen Wei that used to be at the Legacy Chamber to come as part of our traveling party, ride over on our team plane. She happened to be from Shanghai, to help us introduce Charlotte to a lot of her native neighbors and encourage them to move their businesses here and do business with us. Same thing, when we were invited five years ago right before the pandemic to go to Paris, the first thing we did, with Janet LaBar's leadership at the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance is say, "How can we use this regular season game against the Milwaukee Bucks in Paris? How can we bring people from all over Europe?" We put together an amazing group of business leaders from Charlotte to talk about what a great place Charlotte is to do business. So, we were lucky to have our Mayor there, I think Marcus went. Did you go Tracy?

Ms. Dodson said I was there, yes.

Mr. Whitfield said I think the Council member here. We had a number of people join in our party and travel over. Bank of America and Honeywell allowed two of their most senior executives to sit on a panel with Janet LaBar and I to just really praise Charlotte and what it's like to do business in Charlotte. Our Commissioner Adam Silver, his entire executive team, our owner, our managing partner, Curtis Polk, everybody there to do all we could to make sure this game, a part of the NBA global games, had a chance to tell our story about Charlotte rather than just going over and playing a game.

So, we're committed to that. We're hoping to get another opportunity to plan internationally. When we do, one of the first things we're going to think about is, "How can we use that opportunity to better the place that we all love to live, work and play."

Councilmember Driggs said I'll just make a short comment. It feels like we're getting low on time. For one, thank you all of you for the important contributions you make to Charlotte not only in your limited specific areas and responsibility, but also as community citizens. Much appreciated and congratulations on having weathered COVID the way you did because the drop off in your revenues in particular was sensational.

What I wanted to say was we have invested in fact in hospitality, in the Convention Center, we're talking about the arts, the team and at Quail. Those things came up sort of one at a time from a Council perspective. We sort of said, "Yes, okay that looks good." So, if you have thoughts again, not now, but if you have thoughts on how we can be more holistic and intentional. Pardon those expressions, but can we do more to capitalize on the synergies that come from the activity in each of your spheres and the spin off in terms of job creation, economic activity and so on. It feels to me like we're a little bit piece mill right now in the way we make our decisions about what each of you does. Thank you.

Councilmember Graham said I too want to echo Councilmember Driggs' sentiments in terms of the impact that you all make on our local community from an economic development perspective. Fred, you may have read my mind. Yesterday I had mentioned the HB2 example in reference to how the corporate community really came to help us through that tough time and use it in the same analogy of mobility. All the events that you guys do are regional events. People from all over the southeast come to Charlotte. At the President's Cup I met folks from Florida and Georgia and Tennessee and D.C. They came to Charlotte for the event.

So, mobility and making sure we're able to get people from the region and to your destination is really important to us, to me. So, from an economic development

perspective, would love to take you up on that help in reference to talking to centers of influence in Raleigh about the need for a mobility plan for our region. Not a Charlotte ask, but a regional ask. You heard us talk a little bit about our state and federal agenda. Words on paper, unless we're intentional about impacting and talking to centers of influence who understand what it is that we want to get done for the region and more importantly the impact it has on what you do each and every day. So, I'm publicly saying we need your help and would love to find ways where we can work together to make that happen.

Mr. Patel said I just want to say thank you to all of you. If it wasn't for some of the programming that the City Council did right off the bat when the first round of money came, we were very focused about how we're going to spend those dollars. You kept a lot of hotel doors open, a lot of restaurant doors in business. So, thank you for that. We were able to take that on to a state level and get \$500 million from the state of North Carolina for hospitality and tourism assets. I think not just as a city, as a state, we're the sixth most visited state in the country, I think. I think that's what the number is. So, it is huge. The beaches and the mountains. I remember having the conversation with the Governor when the caps came and I said, "Charlotte's not going to get to 50 percent occupancy anytime soon, but your beaches and mountains will." And low and behold they got there, and they're still there. They're booming. I just want to thank you for all the investments that you have made. For small business owners like us, Charlotte's home. I do it because I love it and we do have relationships and anytime we can help, we will do it. Thank you.

Mr. Whitfield said can I just add one thing to Councilmember Driggs' comment. I do think we're very fortunate to have our owner be who he is, and our managing partner think the way he thinks and he's Marcus' financial guy, Curtis Polk is. So, it doesn't happen without him. You know, during the pandemic we were completely out of business and our owner made a decision not to layoff any of our workers, not to furlough anybody, not to cut anybody's salary.

For part time workers that were scheduled to do events in the Spectrum Center that had been cancelled, he agreed to pay them as if we held those events and we believe that between that and James Jordan who is our COO (Chief Operating Officer), who's a 31 year Veteran who brought in a military stance as we went into the pandemic creating a task force, because I didn't know what in the world he was talking about. At the end of the day, it was the best thing that ever happened because it kept all of our leaders across the business, including basketball, on twice a week meeting and we kept everybody employed, stayed in touch with all of our teammates. So, coming out of the pandemic, we were ready to get right back to business.

So, we're grateful that the Charlotte community supported us. We renewed 90 percent of our ticket holders from the year before. We renewed all of our corporate sponsors and grew many of them substantially and we just had our tenth sell out this year a couple of nights ago. I don't have to tell you all, we aren't quite playing the way we'd like to play, we've had a lot of injuries. So, it's been great to see us finally get two games ago all five of our starters on the court together for the first time all season and get big wins against Chicago and Miami.

Again, a lot of it is our owner, but also a lot of it is just this community supporting us, embracing us, continuing to give us another chance to get better on the floor. We're trying to do everything we can on the business side to make sure that when anybody comes in the Spectrum Center for a concert, a family show, most concerts when they go on the road, they make one or two stops in the Carolinas. We brought other cities in the equation that were never thought about, Greenville and Columbia. Because of House Bill 2, they compete against us now for these concerts and family shows with Raleigh and Greensboro, my hometown.

So, you all investing in our building will continue to help us be able to out book all of these cities and make sure that every major concert or family show that hits the road, if they're going to stop twice in North and South Carolina, we'll get one of them. If they're only going to stop once, we want to be that one.

Councilmember Bokhari said I'll just say real quick. We're obviously all very lucky to have you. That's been emphasized a lot. Just want to take a second and depending on what side of the negotiating table you are from her at any given time it may differ that we all recognize Tracy Dodson and the bridge she provides to the business community, to the hospitality community and to this Council. That goes many times unstated, but we all recognize how critical that is.

Mr. Whitfield said couldn't agree more. She and Marcus have been phenomenal partners in going through a year and a half negotiation and it never became anything other than positive.

Ms. Dodson said three.

Mr. Whitfield said three years, okay. It was always positive because we all had the same goal in mind. Let's make a wise investment, let's don't make any money, but let's make sure we keep the Spectrum Center where it needs to be to stay on top of sports and entertainment in the Carolinas.

Ms. Dodson said so, Fred, I think you just said it well. One take away for this is it's not an us versus you when we're in these negotiations. It is about what's best for our community, how we all keep moving together in that partnership. That was really what I just wanted to take an opportunity to thank you guys for all that you do and that partnership. I think it definitely goes both ways. We're very fortunate here. So, thank you everyone.

Ms. Arnold said thank you to our panelist again. We really appreciate you being here. At this time, we're going to take a quick break. Lunch is in the hallway. We will have a closed working session. You also will have a working lunch during that time as well. Then after the closed session, we'll come back to the planning presentation to end the day. Thank you.

The meeting was recessed at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 12:48 p.m.

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ITEM NO. 4: CLOSED SESSION (WORKING LUNCH)

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Mayfield and carried unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to NC General Statute § 143.318.11 (a) (3) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in Charlotte, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the City in negotiations pursuant to NC General Statute § 143.318.11 (a) (4), and to establish or instruct City staff considering the position to be taken by on behalf of the City in negotiating the price or other material terms of a contract or a proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase option or exchange, pursuant to NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (5).

The meeting was recessed at 12:51 p.m. for a closed session and reconvened at 3:47 p.m.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.



Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 5 Hours, 16 Minutes
Minutes completed: March 27, 2024