

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Action Review on Monday, September 25, 2023, at 5:09 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Councilmembers present were Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, and Braxton Winston II.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember James Mitchell.

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmember Dimple Ajmera, Marjorie Molina, and Victoria Watlington.

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**Mayor Lyles** said thank you. It's September 25, 2023, and we're starting the Charlotte City Council meeting. We begin with introductions and being called to order.

**Councilmember Ajmera arrived at 5:10 p.m.**

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### **ACTION REVIEW**

#### **ITEM NO. 1: MECKLENBURG COUNTY ABC BOARD INTRODUCTION**

**Mayor Lyles** said alright. So, at this point in our agenda we are talking about those things that might be on our agenda in the future as well as those opportunities that we have to get various reports and information together. So, we'll start this evening's meeting by welcoming Keva Walton and Monifa Drayton of the Mecklenburg County Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, mostly known as ABC to introduce themselves and to give us a presentation.

**Keva Walton, CEO Mecklenburg County ABC** said well good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to be here. Our purpose is really quite simple. To introduce to some and to reintroduce to others the Mecklenburg County Alcoholic Control Board. Let me say that actually 76 years ago now, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners and the voters approved what is known as an evergreen business. A business that is self-replenishing, self-funding and meant to improve community. That business is Mecklenburg County ABC Board and at its founding there were some very specific parameters put in place on how that Board would exist in this community. A big part of that was investing dollars back into the community. Again, no tax dollars. Completely self-funded from the revenues generated by the sales. I think it's important to look at, in 75 years, that's what that investment looks like and it continues to grow. A big part of that investment as you can see was when Mecklenburg set it up, a percentage of the profits, because we can't keep profits by general statues, and we have a threshold that we can't go above. So, an annual part of our budget is investment in Mecklenburg County, City of Charlotte Public Library, alcohol education and law enforcement. So, there's nothing you can do about receiving a check. You're going to get one. It's in the budget. So, that's what this looks like.

So, when we talk about being community invested, that's what we mean. We put dollars behind this mission. Let's be clear, we all might enjoy an adult beverage, but there are many among us who struggle with addiction. Whether it be alcohol and I would encourage us all to pay very close attention to the fentanyl crisis growing exponentially and quietly but not so quietly. So, a big part of our mission really is about alcohol education. So, today kind of three seeds I want to leave you with for us. The first is around community and as you can see our very construct was all about community. Alcohol is a very addictive substance. It's easy to forget that in a place like Charlotte, but we see the numbers. We see the casualties, and we saw a lot of it during the pandemic, but a big part of our effort and our mission is supporting community and making sure that alcohol education, treatment, and prevention is a priority. So, a big part of it is we have an annual community granting process. This year alone total \$1.9

million. These grants you see before you, these are small grassroots organizations who are doing the work of substance misuse, education, treatment, and prevention on the ground where people are. That's important to know.

The other thing we did that's really significant this year is we added a fiscal agent component because we want these emerging organizations to be successful, not just in our grant, but in the grants beyond. So, you can see those are the small grant awards. These are trusted names in our community that have been recipients of grants over the years and continue to do so. Then we have a few that are our larger grantees. Again, names you recognize all doing the work of substance misuse, education, treatment, prevention, and research. So, that's a fundamental part of what we do. It's also important to remember back in the 1950s, Mecklenburg County ABC Board cofounded Anuvia.

**Councilmember Watlington arrived at 5:15 p.m.**

It used to be known as the Chemical Dependency Center and we continue to make about a \$3 million investment in Anuvia annually in addition to these grants. A big part of community for us, and you saw law enforcement, is our engagement with the community. I have several members of our law enforcement team here representing, holding down the back row. You see a lot of young people in these photos. I can't express to you how important it is that we are constantly making our young people aware of the dangers and the challenges of substance misuse. During the pandemic, one of the research studies showed that young people, alcohol was the number one substance for misuse during the pandemic. This is sixth, eighth, and ninth graders. So, you will see our law enforcement. Certainly, they protect our property and protect our customers and our consumers, but more importantly they spend time with our young people. That includes colleges such as Johnson and Wales and Johnson C. Smith University. So, community is a very big part of who we are.

The second piece really is around customer service. My teammate over there, Vernetta Purcell, our HR (Human Resources) Director often says, "We are a retail business with government oversight," and like any business the customer is king. So, we spend quite a bit of time or half of it like everybody else. COVID was an opportunity to really relook at our business and how do we make it more customer centric. Obviously, there's some pieces that we don't control in Raleigh, but we are able to influence as the largest Board in the State and we've made some movement there on modernization. Proud to say that we're moving some of those requirements that make it easier for small businesses to do business. It's key upon that. Internally, we're spending a lot of time on making product more accessible in a responsible way. Again, our granting, we've spent a lot of time particularly around our mixed beverages. Those are all those hotels, bars, restaurants, neighborhood bars. How do we make their lives easier? Because they are small businesses, and we want them and need them to be successful for a number of reasons. So, constantly working on that front. This is probably one of your slides that I borrowed and it's a little outdated because I'm proud to say that if you look at that food and beverage line, that's now \$5.1 billion. The spirits industry clearly is an integral part of that hospitality tourism economy. I constantly say that to our team, whether it's a direct, indirect, or induced job, the work that comes around the spirits industry really helps drive so much of this economy. So, the work that we do, again, it's not just about this ABC Board, it's about this economy. Talking to Councilmember Graham about the tennis tournament that we will have here in Charlotte. We're already thinking about that. How do we service that? We're looking at Cincinnati now, getting to understand of how that is serviced. We know that Rivergate is coming soon with lots of product and people and our airport continues to grow. So, we're constantly looking at the surrounding environment and how do we adapt to make sure that we are best serving our customers. So, know that we're constantly watching the environment.

So, the customer and then the culture. Again, [inaudible] say we have a strong 320 and growing employees full and part time. We're constantly looking at the market. Proud to say that our salaries are above market for comparable retail operations. We do an annual scan of the environment and have that study done externally. Very competitive.

We actually pay nonprofit volunteer hours. Really excited about tuition reimbursement and our Board voted. We know that student loan debt is huge. So, our Board voted to put in place a student loan repayment process for our full-time employees in good standing over a year. Proud to say that the uptake on that has been pretty good and has been transformational for a number of folks. This year we will add a success sharing plan. If it were private sector, we'd say profit sharing but we don't have profits at Meck ABC. So, it's based on incentive and goals that will be reached by each department. Again, we celebrated 75 years and rather than putting those dollars into billboards and advertisement, we put those dollars back into our people. All sorts of wonderful enhancements that make their work lives better. So, we're working on building a culture that is desirable to be a part of. Again, it's retail and lipstick on a pig or whatever you call it, it's still retail, and we want to do our best to take care of our people. So, again, customer, community, and culture.

I want to now turn it over to Dr. Wilhelmenia Rembert who is one of our Board members and she's going to bring words on behalf of the Board. Dr. Rembert.

**Wilhelmenia Rembert, Mecklenburg County ABC Board** said thank you very much Mr. Walton and good evening, everyone. Madam Mayor, Mr. Mayor Pro Tem and members of Council. I am delighted to be here this evening on behalf of our Chairperson, Ms. Monifa Drayton. She is unable to be here today, but she sends her sincere regrets. She would certainly have been here, but she is out of town and could not be here today. So, I am pleased to bring remarks or greetings on her behalf and on behalf of the other members of our Board. One other member of our Board is here. I'll ask Director Beverly Thorpe if she'll stand or be recognized. I didn't see if any of our other Board members came in yet. I don't think so. On behalf of the entire Board, we want you to know how important this partnership is with the City as it is with the County and with the Public Library. The funds that we have over and above what it takes to run the operation. We get to put back in the community and we think that's of great value to our community. So, we're here. Director Thorpe and I are here to show our support to our CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Mr. Walton who we believe is doing an exceptional job in running our ABC operation. You should and can be very proud of the work that he and his team are doing. I also would be remiss if I didn't bring greetings from Congressman Jeff Jackson's office where your former colleague former City Councilman Larken Egleston is our District Director. He sends his regards as well. So, thank you so much for having us this evening.

Mayor Lyles said thank you.

Mr. Walton said so, a lot in there, but again I think Dr. Rembert summed it up well. We have a lot to be proud of in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and our task is to hold down our lane. Our lane is to make sure we are managing the sale and distribution of spirits in a lawful, legal, and responsible way. I can't stress that enough. Again, it's easy to say lots of things you could say, but I can tell you everyday the number of fake IDs that we receive, and parents believe it or not who bring their under age kids into the store and want to purchase for them. It's taken on a whole new light now. So, our law enforcement and our store associates do a wonderful job of that. Again, I'm wearing a button about ABCTOGO and one of the outcomes of the pandemic. We didn't know if we'd end. So, we entered the e-commerce space and I'm proud to say when and if Sunday sales comes, which it will at some point, we will have our software developed such that you can order online and pick up hopefully in store or curbside. Store 25 at Randolph currently is operational as well as Store 14 on Central Avenue. By the end of the year, we plan to have at least five more ready to go. So, that concludes my comments. Again, thank you. I wanted to let you know what we're doing and that we believe in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. So, thank you. One last detail. So, I mentioned we cannot keep profits. So, this is yours.

Mayor Lyles said thank you.

Mr. Walton said so, again, we have an annual amount that we budget every year specifically for this and we can't keep profits over a certain threshold. So, this \$1.5

million is over and above what you receive in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. So, again thank you and I'll entertain any questions you might have.

Mayor Lyles said well Mr. Walton, thank you for your presentation. I would like to say that I think what you do and the stores has been just truly remarkable. The way that they've changed from being kind of like the red dot store to actually a place that's bright and has selections and choices. I have to say to you, of the stores that I've been in, the staff has been tremendous.

Mr. Walton said great.

Mayor Lyles said easier to pay, easier to find, all of that. So, your customer service, at least in the respect that I've had, and I want to say this to the Board members, it has really changed from what was the tradition. So, I think that there are a few questions for you.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said thank you for the presentation Mr. Walton and for the Board members who are in attendance. A couple of questions for you and you may or may not have the answer to this. How do you decide which locations receive which products?

Mr. Walton said we are getting better at that data analytics, what's being driven, what sale is being driven where, how much volume. Like any other retailer and we're getting better that we've invested significantly in our computing platform to better enable us to do that, but principally based on sales.

Ms. Mayfield said so, it's interesting that your current model was based on sales because if the location closest to me doesn't have the product that I want and I have to go across town, the sales are going to be based off of that location or if I were to go online to do a search. So, I'm going to be very specific. Jack Daniels now has a Tennessee Honey in a can form.

Mr. Walton said yes.

Ms. Mayfield said Myers Park is one of the few locations in Charlotte that has that. If the Wilkinson Boulevard location, the Brookshire location, the Mount Holly location, any one of those are the closest location to me, there's no way for me to go on to ABC's website to find this particular product. So, that's why I was wondering how it is decided.

Mr. Walton said you're looking for the bottle or the cans?

Ms. Mayfield said it's a can.

Mr. Walton said again, we're always looking. Again, what I would say to you, there really is probably very few products that we can't get. We do try to look at how sales are moving because it moves. It's like an amoeba. It could be this way one month and the next different. So, we will take a look. Mikes got that down.

Ms. Mayfield said yet when we're talking about using technology, it might be helpful as people, not only those who currently live here, but as we're growing, we have a number of locations throughout the City. I'm on the website and did a Google search. It would be helpful to say in my area, if there's a specific product, because I believe it was under the North Carolina Legislative Statute that we can't receive certain drinks that come in from out of state. So, again, I'm just going to speak for the I in all of my alcohol related questions. So, after visiting Ireland a number of years ago, there was a very specific Irish drink that I can only get from Ireland because nobody sold it here. For many years, I was able to order it and then that was changed when we no longer could get orders from it. Unfortunately, North Carolina doesn't have it. I had to go across state lines in order to find it. So, I also wonder if that's still going to be a concern and if so, how do residents encourage you all of certain products and brands so that we're not going across the state line in order to identify purchases?

Mr. Walton said well a lot of that has to do with what's listed at the state level and chances are we could get that by special order. So, there really is no product we can't get, the question is if it isn't in stock across our system, we can probably get it through a special order if it's not listed by the state. The state hosts quarterly listing meetings for new products to get them on the list. So, it's always changing every quarter.

Ms. Mayfield said so, I'm going to tell you to add Coole Swan to whoever the magical person over there writing things down onto that list, but I think there is an opportunity if we're looking at our neighboring partners what products they are having that we might not have. Again, if I need to go across the state line or to Frugal then that's sales that I'm not able to participate and utilize right here. So, it might be an opportunity to see what is it that they're seeing that we don't have in our stores.

Mr. Walton said absolutely. I would footnote that in our total system including barrel picks, special orders, they're well over 4,000 SKUs (Stock Keeping Units). So, we'll get you.

Ms. Mayfield said yes, because I don't want to special order. I just want to be able to walk into the store and get what I want to get. Mainly, my notes are we comparable to South Carolina with our offerings as well as our pricing?

Mr. Walton said I'm biased. I think we exceed. It's easy to look at two or three stores and look at their product. Our products is spread across 31 stores and 1,200 mixed beverage customers. So, that's like a bar restaurant. So, it may be in the system, it may not be at that store but changes are it's in the system, and I will say one of the things that we want to get better at from our data and our computing platform is to be able to detect and be responsive to that demand because you're right. We want to make sure our residents are taken care of.

Ms. Mayfield said in your slide for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Hospitality Tourism Industry, what is You Drive It? When you have in the Hospitality Tourism Industry slide, where we had the little bar, what is You Drive It?

Mr. Walton said that I do not know. That's a Mohammad Jenatian slide. I grabbed it from HTA (Hospitality and Tourism Alliance).

Ms. Mayfield said okay.

Mr. Walton said I didn't create that, but that came directly from CRVA (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority) and HTA.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you.

**Councilmember Anderson** said sounds like we have some leaking sales for Frugal Macdoogal. So, we need to make sure we're capturing. I have two quick questions for you. First, I do want to say I echo what the Mayor has said about the renovation of the stores being brighter, the customer service. I've witnessed that in two stores that are in District One and adjacent to District One. The user experience is much better. I also want to thank you for being adaptive to how our environment is changing and being ready to embrace the change before it actually occurs. I think that's important not only for the Board, but across all entities for the City. We need to be more proactive versus reactive. I have two questions. The first one is around social districts and as you know we are embarking on approving our first social district in the City and because you are the Board of the County, I know you're in conversation with Wake County and other Counties that have social districts. Some of my residents have some concerns about safety and how that's being managed. I was just wondering can you speak a little bit about your learnings from the existing social districts in the state?

Mr. Walton said it's still very sketchy. Not a lot of learning as of yet. I was at a conference; it was in New York, and they talked about the whole night time economy. I shared this with Mohammad, Tom and Michael Smith and the whole notion is

recognizing that the nighttime economy is a significant brand point and economic point for your city. So, in New York, UK (United Kingdom), they have these nighttime managers, and that function of a social district is being orchestrated through that entity. New York, as you can imagine, tons of social districts, it really is mind boggling. We have concerns about safety and enforcement quite frankly all around. So, I have no other new learnings other than what I took from that conference, and I shared with Tom, Mohammad and I think I shared it with Chief Jennings also because the police departments in these cities are very engaged in the orchestrating of these night districts. We are continuing to watch and learn as well, and would appreciate the conversation back and forth. We have a team of 16, very small law enforcement office who work very closely with CMPD (Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department) on these matters. So, again we want to continue to be a part of that conversation.

Ms. Anderson said absolutely. I think that partnership with your law enforcement officers and CMPD as well as the entities that are looking to bring these social districts on board is the right type of collaboration that we need to ensure that it's successful and safe for the residents. The second thing I would like you to speak on is just the education piece around fake IDs and having adults purchase alcohol for minors. I know you all do a great job of community engagement and will come out to neighborhood association meetings, other meetings. Can you speak to that arm of your community engagement so everyone can understand how you are accessible for the balance of Council?

Mr. Walton said yes. Again, we are looking as we speak. We've just brought on an additional staff resource, particularly in our community outreach education area. Our law enforcement team has stood up an entire unit within that division focused just on community engagement. So, we were very engaged with and we're looking to reengage with CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) for our state program so that we are constantly in the schools. I'm increasingly believing that we need to spend more time with parents because I heard a father talk about the loss of his 14-year-old son to fentanyl and he thought his son had no issues. So, as we think about our next evolution and we are at that point of determining next, and again welcome the opportunity to have that conversation because I'm feeling like we need to talk to parents and children. Yes, we are available.

**Councilmember Molina arrived at 5:38 p.m.**

Our law enforcement team as I said are in CMS, we're in charter schools, we spend time over at Johnson C. Smith as well as Johnson and Wales and our grantees are an important part of that because they operate where people live and they have a connectivity that maybe none of us has. So, those grants that go to those small grantees is critical and I think that's going to be a way for us to reach deeper into the community.

Ms. Anderson said I agree. Thank you for giving back to the community. That's all I have Madam Mayor.

Mr. Walton said thank you.

**Councilmember Bokhari** said Keva it's good to see you and thank you for all of your multiple roles and contributions to our City over the years. Appreciate seeing that up there and all the proactive stuff. We know that especially when you look at commercial businesses suffering through the pandemic in a lot of ways with their touch point to liquor and all the complexity statewide that comes along with that, sometimes there are issues that arise. I just want to recognize you and your team for troubleshooting the constituent services aspect of that. We know issues arise and you've helped in a number of those cases. Greatly appreciate it and I'd just ask as we move forward for us to continue to make that a priority particularly not just from the business needs which I know you and your team fully are aware of and work on, but that intersectionality between the CMPD ABC folks. The County, Parks and Rec, the County from a health and human services perspective, there's a lot of touch points and there's a lot of ways things can fall between the cracks or be difficult. I think there's an opportunity to build on

what you've done here like we have in the City with one stop shop views for development and things like that. So, just a note to remember as we move forward, but a note of appreciation for you and your team as we work through tough time sensitive items.

Mr. Walton said thank you sir. Again, I would encourage us to relook at that nighttime manager role and function. Again, UK, some of the larger cities had that function and it really served as an umbrella and a hub for all that to coexist and it operated out of the Mayor's office, I think in most of those cities. So, thank you for that.

Mr. Bokhari said we can do that somewhere else here, but that sounds great.

**Councilmember Johnson** said thank you for the presentation.

Mr. Walton said you're welcome.

Ms. Johnson said I will say I recently had a chance to work closely with Ms. Drayton and I know that she leads with integrity and excellence. So, I know your Board is in great hands. I do have a question about the prevention that you all help with. I wanted to hear more about that. You spoke to it a little bit when you talked about the community grants, but what tools are available to restaurant and bar owners to assist when patrons have had too much to drink? Thanks.

Mr. Walton said thank you for that. So, our law enforcement team, we call it ASSET is the acronym. Alcohol Server/Seller Excellence Training. ASSET is all about going into an establishment and educating every server on overservice and carding. So, it can be done. Last year we launched an online platform because we realize it's often hard to get everybody in a restaurant at one time. So, it's self-driven and I'd encourage you all to go take it for your own information and there's a certificate at the end if you're successful. We've seen a significant increase in the number of folks because of that as well as the in person. So, our officers are always available to do that. How many this year have we done Kevin?

Unknown said numbers wise, we're at a couple of hundred sir.

Mr. Waltons said yes. So, that's always available. We are in the process of translating that into Spanish. Always online and our community engagement folks are looking for opportunities. So, if you see opportunities out there, don't hesitate to give us a call and let us know. Again, I'd encourage you to know these grantees because again they're touching people where they live and we can't forget Anuvia. They really do exceptional work there, have been since 1957 or so. So, that's a big part of the agenda as well, but more to come because that need is great. Thank you.

Ms. Johnson said thank you.

**Councilmember Watlington** said thank you. I just have a couple of questions. I'm particularly interested. You mentioned data analytics and how you all are kind of managing your inventory and things based on information from point of sale. I'm just curious where you think that is going or what is the plan forward?

Mr. Walton said thank you for that question because we actually just completed a market analysis with UNC (University of North Carolina) Charlotte School of Business and that very thick document will really help us better understand two things we want to look at. What has changed since the pandemic and what is anticipated over the course of the next five to six years? Now we had to make significant investment in our computing platform to be able to do the data analytics and migrations to Cloud and all those wonderful things. So, we're just now coming up on the curve. So, my plan is to really digest that program and really understand. Again, where is the City going? We don't exist outside of the hospitality tourism economy. So, how do we align those dots and begin to chart there? That will drive so much. I do think a big part of next for us. You won't necessarily see the 6,000 square foot store on three acres. I think we've got



to look for new and inventive ways to enter the marketplace as an example. Some may be maybe an online only store with the top 25 product that fills in where we have gaps. So, as we know the Chick-fil-A on Randolph is a great example of how retailers are shrinking their footprint. They're lessening the number of SKUs. SKU fatigue is what's coming up. So, all of that's a factor now and we're just beginning to digest that and understand that we just got the results from the study last week. So, I'll be happy to come back and once we get a plan and actually share with you where we're going because I think that's important for the hospitality tourism economy.

Ms. Watlington said sure. Yes, I'd be very interested in what your go to market strategy looks like and what your direct-to-consumer sales pipeline may look like. I'm sure for alcoholic beverages you can't necessarily do a vending machine or something that's autonomous, but I'd be very curious.

Mr. Walton said artificial intelligence is amazing. I just have to say that.

Ms. Watlington said very interesting. The other question that I had is from a supply chain standpoint. You may have already covered it or alluded to it a little bit, but I'm curious as to how do smaller retailers, small business, particularly minority business wholesalers get into your pipeline? Are there programs to help support that or are you only dealing with the larger brands?

Mr. Walton said again, I mentioned earlier the state listing system. Any product in the state of North Carolina goes through the North Carolina ABC Commission for listing and that's the process that they go through. I'm not an expert on the length of time or how difficult that is to navigate, but surely there's opportunity there to strengthen that. We've had some local successes who are diverse owned and I'm proud to say are in our stores. We want to see more of that. There are opportunities for us certainly to do more of that. Again, I'll say to you we will probably come back to you in time because again we're talking about modernization and it's the largest Board in the state. I think we have a bit of a responsibility to challenge the status quo a little bit. So, stay tuned.

Ms. Watlington said certainly. Thank you for that. I definitely think there's a play there from a tourism and hospitality standpoint of how do we play up our local brands and how do we create a consumer experience that drives folks to the Charlotte brands in particular. Then my last question is I know that the ABC Commission is tasked with the licensing. I'm just curious though, what role do you all play given that you're in the community and you understand where some of the issues are and things like that. Can you talk a little bit more about the role that the ABC Board plays in trying to manage or curb some of that concentration of alcohol outlets, even if they're not ABC stores in particular?

Mr. Walton said yes, the process that the City has for assessing and checking the box, is this a good establishment, that's really the most local control. We can provide input but we're not directly in that process. I know it may seem slow perhaps for our permittee, but that's part of the reason so that CMPD, ABC can go out and do an inspection. Planning can do an inspection and to make sure that if this is not a good location for an outlet, that it doesn't become one. Again, I know that sounds a little arduous to a business owner who wants, but at present, that's the process. I think it's really important again, from you all's standpoint that CMPD, Planning and all your entities that are involved. Again, just go to Southend. You see the explosion that exists there. It's a lot of effort and your folks do a really good job of doing that. Again, to a business owner, I know it may seem a little slow, but there's a reason. There's a very intentional reason to that, and I would say lastly, it's important. Imagine if there were privatized sales and what would happen to those hot spots, those C stores that have been troublesome to the City for decades? I'm biased obviously but that's a very real community challenge particularly in some neighborhoods more than others.

Ms. Watlington said I know all too well.

Mr. Walton said yes, I know you do. Thank you.



**Councilmember Graham** said quick question. Keva, I want to thank you for your leadership on a wide variety of fronts in this City and our personal relationship goes without saying. So, really appreciate the job that you're doing. It's really a quick question for the manager. Mr. Manager, I keep seeing that \$1.5 million. Tell me, where does the money go in the budget. How is it utilized and how are we tracking it?

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said sure. It's not allocated specifically in the budget. So, when you start to think about that additional \$1.5 million like some of the items dealing with public safety, they would be able to support that. So, we are very thankful. That's how we use it.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said thank you Madam Mayor. I agree with my colleagues about the great work that you and your Board are doing. Appreciate it. In fact, I had an opportunity to attend one of the events that you all had the Queens University that Anuvia was hosting. I think we absolutely need more presence on college campuses. So, if you could just elaborate on the kind of work we are doing on college campuses and how are we addressing some of the struggles that you mentioned early on in the presentation, especially when we're talking about young adults? If you could just speak to that.

Mr. Walton said certainly an opportunity for growth. A lot of our focus has been in grade school. I'm proud to say that our law enforcement division established a paid scholarship for a criminal justice person from Johnson C. Smith. We don't have physical space to house him. So, hopefully when we get complete with our renovation, we'll do that. A number of our officers are on campuses. We have a couple who are adjunct professors at Smith and building that relationship is the first thing. We also offer, I'm going to call it drunk driving, but it's something else. They put on the goggles, and you navigate a vehicle.

Ms. Ajmera said a simulator.

Mr. Walton said yes. So, that's something our law enforcement folks are also out doing particularly at Johnson and Wales and we're always looking for new opportunities. Principally we've been at Johnson and Wales and Johnson C. Smith. Our staff is only 16. So, there's only so much we can do, but how do we leverage relationship and partnership to do more? Again, the online ASSET as I'm talking, I know it's for servers, but that may also be of value to those college age drinkers to know when you've had too much and when you need to drive. So, that may be something we push out online.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I'd be interested. I was going through some of your grantees and many of them we recognize, but I don't see any specifically targeted towards college campuses, especially our young adults. As they just now have a license to now drink, I think it's very important that we do target that group.

Mr. Walton said agreed.

Ms. Ajmera said I see that you have about \$3.4 million distributed towards law enforcement. I wasn't sure because I haven't seen a lot of these checkpoints, drink and drive where I had seen that near college campuses. I'd be interested to hear your vision as to how we can really address the drink and drive culture.

Mr. Walton said yes. Again, partnership is key. Our relationship with CMPD, we cannot do what we do without that relationship. We have a tremendous partnership, but again just listening here I think leveraging our ask at our online ASSET platform more in colleges. I think out of this conversation comes the idea of how do we do more because again, how do we link in with what's already there?

Ms. Ajmera said especially when you have a location that is so close to the college campuses where I've seen college students go. How can we leverage that location to do a targeted outreach to college students and work with law enforcement? This \$3.4 million, is that going specifically towards addressing drinking and driving?

Mr. Walton said it's all inclusive. That would include our law enforcement team, the whole investment of law enforcement as well as the outreach part that comes with it.

Ms. Ajmera said I appreciate your presentation, certainly very resourceful.

Mr. Walton said thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said I would like to see, to Mr. Graham's point, how do we leverage some of these dollars that we are receiving to address some of the gaps that we might have in law enforcement and really using that towards public safety. Thank you.

Mr. Walton said we'll be thinking. Thank you.

**Councilmember Winston** said good to see you, Keva.

Mr. Walton said you as well.

Mr. Winston said so, I have two questions and a comment. Going back to the social districts' topic. One of the rationales for creating this on the state level was the idea that this would increase revenue. Obviously, we're still working on our first one, but there are social districts around North Carolina. Is there any data showing social districts and the economic impact that exists?

Mr. Walton said I get a weekly brief from our national association. It's still early. I haven't seen anything discreet that would give you something real substantive. I will be on the lookout for that because typically that's a brief that covers all 17 of the control states, but I have not seen. Mike, are you aware of anything that's come out as of yet? That's something that we will be on the lookout for because I get that brief daily and I can ask our national office, "What are you seeing on social districts?"

Mr. Winston said so, there's no data right now that shows?

Mr. Walton said no, nothing meaningful that would help you that I can see, but I'll continue to look.

Mr. Winston said thank you. So, I've heard anecdotally that younger adults aren't drinking as much as previous generations. Do you have any data around this to show whether that's true or false?

Mr. Walton said COVID would tell us that would be not true. Anuvia did a youth study in 2021 there about and as I said, alcohol was the number one substance misused by sixth, eighth, ninth and tenth graders principally because of ease of access at home. Now we've got to contend with experimentation is no longer an option.

Mr. Winston said is there any data that shows comparatively if that aggregate is increasing from previous generations or decreasing?

Mr. Walton said I will go back to Anuvia. What I'm seeing is coming from COVID times. So, now that we're out of COVID, it would be interesting to see if that holds true. Again, back to your questions, and thank you for this because this is one of the things I want us to be deeper in is the research end of that. I'd love for us to be able to report, "Here's where we are as a City, as a County relative to substance misuse and here are the gaps." Anuvia is our leading indicator. I'll reach out to Valerie Kopetzky and see what data we can get and I'll forward that over.

Mr. Winston said thank you. The last thing. As I've been listening and taking a look through, this has to do with transportation. This is my comment, feel free to respond if you feel so moved. Transportation, especially in this City and North Carolina is directly correlated with alcohol consumption. A lot of places you have to drive to go drink and vice versa. A safer City means a City where alcohol and personal vehicles aren't as connected. This shouldn't nor does it have to be connected to law enforcement. I hope

you can find ways to invest in the community ways that helps people move around and do that more safely after consuming the products that you regulate. I don't see any direct investment in these community investments in transportation. When we look at drunk driving, accidents, vehicular deaths, vehicular violence, when we look at the way the community is set up, it seems like there's an opportunity there to deal with the problem before it becomes a problem. I'd love for you guys to look into finding more direct ways to invest in that.

Mr. Walton said we certainly will look at it. Again, our focus has principally been on the person, the individual and choice and awareness, but you introduce an interesting perspective. So, something to think about. Thank you.

Mr. Winston said well people aren't driving to go drink and aren't drinking after they're driving. I think that is certainly dealing with the person.

Mr. Walton said well maybe one of the biggest parts is just awareness. You got to repeat something multiple times for people to hear it. So, thank you for that.

Mr. Winston said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I think we've heard from all the Council members. We want to say again to the Board of Directors that have attended and are participating, Mr. Walton, thank you for the work that you're doing. Thank you. Now I'd like to recognize Ms. Watlington.

Ms. Watlington said thank you Madam Mayor. Councilmember Anderson and I would be remis if we didn't recognize the beautiful women in their crimson and cream that are here visiting with us today. If you could please stand. Today kicks off our Delta Days in the City hosted by our Charlotte Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. It's a weeklong series of social action activities which is cumulated in our Delta Days in the City this Saturday. To learn more about that and how you can get involved and be a part of the work of Delta Sigma Theta of improving our community, you can visit DSTCLTALUMNI on Instagram or certainly feel free to connect with any number of the dynamic women in the room. We thank you and we honor you for your service and we appreciate you being here today my sweet Sorors.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. Please feel free to stay as long as you would like.

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## **Item No. 2: Mayor and Council Consent Item Questions and Answers**

**Mayor Lyles** said the next item on our agenda is the consent questions. Ms. Harris has some of those and I believe you have the handout that addresses two items that are on the business agenda and some material behind it around Item 15 and Item 17. Are there any other questions for the consent agenda? Are there any items that someone would like to speak to or any specific item that you'd like to speak to?

\* \* \* \* \*

## **ITEM NO. 3: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 19 THROUGH 36 MAY BE CONSIDERED IN ONE MOTION EXCEPT FOR THOSE ITEMS REMOVED BY A COUNCIL MEMBER. ITEMS ARE REMOVED BY NOTIFYING THE CITY CLERK.**

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with the exception of Item No. 20 which was pulled for a separate vote.
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**Councilmember Mayfield** said I was pulling number 20. So, do you want me to ask my questions now?

**Mayor Lyles** said go ahead and address. I think that would be appropriate since we have a motion on the floor that you address Item 20 Ms. Mayfield.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you Mayor. Item 20 is the vendor change for the previous approved purchase of specialized equipment truck. Action A, approve the purchase of a custom police command bomb truck for a cooperative contract. B, approve the unit price contract with Emergency Vehicles, Inc. for the purchase of a customized police bomb truck and related equipment for a term of two years. C, authorize the City Manager to extend the contract for additional terms. Back in July of 2023, Council approved I believe, and I can ask the Clerk later to check in the minutes, that I was not in support of us moving forward with this particular purchase. What we have in front of us today is a change in the vendor. What we have in here is, "A change to the vendors is being requested due to the fact that the Emergency Vehicles, Inc. was unable to commit to better pricing and is able to meet the delivery schedule needed to comply." So, this is a request for us to approve changing the vendors. We have in here noted, "CMPD has received over 300 bomb squad service calls and the bomb truck has been deployed to over 80 of the calls. The City's current bomb truck has reached the end of its lifecycle and needs to be replaced. The current truck is over 20 years old and has multiple mission critical items that are broken or unserviceable." It's actually a two-part question and hopefully we have the staff here that can answer. One of the questions is in direct inquiry to the current bomb truck that has passed its life cycle. That question is historically we have a number of surplus items, including surplus guns and other things related to CMPD. So, what is the plan for the current truck that we have? Is this something that is going to be recycled? Is this something that's going to be resold through our surplus? What's the plan for this current vehicle?

**Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget** said so, I will follow up with CMPD to get you the specifics, but no, this wouldn't be available to the general public unless the tactical pieces are taken off and it's a more armorized vehicle type. Things would have to be downgraded before we'd ever have this available to the public, but we'll follow up and get you exactly what's going to happen to it.

Ms. Mayfield said so, thank you Marie. I apologize for not sending this question to you earlier because you did answer the other questions for me. Not really for general public, I want to make sure that this isn't sold to another smaller department because they might be a much smaller police department that might not have access financially to the resources that we have. If this is a vehicle that we've already identified has exceeded its life cycle, just like with a used car, I can still go buy a used car from late 1999, early 2000s today. Doesn't necessarily mean that that's a good idea for me to do at this point unless I'm a mechanic and can do repairs. I want to make sure that we know clearly what's going to happen as far as this vehicle being decommissioned and not be something to the general public, but it also shouldn't make its way to another department.

Ms. Harris said yes ma'am. We'll get you that, and if it would, it would be more so something for training purposes typically and it wouldn't be in service but we'll get you the specifics around that.

Ms. Mayfield said that would be extremely helpful even though we're having this conversation this evening. I have a challenge with us just identifying a new vendor for this without having the additional language whereas most often we would have a little bit more vendor information that we're moving forward. The vendor that we chose back in July of 2023, they weren't able to do the work. So, we went out and found another vendor that potentially can complete the work.

Ms. Harris said so, just to clarify. Both these vendors were under the same cooperative agreement that was already bid out and they both had contracts. The original one we were negotiating with, they were coming in higher. So, the original estimate we gave you was \$1 million. They were coming in a little bit above \$1 million. We had an estimate, but then also just based on how things were going with availability and materials and things like that, they weren't able to produce. They were, but not within



the time frame. With federal dollars we have to spend it within a certain time frame. So, that was the main knockout factor. They couldn't produce it in time for us to use these grant funds whereas the other vendor came in a little lower and guaranteed to meet the delivery time cycle required.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for explaining that and also, it's noted in here that, "The vehicle would be a regional asset that would serve not just the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County but also the other 10 counties within the Urban Area Security Initiative within the region." So, with this approval we're saying that the anticipated expenditures to be about that \$1 million?

Ms. Harris said yes ma'am.

Ms. Mayfield said how much of that \$1 million is coming from our regional partners that also would benefit from this? I need us to not be in a place where Charlotte is the one that's expected to be all things for all people. So, we need to have financial contributions from our partners that also would be utilizing our services.

Ms. Harris said I definitely understand what you're saying, but for this particular asset, it's federal grant and we're the capital of the UASI (Urban Area Security Initiative) County.

Ms. Mayfield said so, we house the grant?

Ms. Harris said so, we administer the grant funds on behalf of the region. So, we're not paying for it and they're not paying for it. The federal government is giving it to us and paying for it, but we're also deploying it as needed throughout the region.

Ms. Mayfield said that is helpful because what we have on here that I'm reading is the funding is general grants fund. So, I didn't read that as to be federal general grants.

Ms. Harris said yes ma'am, it's federal.

Ms. Mayfield said so, I'm still going to be a no for the simple fact for the type of equipment, but I needed to get clarification on where the funding's coming from, how are we making sure that this original vehicle is being decommissioned and without having that information, now it would be very difficult for me to move forward. The last thing we need is something out there that can cause damage.

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

The following items were approved:

**Item No. 19: Firefighting Nozzles and Hoses**

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Rhinehart Fire Services for the purchase of Akron Nozzles and Snap-Tite Hoses for an initial term of three years, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

**Item No. 21: Corridors of Opportunity Emerging Developers Training Program Support**

(A) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute a contract for up to \$600,000 with Local Initiatives Support Corporation for the operation, administration, and management of the currently named Corridors of Opportunity Emerging Real Estate Developers training program, and (B) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute, amend, and renew contracts and other documents as needed to complete this transaction.

**Item No. 22: Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons Installation**

Approve a contract in the amount of \$1,527,731.70 to the lowest responsive bidder Lumin8 Transportation Technologies, LLC, for the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons Installation project.

**Summary of Bids**

Lumin8 Transportation Technologies, LLC	\$1,527,731.70
STS Cable Services, Inc.	\$1,757,841.03
Brooks Berry, Haynie & Associates	\$1,828,499.09
Whiting Construction Co., Inc.	\$2,119,370.00
ALS of North Carolina	\$2,791,800.00

**Item No. 23: Parking Citation Management System and Related Services**

(A) Authorize the City Manager to renew the existing contract with Passport Labs, Inc. for parking citation management and related services with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to purchase such additional software licenses, services, hardware, maintenance, and support as required to maintain the system for as long as the city uses the system.

**Item No. 24: Construct University Research Park Sidewalk**

Approve a contract in the amount of \$1,156,273.25 to the lowest responsive bidder Sealand Contractors Corp. for the University Research Park Sidewalk project.

**Summary of Bids**

Sealand Contractors Corp.	\$1,156,273.25
United of Carolinas, Inc.	\$1,242,037.50
DOT Construction, Inc.	\$1,250,932.10
Blythe Development Co.	\$1,517,241.00
Astron General Contracting Company, Inc.	\$1,694,522.50

**Item No. 25: Water and Sanitary Sewer Service Installations**

Approve a contract in the amount of \$11,538,945.00 to the lowest responsive bidder Propst Construction for the Water and Sanitary Sewer Service Installations project contract 2.

**Summary of Bids**

Propst Construction Co., Inc.	\$11,538,945.00
Mainlining America LLC	\$11,872,531.00

**Item No. 26: Regional Express Bus Service Agreement Renewal with Union County**

(A) Adopt a resolution ratifying the Interlocal Agreement with Union County for Regional Express Bus Services, for an initial term of one year, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the agreement for up to four, one-year terms and to amend the agreement consistent with the purpose for which the agreement was approved.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 635-636.

**Item No. 27: Airport Baggage Handling System Operation, Maintenance, and Repair Contract Amendment**

Approve contract amendment #6 for \$1,717,767.48 to the contract with Siemens Postal, Parcel & Airport Logistics, LLC for maintenance, operation, and repair of the Baggage Handling System.

**Item No. 28: Airport Concourse E Public Area Renovations Construction**

(A) Approve a contract in the amount of \$44,221,875.00 to the lowest responsive bidder Edison Foard, LLC for the Concourse E Public Area Renovations project, and (B) Approve contract amendment #1 for \$1,903,726 to the contract with The Wilson

Group Architects, PA for construction administration services for the construction phase of the Concourse E Public Area Renovations project.

### **Summary of Bids**

Edison Foard, LLC	\$44,221,875.00
Archer Western	\$44,639,000.00
Cleveland Construction, Inc.	\$48,860,929.00
JE Dunn Construction	\$53,454,790.00

### **Item No. 29: Airport Fixed Base Operator Electric Aircraft Tugs**

(A) Approve the purchase of Electric Towbarless Aircraft Tugs by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with JBT Lektro for the purchase of Electric Towbarless Aircraft Tugs for the term of three years, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

### **Item No. 30: Reimbursement Agreement for Aviation Communication Facilities**

Authorize the City Manager to execute a reimbursement agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration for New Aviation Communication Facilities.

## **PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS**

### **Item No. 31: Aviation Property Transactions – Eaton Circle**

Acquisition of 9,453 square feet (0.217 acres) at Eaton Circle from Northway Homes, LLC for \$40,000, and all relocation benefits in compliance with Federal, State or Local regulations for Aviation Master Plan.

### **Item No. 32: Property Transactions – Dobson Drive Storm Drainage Improvement Project, Parcel #6**

Resolution of Condemnation of 1,501 square feet (0.034 acres) Storm Drainage Easement, 650 square feet (0.015 acres) Sanitary Sewer Easement and 947 square feet (0.022 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 828 Corwin Drive from Florentina Sanchez Gomez for \$11,850 for Dobson Drive Storm Drainage Improvement Project.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 637.

### **Item No. 33: Property Transactions – Dobson Drive Storm Drainage Improvement Project, Parcel # 11**

Resolution of Condemnation of 1,130 square feet (0.026 acres) Storm Drainage Easement and 1,888 square feet (0.043 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 5935 Amberly Lane from Ramiro R. Rios and Lisa J. Rios for \$14,975 for Dobson Drive Storm Drainage Improvement Project.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 638.

### **Item No. 34: Property Transactions – Monroe Road Multiuse Path, Parcel # 18**

Acquisition of 406 square feet (0.009 acres) Sidewalk Utility Easement and 1077 square feet (0.025 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 5533 Monroe Road from Luis Alberio Loaiza and Luz K. Garzon for \$14,750 for Monroe Road Multiuse Path (MUP), Parcel # 18.

### **Item No. 35: Property Transactions – Monroe Road Multiuse Path, Parcel # 23**

Acquisition of 230 square feet (0.005 acres) Sidewalk Utility Easement, 159 square feet (0.004 acres) Storm Drainage Easement and 1173 square feet (0.027 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 5633 Monroe Road from Divine Health Academy, LLC for \$12,000 for Monroe Road Multiuse Path (MUP), Parcel # 23.



**Item No. 36: Property Transactions – Sanitary Sewer to serve 6753 & 6763 Lebanon Road, Parcel # 5**

Acquisition of 2,496 square feet (0.057 acres) Sanitary Sewer Easement and 1,412 square feet (0.032 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 6511 Lebanon Road, Mint Hill from Heath B. Howie, Jr. and Ruth Sharon Terrell Howie for \$11,000 for 8-inch Sanitary Sewer (SS) to serve 6753 & 6763 Lebanon Road, Parcel # 5.

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**ITEM NO. 20: VENDOR CHANGE FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PURCHASE OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT TRUCK**

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to (A) Approve the purchase of a customized Police Command Bomb Truck from a cooperative contract, (B) Approve a unit price contract with Emergency Vehicles, Inc. for the purchase of a customized Police Bomb Truck and related equipment for a term of two years under the Houston-Galveston Area Council Cooperative Program (H-GAC Contract FS12-19 Public Services 19-01178), and (C) Authorize the City Manager to extend the contract for additional terms as long as the cooperative contract is in effect, at prices and terms that are the same or more favorable than those offered under the cooperative contract.

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

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

NAYS: Councilmember Mayfield

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**ITEM NO. 4: ACTION REVIEW AGENDA OVERVIEW**

Mayor Lyles said the next item on our agenda is a review. I'm not quite sure if we have time for both of these items Mr. Jones.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said no, Mayor. So, what I would suggest is that the Quality of Life Team presentation is necessary to have tonight because there is going to be a recommendation for future ordinance changes and in terms of the social districts, we also have a closed session.

So, I would say with the social districts, and Liz is in the room and so is Debbie, we were just trying to bring you an update. I think there were eight pre applications and we have one application that's actually in right now. That's the gist of the updates. So, let's check that. So, right now we have the Quality of Life Team for you and one closed session item. So, I would like to move forward with the Quality of Life Team.

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**ITEM NO. 5: ACTION REVIEW ITEMS**

Councilmember Bokhari said if we don't have time, that's okay, but I want to make sure we're moving aggressively on the social districts stuff if things are in our shop here, not waiting on others to apply. Is that the punchline?

Marcus Jones, City Manager said yes.

Mr. Bokhari said great.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said Mr. Manager, I need clarification on what you were saying as far as the social districts. We're saying right now we're going to go over Quality of Life Team. What were you recommending regarding this presentation?

Mr. Jones said for the social districts, it was just really giving you an update of where we are. I think Councilmember Bokhari captured it well. It's not that the City is sitting on anything, but if you would like to have that during the Manager's Report because it seems like there's a lot of questions around social districts, I'd like to put it on the Manager's Report.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you because we have received quite a few emails and we also want to make sure that we're all at least in the same book even though we will not necessarily be on the same page with social districts, but there has been quite a few emails and conversations from the community regarding impact. So, I would like for us not to rush through or brush over it.

Mr. Jones said okay. One of the things that we're trying to do as we set up the conversation tonight for the Quality of Life Team, we don't want you to think about this as a one off and this is one thing that we're doing because you may think about it and say, "Well, you hired four people and we have a lot more things that are happening in the City." So, we always try to frame this around Safe Charlotte. If you will recall this goes back to June of 2020 where we had every single committee go through what could happen as it relates to those committees in terms of making sure we have a safe City. So, some of the outcomes of that is reimagining policing with their civilian response teams, the Alternatives to Violence, the hospital-based violence prevention program and a lot of the collaborative work that's happening in the Corridors. So, if you would just look at tonight's presentation as something that's additive to everything else that's going on, as we went through this last budget development cycle. We talked a lot about quality of life, we talked about illegal parking, we talked about trash and this is just an update to show the collaboration that we're trying to address some of the concerns that came out of the last budget cycle. So, Debbie, I'll turn it over to you.

**Debbie Smith, Transportation Director** said thank you Mr. Jones. I'm so excited to introduce our team. So, once again I'm Debbie Smith. I serve as your Transportation Director. I've been with the City going on 24 years and I can truly say that we have the best people at the City who are so passionate about this work and are great public servants. So, with that, let me introduce some of those great employees that we have. Tamara Blue, she serves as our Public Relations and Communication Manager within Transportation. We also Rebecca Hefner, Deputy Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services and Lisa Flowers from our attorney's office. So, Tamara is going to really briefly introduce you to the Quality of Life Team and our immediate focus areas. Spoiler alert, Mr. Jones shared those with you. Wonderful, thank you. Rebecca is going to share some of the work that Code Enforcement is doing in these areas and give you an implementation update and then Lisa is really going to start to tee up this idea of ordinance update recommendations that we believe are going to help move the needle around enforcement strategies. What a beautiful way, with my superstar line up to demonstrate for you what we're doing across department lines. We're weaving this together and we're looking at immediate gains, but we really have our eye on the prize of long-term strategies. So, with that, it's everyone from executive leadership down to our subject matter experts and I do want to say that we've got several members of our Quality of Life Team in the audience over here as well. So, it is just a beautiful partnership, beautiful collaboration. So, with that, Tamara.

**Tamara Blue, Transportation** said thank you Debbie. Good evening. It's good to see you all this evening. What is the Quality of Life Team? So, the Quality of Life Team's purpose is to identify and share issues repeatedly brought to the attention of staff and City Council. The team pulls its knowledge and expertise from specific areas to assess current issues and needs of the community from a holistic approach. Strategies may be short or long term, but the goal is to affect positive change. This team first convened nine months ago and has discussed in great details issues like litter, illegal parking, commercial truck parking, that is an issue that has risen to the top for many of our

residents. Illegal parking is a vehicle blocking ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access, crosswalks, train tracks, loading zones and crosswalks to name a few.

The team conducted peer city research to learn how others are managing this national issue. We learned that Greensboro, Raleigh, and Greenville had all recently and were in the process of updating ordinances to help address illegal parking activities. We spent time talking with local multi-facilities truck parking owners and a truck parking enforcement company. We also talked with the President and CEO of the North Carolina Truckers Association about trucker's challenges and the lack of safe and reliable truck parking throughout the state. We are working to access and improve technology to make it easier and safer to site while collecting data that can help us better manage the concerns, further our education efforts and potentially identify new partnerships. We're already implementing some strategies and will roll out more over the coming months. We've identified the need to update some of our ordinance language to include infrastructure items that didn't exist when they were originally written or last amended, a healthy sign of a growing city. We know that education is important and is the foundation to affecting positive change. We will keep in motion this cycle of communicating with our peer cities, keeping up with industry best practices and identify potential solutions while putting our boots to the ground to manage issues and most importantly, continue to educate ourselves and the public.

Next, I would like to turn it over to Rebecca Hefner to share Code Enforcement's essential role on this team. Thank you.

**Rebecca Hefner, Housing and Neighborhood Services** said good evening y'all. Tonight, unfortunately Jane could not be here this evening, but she and her team are doing a fantastic job with this work, and I hope that I will represent them well. Now Jane Taillon's a little bit more hard nosed than me. I tend to be kind of excitable, but I'll do my best to give it to you straight tonight. Y'all ready? Code Enforcement, love us or hate us, it really depends on whether we're responding to your concerns or telling you something that you can't do. Either way, Code Enforcement plays an important role in enhancing Quality of Life in our community. Enforcement is really just one part of what we do. Education, partnership, problem solving, these are also part of our code team's daily activities. I guess that would make it too long of a name, so we just stick with Code Enforcement. Our staff are out in the community every day. We're actively working with residents and business owners to address violations before they become complaints and just try to solve problems before they become safety concerns. Our Code Enforcement Division investigates more than 50,000 properties each year. Many of these concerns that we hear about involve more than just code issues. So, think for a minute about a busy intersection in Charlotte. We might get a complaint about this intersection and we go out and there's illegal signage, there might be a business zoning violation, but also litter, a damaged guard rail on a state road and vegetation blocking street signs. All of these things, this requires a coordinated response from multiple departments, property owners, partner agencies and even community volunteers.

This new code team structure we're going to share with you tonight, the Rapid Response Team, helps us respond in a more coordinated way to resolve some of these really more complex issues. The new Code Team is an investment that you all made through the FY2024 budget. So, thank you for helping us take this step towards better addressing Quality of Life in Charlotte. Currently our Code Enforcement Division operates from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and with the addition of these four positions, we'll be able to cover some extended hours on some weekdays and some weekend hours. This is especially important as we're working to address tractor trailer parking across the community as this is a particular challenge, especially on the weekends. I know that you all have gotten a lot of emails over the weekends about it because you have then forwarded them to us. So, we know this is a busy thing on Saturdays and Sundays. This team will allow Code to put additional resources into these current Quality of Life concerns but what we're really excited about is that we're creating a flexible structure on this team that will allow us to more quickly respond to emerging issues in the future.

So, we wanted to share a quick implementation update. We're currently in the process of hiring for this new team but some of the work has already begun. For example, education is an ongoing activity. We receive calls daily about vehicles that are blocking bike lanes, crosswalks, accessibility ramps, loading zones and more recently we're hearing about it on streetcar tracks and light rail rights of way. Our staff have been distributing windshield cards to educate drivers about these violations. You can see an example of that card here on the screen. We've also moved really swiftly to increase enforcement of illegally parked tractor trailers. In June 2023 you adopted a budget that included this new team. In July 2023 the Manager gave Code Enforcement authority to enforce specific parts of the Parking Ordinance in Chapter 14 and in August 2023 Code began issuing citations in several of the City's truck parking hot spots.

So, even while we're recruiting in hiring, we've also gotten straight to work. We know this is an urgent concern in our community. Some of these hotspots include locations in the University area, the I85/485 corridor, west Sugar Creek, Davis Lake area, parts of the Albemarle Road corridor, 521, Providence Road West. If you're not hearing your specific hotspot, I didn't list every single one, so be in touch with Jane and we'll let you know where we're working right now. In addition, we're working through a variety of process and technology enhancements that will make our work more efficient and more coordinated. More importantly it will make our work more scalable citywide because again this is an additional four positions and it's a large City with a lot of these concerns.

This slide illustrates the future state of what we see as the Rapid Response Team and we wanted to share this with you because it's more than the addition of a Code Team. Once our staff are on board, each team member will serve as a liaison to one of our partner departments, in some cases even participating in their team meetings in addition to their field activities. The goal here is really to create a more streamlined response to some of these challenging Quality of Life concerns through more coordination at the staff level and more integration of processes and technology. So, the Quality of Life Concerns Team that Tamera talked to you about, that will continue to serve as the strategic driver of this work identifying proactive solutions and the Rapid Response Team will act to coordinate those response activities on the ground throughout the community. So, we'll have those two parts working together. I wanted to share to quick successes from this diagram, but given the timing, I will go through extraordinary quickly. Two of them that were seeing some good tractions initially are around litter, debris and neglect and tractor trailer parking.

So, on litter we have a partnership here on the screen with Solid Waste, Code with Housing and Neighborhood Services and Keep Charlotte Beautiful, and around parking we have a great partnership with C-DOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation), Code and CMPD. This slide highlights some of the great work that's going on around litter, trash and debris. We're really making progress on some of these strategies. In addition to the new Code Team, you also invested PAYGO (pay as you go) funding in the FY2024 budget to establish a third litter crew within Solid Waste Services and then you should be receiving a monthly update from Keep Charlotte Beautiful that's also sharing all about the accomplishments of this small but mighty team. We have representation here in the room. So, some of the things that they're doing are here on the slide. You can read them in your updates, but I do just want to shout a record breaking year that we just concluded with over 9,500 volunteer hours picking up nearly 5,000 bags of litter throughout Charlotte. There's 430 plus active participants in that program. So, really fantastic work to that team.

Lastly, commercial truck parking. This is the one that started it all. The issue that got us all going. So, I know you heard a little bit about this from Tamera. I'm going to move through this quickly in the interest of time, but one of the things that we have heard over and over again is that there just isn't enough truck parking in our community. This is truck drivers who are driving through town because we have a demand for goods here in Charlotte and it's also truck drivers who live in our community. So, truck drivers who can't go home to their driveways and neighborhoods and community parking lots the way that many of us do at the end of the night. What we've heard from truck drivers



and owner operators is that a parking violation in the City of Charlotte is a cost of doing business. So, there's a \$25 citation and CMPD has been enforcing these violations and now Code will be participating and enforcing these violations, but we've heard from our partners and our peer cities that many cities are updating ordinance language to have a better opportunity to manage this issue. So, I'm going to pass it off to Lisa Flowers to share some of the potential ordinance updates with you.

**Lisa Flowers, City Attorney's Office** said thanks Rebecca. So, in the interest of time, the team's asked me not to go line by line through Chapter 14 to give you all the updates. Basically, as we looked at what was included in Chapter 14, we found some areas that we could make some clarifications and some terms that either weren't defined or weren't defined consistently with how those terms were defined elsewhere. So, it made sense to make them align with the State statutes. So, for example bicycle and public bicycle path. We're just citing to the State statutes. So, then if the State statute changes our ordinance doesn't need to change, but there's an exception when it comes to commercial vehicles. Currently Chapter 14 defines commercial vehicles, it uses the State definition which is based solely on weight. We're proposing that we align our definition with what's in the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) which uses weight but more importantly size and that will make enforcement consistent with how Code Enforcement currently operates.

We're also proposing adding some new provisions that will be new provisions of illegal parking. So, things like we're making a separate item for parking outside the lines on the light rail line, EV (Electric Vehicle) parking, if you illegally park without being in the EV or even if you are an EV, but you're not plugged into the EV spot. Then finally parking in a bike lane which has been a long-standing request from the Bicycle Advisory Committee. Finally, we're proposing adding to the list of parking violations that are subject to a \$100 fine. Currently most illegal parking receives a \$25 civil penalty. There are a few that receive \$100 penalty. These are things like blocking the curb ramp, parking illegally in an accessible space or blocking a fire lane, blocking a fire hydrant. We're asking to consider adding things that you see represented in some of these pictures. So, if you look at the top left, that's blocking the box. So, if you're not familiar, the vehicle should not pull into the intersection or crosswalk unless there's enough room for the vehicle on the other side of the intersection even if it's a green light. Parking in a bike lane there in the middle. Over on the right, parking on the sidewalk. That one's parking on the light rail line. Then down is parking on the sidewalk. EV parking and then provisions of the commercial truck parking to raise those to \$100. These are things that are violations that cause either safety or operational concerns.

So, there won't be any increase in most parking violations. You won't have an increased fine except for these. However, we also added a provision that makes each hour, if you're parked in a time restricted or metered parking spot. Each hour is another civil penalty. So, that alleviates people that'll get a ticket and they'll just keep their car there. So, they've just paid \$25 for parking all day. So, this will hopefully deter that. I'm going to turn it back over to Debbie to tell you what's next.

Ms. Smith said so, very quickly to wrap up. I know Lisa flew through that at lightening speed. There will be another opportunity for us to give you more detailed information on those ordinance updates. We really wanted to just tee that up for you. So, in the coming month you will see that again as an opportunity line by line to be able to just understand what we're doing there so, within the next month. Once again, next steps, we want to continue the rollout of Code's new team and we're doing some technology and process updates that related to Code's new team and there's this ongoing partnership that we have within C-DOT and other partner agencies. So, quickly going through the next steps, only for time I know we're wrapping up, but I want to make sure I leave plenty of time for discussion. So, with that, opening it up.

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you Debbie for ending on this point. I think the question is we have about 70 or 75 to 100 people in the chamber and it's past the time for the meeting to start. The question I have, would you like to take 30 minutes upstairs or go down

and have the meeting and have the discussion at some point after we finish the agenda on this item which I don't think that these ladies probably knew that we'd ask them to stay longer. I think the question is up to you. When do you want to discuss this, because we do have people waiting for us downstairs? Is there a preference from the group?

Mr. Bokhari said could we follow up offline perhaps with staff on this?

**Councilmember Graham** said no.

Ms. Mayfield said no.

Mayor Lyles said well yes you could, but other people may not choose that option but there's always going to be the option to follow up. I mean it doesn't have to be that everybody follows up the same way.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said [inaudible] time sensitive [inaudible] in terms of [inaudible].

Mr. Jones said so, it is not like we're having it next week, we just wanted to put this out in front of you because there are some significant changes that we'll ask you this fall, yes.

Ms. Ajmera said so, there's no time sensitive issue.

Mayor Lyles said right, but I think it's structure of change. So, right now I'm just asking you do you want to stay upstairs and take the time or do you want to go downstairs and start the meeting and do it after the meeting? That's all I'm really asking. You would like to do it now?

Mr. Bokhari said downstairs.

Mr. Graham said well after the meeting is like 9:00 p.m., 9:30 p.m., 10:00 p.m. It's in front of us right now and we've been talking about this since February 2023. So, this is an opportune time for us to dive in on some of these issues that I think are extremely important, even more important than the social districts from my perspective.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I agree Councilmember Graham.

Ms. Ajmera said we have 75 people waiting you said?

Mayor Lyles said yes, there's 75 people or so in the chamber. You know that you've got some things on this agenda that are important to some of the neighborhoods. We also have a number of proclamations as well as introductions to be made. So, really this is always a struggle for me because we can go and then be later, but I thought it would be good to ask you what you want to do instead of just a decision because then we run and rush. So, all of you that would like to stay upstairs and continue this discussion for the next 30 minutes or so, please raise your hands. One, two, three, four. Alright, all of you that would like to go downstairs, please raise your hands. One, two, three, four. We are going to have a Manager's report. So, we can do some of this during the Manager's report which is earlier in the night.

Mr. Graham said yes, I don't want to wait until the end of the night.

Ms. Mayfield said are we going to be able to ask questions during that time?

Mayor Lyles said that's what the whole thing would be, a discussion like this. It would just be at the dais downstairs. Alright. So, we're going to go downstairs and get started and during the Manager's report, we'll go through Quality of Life and social districts.

\* \* \* \* \*

The meeting recessed at 6:39 p.m. to move to the Meeting Chamber for the regularly scheduled Business Meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina reconvened for a Business Meeting on Monday, April 11, 2023, at 6:40 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, Marjorie Molina, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston II.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember James Mitchell.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mayor Lyles** said good evening, everyone. We really appreciate you being here this evening, especially those of you who are attending in person. We also want to say thank you to those that are watching us either on the City's YouTube Channel or other virtual possibilities that you have. So, today is the last business meeting for the month of September 2023 for the Charlotte City Council. We really appreciate your patience here and look forward to this meeting tonight. So, we'll begin with calling this meeting to order.

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#### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

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

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

##### **ITEM NO. 7: HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

**Mayor Lyles** read the following proclamation:

**WHEREAS**, for decades Americans have observed National Hispanic Heritage Month by celebrating the history's culture and contribution of American citizens, residents and immigrants of Hispanic origin from Mexico, Central America, South America, the Caribbean and Spain; and,

**WHEREAS**, In September 1968, Congress and President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed National Hispanic Heritage Week; and,

**WHEREAS**, in 1988, the Congress and President Ronald Reagan expanded the celebration of the Hispanic presence in the United States to a month-long commemoration. Every year the United States Congress and the White House call for public officials, educators, librarians and all Americans to observe National Hispanic Heritage Month with appropriate ceremonies, activities and programs; and,

**WHEREAS**, this year the Latin American Chamber of Commerce, the Latino Leadership Council, the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals and the Latin American Coalition joined in the celebration at the Government Center; and,

**WHEREAS**, Charlotte's Patriotic Celebrations and Traditions Committee is commemorating the National Hispanic Heritage Month at the Mint Museum for the ninth consecutive year;



**WHEREAS**, according to the Office of the U.S. (United States) Census, Mecklenburg County is home to 170,000 Latinos. The City of Charlotte recognizes the extraordinary contributions made to this community by immigrants, residents, and citizens of Latino options:

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Vi Alexander Lyles do hereby proclaim September 15, through October 15, 2023, as

**“HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH”**

in Charlotte and commend its observance to all citizens.

**Councilmember Molina** read the proclamation in Spanish:

**CONSIDERANDO QUE**, durante décadas, los estadounidenses han observado el Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana celebrando la historia, la cultura y la contribución de los ciudadanos, residentes e inmigrantes estadounidenses de origen hispano de México, América Central, América del Sur, el Caribe y España; y,

**CONSIDERANDO QUE**, en Septiembre de 1968, el Congreso y el Presidente Lyndon B. Johnson proclamaron la Semana Nacional de la Herencia Hispana;

**CONSIDERANDO QUE**, en 1988, el Congreso y el Presidente Ronald Reagan ampliaron la celebración de la presencia hispana en los Estados Unidos a una conmemoración de un mes de duración. Cada año, el Congreso de los Estados Unidos y la Casa Blanca convocan a los funcionarios públicos, educadores, bibliotecarios y todos los estadounidenses a observar el Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana con ceremonias, actividades y programas apropiados; y,

**CONSIDERANDO QUE**, este año, la Cámara de Comercio Latino Americana, el Consejo de Liderazgo Latino, la Asociación Nacional de Profesionales Hispanos de Bienes Raíces y la Coalición Latino Americana se unieron a la celebración en el Centro de Gobierno; y,

**CONSIDERANDO QUE**, el Comité de Celebraciones y Tradiciones Patrióticas de Charlotte está conmemorando el Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana en el Museo Mint por noveno año consecutivo;

**CONSIDERANDO QUE**, según la Oficina del Censo de los EE. UU. (Estados Unidos), el condado de Mecklenburg alberga a 170,000 Latino's. La ciudad de Charlotte reconoce las contribuciones extraordinarias realizadas a esta comunidad por inmigrantes, residentes y ciudadanos de opciones latinas:

**AHORA, POR LO TANTO**, yo, Vi Alexander Lyles, proclamo por la presente el 15 de Septiembre al 15 de Octubre de 2023 como

**“MES DE LA HERENCIA HISPANA”**

en Charlotte y recomendamos su celebración a todos los ciudadanos.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 8: SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH**

**Councilmember Winston** read the following proclamation:

**WHEREAS**, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the United States among individuals between the ages of 10 and 14 and 20 to 34. In the United States there were 49,449 suicides in 2022 according to the Centers for Disease Control; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that there are over 1.7 million suicide attempts each year. In 2020 North Carolina experienced 1,436 deaths by suicide according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and over 90 percent of the people who died by suicide have a diagnosable and treatable mental health condition, although often that condition is not recognized or treated, and the stigma associated with mental health conditions and suicidality works against suicide prevention by discouraging persons at risk for suicide from seeking lifesaving help and further traumatizes survivors of suicide loss and people with lived experience of suicide; and,

**WHEREAS**, organizations such as the American Federation for Suicide Prevention envision a world without suicide and are dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide through research, education, advocacy and resources for those who have been lost or struggle.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, we, Vi Alexander Lyles, Mayor of Charlotte and George Dunlap, Chair of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners do hereby proclaim September 10 through 16, 2023 as

**“NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK”**

in Charlotte and commend its observance to all citizens.

\* \* \* \* \*

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**Flooding in Garage**

**Cortez Washington, 5127 Begonia Drive** said my name is Cortez Washington. I'm on 5127 Begonia. I'm having a water issue. I think I'm the only person in Mecklenburg County with flood insurance. The last rainstorm I had to get flood insurance. I called the Water Department, I called the Mayor's office, I called my City Council, no one gave the answer that I needed because water was coming in my house. So, I got in contact with the Governor's Office. The Governor's Office recommended to sue, but I don't want to be in court because my house is flooding now. So, the Water Department did come out. They started the work, but I don't have a drainage system in my yard at all. So, my concern is where is the City Code Enforcer? I've got a neighbor with a mailbox built right on top of her ditch that's running in my house. So, it's important and I need some help. I believe in the good fight. I'm not here to blame anybody. I'm here to get help. My wife and I moved from Boston. We've been here three months. This is my son and I believe in giving everybody a chance. My neighbor's like, "The City's not going to do anything." No, let the City show me they're not going to do anything and then I'll say the City is not going to do anything. I believe in you guys. I've got pictures there so you can actually see what we're going through. We've got a half a million-dollar house that we're trying to save. I feel like the house should've never been built in the place, but what can we do? The only thing we can do now is just fix it. So, if we can get a drain ditch in front of the house, a sidewalk or something that can help us, we'll be so thankful. Thank you to the Water Department for coming swiftly. At first it was a fight, but they did get out there and start the process, but if you guys can help us, we would really appreciate it. My number is (617) 970-1014.

**Mayor Lyles** said I want you to meet with Liz Babson, one of our Assistant City Managers right now instead of you giving us the phone number, let's give it to someone that can actually begin the process of addressing your issue. Thank you.

Mr. Washington said thank you so much.

**Making Charlotte Greener**

**Richard Pennebaker, 5912 Shumard Oak Lane** said thank you. Mayor Lyles and City Council members, thank you for your hard work for our wonderful City of Charlotte. I've

lived and worked here for the past seven years, planted trees with Tree Charlotte, fought for greenways and I just officially became a North Carolina and Charlotte resident and got married here four months ago. Love this City.

Mayor Lyles said congratulations.

Dr. Pennebaker said thank you. So, here's my pitch tonight. Look out Seattle, here comes Charlotte. Yes, we have the power to make Charlotte the greenest City on the east coast like Seattle is on the west coast. Why does this matter? Because we love Charlotte, our City of trees. By 2033, in 10 years, we can become even healthier, cooler, safer, more beautiful, better water management and even friendlier with a greener community for all our people and wildlife. Why? When you visit Seattle, there's commitment to building and maintaining a green city and being one of the top green cities in the nation just jumps out at you and I've delineated reasons for that. Over the next 10 years, the United States is going to have a green revolution. The horses of history are galloping by. We can be spectators, or we can be active participants. So, let's jump on these horse and make Charlotte a national leader in the green revolution. I've vacationed twice in Seattle, once with two of my grown sons and once on my honeymoon this summer. As I've delineated, Seattle the Emerald City does a lot of these things, were very impressive to make them one of the top 10 green cities. Here in Charlotte, we are off to a great start thanks to folks like you, supportive citizens, supportive Mayor, supportive City and County Council. We have some electric vehicles but we need more. Tree Charlotte and Land Management is trying to get out as many trees as we can.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. If you have additional remarks, if you would just provide. I think we have a sheet that you presented to us.

### **CMPD Animal Care & Control**

**Taylor Hodges, 810 Dale Avenue** said thank you for your time Council. My name is Taylor Hodges and I'm a staff member at Char-Meck Animal Care and Control. In my role, I help care for the animals. So, we are fighting an uphill battle and we need help financially and structurally. We are understaffed, underfunded and I love my job. I love the animals and the people that I help, but working in this environment and having to euthanize animals so often takes a mental toll. Community members help by volunteering and fostering, but our fosters are doubled up right now and they are tired. I know firsthand because I often have foster dogs myself in order to help with the space issue at the shelter. I go to work everyday, and I take care of the dogs and then I come home and I continue my work there. I'm not forced to do this, but I know that fostering does save lives, so I do. In Charlotte affordable housing is a huge issue. People are having to give up their animals because they can't afford their home, yet they have no where to turn for help. Some of our volunteers, fosters and staff members are struggling with this. The culture surrounding pet companionship in Charlotte needs to change. Things like backyard breeding and dog fighting should not be tolerated. Low costs, high volume spay/neuter should be a top priority. This must start with animal care and control. We have community programs in place, but they lack resources and appropriate funding. We need your help to make Charlotte Animal Services function in a way that better serves our community. So, please listen and hear our cries, feel our emotions. I invite you to visit our shelter so you can walk in our shoes.

### **Animal Support Services**

**Katie Ferraioli, 2724 Holt Street** said hello and thank you for having me tonight. My name is Katie Ferraioli and I live in the Villa Heights Neighborhood here in Charlotte. I am a volunteer and foster with Char-Meck Animal Care and Control. I also work as a Director of Behavioral Health Services for a large hospital system in North Carolina. I want to discuss the impact that poor animal support services has on the mental well-being of many of your constituents. As an intern with the Domestic Violence Prevention Agency, I have watched survivors of domestic violence refuse potentially life saving emergency housing options because they were too afraid to leave their pets with their

abusers and were concerned with the animals may not survive their stay at the animal shelter due to overcrowding. In my current role, there has been multiple instances in which patients leave against medical advice because they could not ensure the safety and care of their pets if they were to have an extended hospital stay. Imagine seeking necessary healthcare only to find out that your dog or cat was adopted out or worse, euthanized while you were in the hospital.

As a volunteer, I have watched workers at the shelter push wheelbarrows full of dead dogs and cats, animals that they have loved and cared for to the incinerator because there was no room for them. Personally, I have been attacked by four off leash dogs in 2023 in two separate instances. One in which landed both my dog and me in emergency care. I have felt failed by the response of the City each time and I'm currently looking to move my family. I've been in counseling for traumatic stress, and it has taken a great toll on the general well-being and feelings of safety for my family. I feel that improved humane education and owner support may have prevented these attacks, as I know that at least one of the owners was on their radar of ACC (Animal Control and Care) but no preventative measures were taken. That dog continues to live outside most of the time, is not neutered and is generally unsocialized. There is no reason to think an attack like that will not happen again. As the City considers our pleas for increased funding and capacity building of animal support services, I hope that it does so through the ones of behavioral health. Behavioral health is a top priority for this County. Thank you so much.

### **Tax Assessment**

**Deborah Charles, 1212 Beechdale Drive** said this is my first time speaking in front of the Council. So, I just wanted to extend my respect for everyone that serves the City. I served the City in a number of different ways, but that's not why I want to talk here today. I also want to acknowledge that I am here today with some reservation because I am being currently stalked by City and County law enforcement and I am working on a case to prove that. Today I'm here because I do think there is some discrepancy happening with tax assessments. As someone who has worked in financial services for over 25 years, transparency and an audit trail is very important and I recently noticed a reduction in my lot size of almost half which has significant implication for tax purposes as well as worth of the property. I wanted to understand what is the audit trail for changes that are made to lot sizes in particular, the audit trail for that. Yes, that's what I want to understand. I want to understand what is the audit trail for that. How are these changes made and how are they tracked? I have owned my property for 19 years and I've never had an issue until now and I need to understand that there is an audit process in place that I can feel comfortable that that change is not included as a part of the harassment that I'm currently experiencing.

**Councilmember Winston** said thank you very much Ms. Charles. Ryan Bergman, our Budget Director will be over there. He can get in contact with you and we can get some answers to your questions. Thank you very much for coming.

### **The Fonda Bryant Suicide Prevention Signage Act**

**Fonda Bryant, 3110 Patrick Henry Drive, NW Concord** said if you would've told me 28 years ago that I would be sharing my story all over the county to help others, I wouldn't have believed you. Twenty-eight years ago, for those who don't know my story, I called my Aunt Spanky, my hero and told her she could have my shoes. She called me back and asked me, "Are you going to kill yourself?" I answered, "Yes," and she went into action like a superhero and saved my life. I'm proud to say that my signature is all over the Charlotte skyline with my suicide prevention signs in parking decks to prevent suicide and trauma. My suicide prevention signs will soon become law, North Carolina Law, House Bill 858, the Fonda Bryant Suicide Prevention Signage Act, but I'm not done. I plan on making my sign a national law. Many more people could be here if people cared enough to get educated on the warning signs. Through education and simply caring, anyone can save someone's life. Everybody needs an Aunt Spanky. Everybody needs to be like Aunt Spanky. Don't just hear my words people tonight, take

my words and turn them into action. Ask me how you can help prevent suicide. Suicide is the most preventable death of all deaths, and anyone can prevent a tragedy of suicide. You don't have to be a professional. Suicide is everybody's business. More people die in the U.S. by suicide than car deaths and homicides combined. Fifty-four percent of gun deaths in this country are suicides with three out of five gun deaths being suicides. In North Carolina, every six hours, someone dies by suicide. Suicide among youth in North Carolina is the highest its been in 20 years. The financial toll on society is also costly. In 2020, suicide and nonfatal deaths cost the nation over \$500 billion. I leave you with this, treat people with empathy, compassion and kindness because you never know what someone is going through. A smile can hide a lot of pain. Be kind. Thank you.

### **Delta Days in the City**

**Kelly Fant-Kelly, 5220 Witham Passages** said good evening and thank you Mayor and City Council members. I am Kelly Kelly and I bring you greetings as the Social Action Co-Chair from the Charlotte Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, an organization that has been dedicated to service through social action since 1913. This week we will infuse Charlotte and the surrounding communities with Delta Days in the City, a series of events that focus on the areas of education, health disparities, civic engagement and voting. This year's theme is our voice, our impact, our power. Today's City Council meeting is the first of our activities. Tomorrow we'll attend the school board and Thursday we will host our infamous Crimson Brews on our CLTAC Instagram platform featuring Council's very own Tariq Bokhari and his opponent Stephanie Hand. The highlight of our events will conclude on Saturday September 30, 2023 where a host of speakers including Mayor Lyles, Councilmember Victoria Watlington and Council Commissioner Vilma Leake will join us for a conference workshop and a luncheon at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. Our workshops will include education around healthcare disparities, voter education and we'll also have a luncheon that will feature Dena King and Toussaint Romain. The workshops are free and open to the public and the luncheon is a ticketed event. We encourage each of you to attend while we paint the town red and continue to support and push social action within the Charlotte community. Thank you so much.

### **Tree Preservation**

**Kim Hombs, 16303 Farmchase Court** said City Council members and Mayor, I'm here. I'm going to speak fast because I had planned on three minutes. So, here tonight out of concern for Charlotte citizen's quality of life related to our preservation of mature trees and contiguous greenspace. According to our UDO 2040 Plan, Charlotte's tree canopy goal is 50 percent by 2050. According to the studies done several years ago, we were down to 42 percent, and I can only imagine that percentage to be significantly less when the new study results come out. Anyone driving anywhere in Charlotte can see with their own eye's large swaths of mature trees and greenspace being clearcut and many have felt the impacts on their immediate neighborhoods and communities. Some experiencing flooding in their backyards that occurred only after development went in and noise and light pollution increasing due to removal of acres of trees. One inch of rain falling on one acre of undisturbed land is absorbed, no runoff. One inch of rain falling on one acre of impervious surfaces such as parking lots, buildings, etc., creates 27,000 gallons of runoff per acre. Outdated retention ponds are not going to be enough to effectively mitigate this for larger properties. We realized development will occur and this certainly is needed in certain sectors, however, it appears it has gotten significantly out of balance. Mature trees and greenspace are Charlotte's icon, her beauty, her attractiveness. We seem to be killing the goose that laid the golden egg. It is not just beauty and tranquility the mature trees and undisturbed greenspace provide, there are numerous studies showing that drivers speed less along road in which there are trees and greenspace, crime decreases in these areas, significant flood mitigation as referenced earlier and reduction of light and noise pollution, in addition to mental and physical health benefits of CO2 sequestration, negative ions and increasing immune health and on and on. In fact, in Canada physicians now write prescriptions regularly for patients experiencing anxiety and depression for children and adults to spend a certain

amount of time just walking in the woods. In Japan they call this forest bathing. In Charlotte, we lack large areas of just passive use greenspaces.

Mr. Winston said thank you very much Ms. Hombs. If you have any further comments, you can give your comments to the clerk, and she'll put them on the record and make sure Council gets it.

Ms. Hombs said okay, thank you.

### **Illegally Modified Cars**

**Todd Korris, 301 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street** said members of Charlotte City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. My name is Todd Korris and I represent a number of our neighbors and fellow citizens that reside in Uptown Charlotte. Our organization is called Street Peace, and we seek to make Charlotte a safer more livable and sustainable City. We support all of the initiatives the City is taking to improve pedestrian safety and road safety and understand the myriad issues facing a growing City like ours. I've lived in Charlotte for nearly a decade and I'm proud to call this City home. I care greatly about Charlotte becoming a safer place and this is why I and many other citizens bring this issue to you. At best this problem is aggravating and a nuisance though illegal. At its worse, the issue is a pedestrian fatality waiting to happen. There's an ongoing issue of many drivers illegally modifying their exhaust systems to emit dangerously loud noises far greater than the established limit of 85 decibels.

The problem's three-fold. Firstly, drivers are breaking the law. Secondly, drivers drive dangerously fast and pose a public safety risk to pedestrians and other drivers. Lastly the enforcement mechanisms of existing laws and statutes do not appear to be actively enforced by CMPD and State inspections. To trigger loud engine noises, these drivers frequently drive in excess of 50 miles per hour in residential areas and roads in Uptown that are shared with pedestrians. The drivers are reckless and show no concern for the danger they pose to pedestrians and other motorists. These actions violate NC Statute 20-128 pertaining to exhaust system and emission control devices. The City of Charlotte's Noise Ordinance number 9585-X states that, "No activity shall substantially and unreasonably invade and harm the privacy, peace, health and welfare of City residents." This is most absolutely a substantial and unreasonable invasion of privacy, peace, health and welfare. We see little to no action in the City Center area from CMPD in enforcing these laws. Many residents, ourselves included have seen such vehicles blaze past parked police vehicles. Were CMPD to pilot a single weekend of policing this activity around Uptown, we are certain the number of citations and fines would be considerable. Thank you.

Mr. Winston said thank you very much. If you have additional comments, you can give them to the Clerk, and they'll be distributed and put on the record.

### **Tree Preservation and Four-Mile Greenway Project**

**Diane Thornton, 4704 Wilsham Court** said hello there. Thank you for having me here. My name is Diane Thornton. I live in south Charlotte and I'm here regarding a potential development that could take place next to the four-mile greenway. Quoting the Charlotte 2040 Comprehensive Plan on its growth framework. "This framework is informed and shaped by the community based on the assumption that we must listen to each other and consider the intended and unintended consequences of growth on all residents, households and neighborhoods. It identifies and measures areas in Charlotte where residents and businesses may not have access to daily needs, choices for housing, a diversity of employment or safe and healthy environments while providing more transparency and accountability as we plan, design and implement public and private investments in housing, employment, services, schools, parks, roads, trails and other infrastructures." Another quote from the 2040 Plan. "The Tree Canopy Action Plan will define policies that preserve, restore and enhance the canopy. It will continue the work of past tree related initiatives including the 2017 Urban Forest Master Plan and guide the upcoming Unified Development Ordinance."

So, what is going on with the 53 plus acres of old forest land that is under consideration to be destroyed for the building of 640 luxury housing units adjacent to the four-mile greenway on Rae Road? The four-mile greenway is an environment where people have a great opportunity to learn about many aspects of nature including the importance of wildlife. The wildlife and the greenway rely on those 53 plus acres for food, shelter, and water. The flood plains in that area protect our water resources and protect existing homes from flooding. Turning this acreage into a multi-dwelling luxury development does not comply with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan nor does potentially compromising a public City park trail.

**Mark Thornton, 4704 Wilsham Court**

Mr. Winston said thank you very much Ms. Thornton. You can give additional comments and I believe this is something that Mr. Driggs is working on.

**Councilmember Driggs** said Ms. Thornton there is a community meeting on September 29, 2023. I hope you're aware of that. If you write to me, I'll get in touch with you about this.

Ms. Thornton said the community meeting is on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 sir.

Mr. Driggs said 28<sup>th</sup>, correct, you're right.

Mr. Thornton said at Saint Matthew Catholic Church.

Mr. Winston said thank you very much.

Mr. Driggs said I just wanted to make sure you knew. That's the one.

**Hispanic Heritage Month**

**Simon Muñoz-Alvarez, 628-1 Louise Avenue** said Madam Mayor, City Council members, buenas tardes, buenas noches. My name is Simon Muñoz-Alvarez and I'm the serving Chair for the Latin American Chamber of Commerce and it gives me great honor and a lot of pleasure to be standing in front of you all. On behalf of the Hispanic Latino Business Community, thank you, or should I say gracias for the proclamation that gave acknowledgment of the contributions that our community makes to this great City we call home. In recent years the Latino community in Charlotte has seen a remarkable increase contributing to this City's cultural richness and equally important to its economic vitality. The growth presents a unique opportunity for residents of all backgrounds to come together and foster a more inclusive environment in our Queen City. Latinos are the largest minority group making up 19 percent of the nation's population. One out of five people in the United States are Latinos. As we consider the large and rapidly growing economic contributions of Latinos living in the Charlotte Metro area and across the Carolinas, it is important to understand that this impact is not new. Instead, it is the continuation of centuries old tradition. A tradition of Latinos providing economic strength and resiliency for the benefit of all people. On a national scale, Latinos contribute \$2.8 trillion to the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and add on average 600,000 jobs to the workforce per year. Latinos in Charlotte Metropolitan Area are poised to help power the region's economy as they add their value, population growth, work ethic and family values. We are committed to strengthening and adding value to this great City and to make this a place we call home, the best place to live for years to come. Again, Council members, Mayor Lyles, a dear friend to us, on behalf of everyone joining us tonight, thank you for celebrating us and giving us this opportunity. ¡Feliz Mes de la Herencia Hispana!

**Marta Tataje, 3900 Waterford Drive** said hello. Muy buenas noches. Good evening Madam Mayor Lyles and Mayor Pro Tem Winston, Council members and staff. My name is Marta Tataje and I'm a Board Member of NAHREP, that's the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals and Director of their Legislative Influencers of Government Affairs, otherwise called LIGA. So, NAHREP LIGA. I have



been a mortgage lender for the past 21 years and have lived in District Six for the past 21 years. NAHREP is the largest Hispanic business organization in the country with other 40,000 members and over 100 chapters throughout the country. Our local chapter has over 200 members and still growing. Our mission is to advocate for the sustainability of homeownership for the Hispanic community for we know that this is the best way for us to close that wealth gap. NAHREP reports that in the next two decades, 70 percent of new homeowners will be Latino. We have seen Latino homeownership rates consistently increase over the past eight years and it's expected to continue to increase where other groups may decrease. We show a 66.1 percent labor force participation rate here in the State of North Carolina, the highest of any group earning us a position of having 7.9 million mortgage ready people. So, now did you know that between 2019 and 2021 the Charlotte Metro Statistical Area was number one in growth in number of Latino owned households by adding 8,614 households? Did you know that we were number one in the growth rate of Latino owned households at 27 percent growth rate? Yet we're still lagging with a 51.7 percent homeownership rate in North Carolina compared to 75.2 percent among non-Hispanic Whites. The Charlotte Metro area obviously is a desirable place for us to live, and we thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr. Winston said gracias. If you have any other comments, provide them to the Clerk.

**Jose Hernandez-Paris, 1865 Yellow Daisy Drive, Matthews** said thank you Madam Mayor and the City Council members. I'm just here to thank you for taking the time to acknowledge Hispanic Heritage Month and the immense contribution of Hispanic Latinos to the Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. As the Executive Director of the Latin American Coalition, one of the oldest organizations in the State of North Carolina with over 33 years of service, we are very proud to Charlotte home and we're very grateful for the acknowledge and for the time that you have taken today. Just wanted to be here to say thank you for the time that you took to acknowledge us and we hope that you continue to acknowledge our contributions in future years. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lyles said thank you everyone for the time and attention that you give and thank you for those that came down to express their concerns with our community and hopefully you had a great team of people to help you get through some of the maze of local government.

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## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **ITEM NO. 10: PUBLIC HEARING AND DECISION ON A RESOLUTION TO CLOSE A PORTION OF WOODCREST AVENUE**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

<p>There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Bokhari, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing, and (B) Adopt a resolution and close a Portion of Woodcrest Avenue.</p>
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The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 613-617.

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### **ITEM NO. 11: PUBLIC HEARING AND DECISION ON A RESOLUTION TO CLOSE A PORTION OF PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY ADJACENT TO DAVID TAYLOR DRIVE**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing, and (B) Adopt a resolution and close a Portion of Public Right-of-way Adjacent to David Taylor Drive.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 618-621.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 12: PUBLIC HEARING AND DECISION ON A RESOLUTION TO CLOSE UNOPENED RIGHT-OF-WAY OFF SOUTH CEDAR STREET**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to adopt a resolution to close unopened right-of-way off South Cedar Street.

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

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

NAYS: Councilmember Mayfield

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 622-625.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 13: PUBLIC HEARING AND DECISION ON TORRENCE AREA VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION**

**Mayor Lyles** declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Bokhari, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Close the public hearing, and (B) Adopt annexation Ordinance 628-X with an effective date of September 25, 2023, to extend the corporate limits to include this property and assign it to the adjacent City Council District 3.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 66, at Page(s) 362-365.

\* \* \* \* \*

**POLICY**

**ITEM 14: CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

**Mayor Lyles** said earlier in our meeting today, the City Manager began a discussion of two items that we had. One of which is Quality of Life Work Effort being done by the staff as well as social districts which I hope people are familiar with. So, I would like to have the Manager start off with the program.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so thank you Mayor and members of Council. Before they start, I provided you with a 30-day memo that we do. Also in Thursday's packet, there was a question about the work that has been done in each Committee. So, we provided you with an update on the work that's been completed in each of the Council Committees as well as what's outstanding. I do know I have one outstanding question from Councilmember Mayfield about the mix of homeownership versus rental which we are working through that. The two other items that the Mayor mentioned earlier is while we were in 267 we started to have a conversation about the new Quality of Life Team and I see that Debbie has the team ready to roll, but also just a little bit of an update after that in terms of social districts because you have been getting a lot of questions. We just want to make sure that we tell you exactly where we are with that. So, Mayor and members of Council, if it's fine, I'd like to just have Debbie and the team just come up and I guess just take questions.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much Mr. Jones. For the team, thank you for being here. I think you've already heard from one of our public speakers on the expanded noise of vehicles. Add it to your list of many other things we can define as Quality of Life.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said can we bring the presentation up here?

Mayor Lyles said can we get the presentation?

Ms. Ajmera said slide number four. Can we proceed?

Mayor Lyles said does everybody have that one? Which page was it Ms. Ajmera?

Ms. Ajmera said slide number three where you have listed current focus areas and currently we have three listed. So, Mayor a couple of weeks ago you had referred public defecation and urination and drinking in the park and I don't see that listed. Is that not going through this Quality of Life issue or is that following a different process?

Mayor Lyles said it was referred to the Housing Committee. It was a conversation and if you saw the charge, it is really more around the areas in the Uptown and I'll ask Ms. Watlington to address the issues that she had in the referral and the next steps.

**Councilmember Watlington** said I think actually the City Manager is going to address some of the things. I met with a couple of the ACMs (Assistant City Managers) today with my questions and I believe that staff is working on a path forward.

Mr. Jones said yes, to Mayor and member of Council and to your point Councilmember Ajmera, the Mayor did have that referral to the Housing and Safe Communities Committee. We have been working with the Chair, and also, maybe more importantly, there will be a public listening session this Wednesday. The concept is to look at a lot of the work that has already been occurring around this area for the number of years and instead of maybe just focusing on the three items that you just said to make sure that we're looking at this holistically. So, hopefully I got that right based on your meeting today.

Ms. Watlington said yes.

Ms. Ajmera said that's for the Uptown generally, right? So, we're looking at all the Quality of Life issues that Uptown residents had come out and presented and these are some of the issues that just requires time sensitivity and some of these residents are facing these issues as we are speaking. If we can get some sort of timeline around that because I would like to see ordinance updates sooner rather than later if that's what the Committee decides to do, but I know that's what Uptown residents had specifically asked for.

Mr. Jones said yes. I would like to add that as we discover more information and more issues, we'll see that some of that's relevant to many areas through our City and not just the Uptown.

**Councilmember Driggs** said what is the issue?

Mayor Lyles said yes, especially in our business areas. I think that we are seeing where that happens, but I think that Ms. Watlington has had the opportunity to read a lot of studies that have been around, but trying to figure it out. I think updates would be very, very welcome by the Council members to be able to weigh in.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I have a few more. So, maybe Ms. Watlington can add this to her list. Scooters on sidewalks, specifically in Uptown is an issue. The other day our family was at the CIAF (Charlotte International Arts Festival), the International Arts Festival and we saw a gentleman who was in a wheelchair and could not get around because there were scooters that were just zooming through and we really need to look into that issue and how we can enforce it. I know currently we have that in the ordinance, but how do we enforce it to ensure that we are really being equitable in enforcement, especially for those residents who have special needs.

Ms. Watlington said absolutely.

Ms. Ajmera said just one last item, actually just two last items that I have. By the way ladies, you all did a great job. I appreciate anything that Debbie brings up and Rebecca and I know it's data driven. I've always enjoyed working with Debbie when she was supporting the Transportation Committee. So, I certainly appreciate the work that you do Debbie, Rebecca, Deborah and the entire team. I really like what the staff has done when it comes to illegal truck parking because we understand that's an issue throughout the city, especially in the University area. I'll be supporting some of the ordinance update language. What I would like to see also with the litter, I know you all had done volunteer work with Keep Charlotte Beautiful and other organizations. Are we looking into signs that say, "If you litter, this will be the fine?" I see in certain parts of our city; litter has been concentrated. It's great to actually address the issue, but how can we make very intentional efforts in preventing litter?

**Debbie Smith, Transportation Director** said hi Council. Thank you, Councilmember Ajmera. Debbie Smith, Transportation, just for the record. Great questions that you're asking and I so greatly appreciate the support. What we really find with signs such as that, no littering with the fines, is that doesn't always deter the behavior. So, what we're really trying to focus is what is the source of that behavior because what we're finding is that they're more things around that. An example I'll give you, David Cox and W.T. Harris, what we were finding is that an apartment complex, where their trash cans were located and their dumpsters, we found that people were leaving the community, leaving that area with the garbage on their vehicle. So, it was that it was an issue and that those signs in those locations was a reminder, "Oh my goodness, we didn't take care of that," but in just locations where it's collecting, it's really important we're getting to the source of what that issue is. So, signs are effective but not always in every situation.

Ms. Ajmera said I understand signs may not be effective in every situation and it is a behavioral problem. It's shameful. Literally people are eating from fast food restaurants or just any restaurant and just dumping the trash right there in the parking lot. I have seen that over and over again in East Charlotte and I know that's not unique to East Charlotte, that's also an issue in other parts of our City. So, if we can really figure out what we can do from the behavioral side to prevent it, other than signs, I would be interested in those ideas. I know we have community leaders that actually do cleanup efforts. I would love to hear from them, like Minnie Davis and we have Emily and others who have seen this persistent issue throughout many years, but we haven't been able to find a solution. I know that Mr. Phipps would want us to find a solution sooner than later. Great work on the EV parking spot, because a lot of times you're right, there are many times even in our parking that we have, hopefully we can enforce that starting with our parking. That's all I have. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright. I think you're right about Mr. Phipps. He actually has called me and said he has an idea. So, I'm going to send that idea to you guys.

**Councilmember Molina** said first of all I want to congratulate you guys for being forward thinking. I think I'm really happy to see that we've taken the initiative to bring on potentially four new team members that will address this around the clock because there's a constraint. Currently, Code Enforcement we pretty much stop at 5:00 p.m., right? So, now to have that talent in place that's going to look beyond 5:00 p.m. and take the measures to be preventative beyond those hours, I think that's a great idea. I'm kind of peeling down because again I was pretty excited to see that we're taking this initiative. I wanted to know specifically, because I didn't see where we mentioned vehicle parking because a lot of the concerns that I received from residents are around vehicle parking. I'm thinking of one in particular where someone recently brought to my attention that there was someone taking the liberty of parking in the entrance of a neighborhood. I don't know if this is what they considered to be overflow parking for them, but I wanted to see if that's something that we're actually considering and any type of measures that you all are discussing as a department to address that?

Ms. Smith said Councilmember Molina, thank you. We're aware of that location and I'd love if we could bring up slide number four because I think this slide really starts to illustrate as we learn more about the situation. So, we may have been focused on the commercial truck parking in those particular areas, when you brought forward the concern about the parking in addition to just trailers and tractors, we found that there was greater concern around that. So, we're looking into that, but this really tells us as we dive in, as we find those solutions, we actually find that there's more emerging issues around those. So, more work to come on those as it relates to that.

Ms. Molina said okay, thank you. I'm really interested in that because you guys know from my reaching out, the residents are really concerned about it. Even I've had residents actually ask me, "What happened? We continue to make these concerns known. Nothing happens." So, I know offline I'm looking forward to us continuing that piece of the conversation. I also wanted to lift up Landscape Management. That one kind of snuck in. It's not necessarily what you would consider to be Quality of Life necessarily, but you think about landscaping. Can you give me more information about that? You know, if you're riding down the street, other than just trash we see sidewalks, we see all of these other things. So, I'd like to know more.

**Rebecca Hefner, Housing and Neighborhood Services** said sure. Thank you for the question Councilmember Molina. Again, Rebecca Hefner, Housing and Neighborhood Services. Landscape Management is a great partner when it comes to Quality of Life concerns in the community. A couple of things we see, keeping the City right of way mowed or areas that are kept nicely landscaped. In addition, we have a partnership in the Corridors of Opportunity where we're doing additional mowing with our partners at Landscape Management. So, one of the things that we see often is that trash is easier to hide when there's other things growing around it. So, often times we see those two things together, overgrowth and litter. So, they come together as part of a mitigation strategy.

Ms. Molina said okay. Actually, it's funny. I was talking to someone who ran against me for Council who does general services and he offered to me as an idea, he said, "Marjorie, why wouldn't we have people in our district that we contracted with the City to cut some of these weeds or maintain some of the sidewalks?" So, offline I'd like to think through that, ideas that we can use to really activate some of the residents in our communities who would be willing to partner with us possibly to help us mitigate some of those risks. This is just an idea, not making any promises to anybody, but I love when people kind of bring those types of creative conversations forward and they're solution oriented. It really helps us to really think through some possibilities that we can bring back to you guys to really kind of go through.

Also, last thing for me in particular. So, East Charlotte, I've mentioned this. Actually, I was talking to our City Manager having a conversation, we got this gift with Highway



74. It stretches from the mountains to the beach and so when people come through 74, for some people, if they're just traveling through, it's really the face of the City for them unless they come off of one of our exits to do something or go Uptown or whatever. So, I'd like to see us look into partnering with the State, specifically along that particular highway. I know there will be others that we could pretty easily identify, and I don't know if you think that would be possible, but I'd like for us to talk about that from a landscape perspective. Do you think that would be possible for us to at least start an interest conversation? I love partnerships. I think working together is the best way. I know we can't make anybody do anything, but they have a vested interest in making sure that this thoroughfare is nicely facing the citizens and residents that pass through it. So, I'd like to know if we can continue those conversations and see if there's interest maybe.

Ms. Smith said Councilmember Molina, I love the idea generation. You and I have had lots of conversations. So, I grew up in the Charlotte area on the East side. Went to East Meck High School, I went to UNC Charlotte, my alma mater. So, I love this City. I learned to drive on US 74 back when it was very narrow, but absolutely those conversations are instrumental. One of my parting comments in our last conversation is that partnership with NC-DOT. So, while we can't make promises on what's possible, what we can do is have those conversations and see where those opportunities are. So, thank you for that.

Ms. Molina said thank you so much. Very interested in that.

Ms. Hefner said one thing I skimmed over in the presentation that I do want to make sure to mention as it relates to the NC-DOT partnership, is that they are in the midst of their biannual litter sweep. It is the fall litter sweep right now on State maintained roads. So, you might see volunteers out, you might see State maintenance crews out. You can get yourself and help with that by checking out the fall litter sweep with NC-DOT.

**Councilmember Johnson** said thank you so much. Thank you all for this presentation. Thank you for the work that you're doing. You know this has been a huge issue in District Four that predates me. You know, we talked about Councilmember Phipps that worked closely with you guys even having a town hall in 2020. I believe that you said this work started in 2020. Is that what I heard?

Ms. Smith said yes Ms. Johnson. So, really this work has been ongoing. So, really it was the collaboration in this team strategy approach and terming at the Quality of Life Group and what Rebecca described in the last meeting really was about the steering team and getting that together. So, the work has been ongoing. So, it's not that it just started nine months ago, really, it's the strategy and how we're tracking and how we're reporting back out to you is that intentional effort that we're doing.

Ms. Johnson said I appreciate that because I've been working really closely with you all and I know you've been working on this since 2020. I'm glad you're able to present it now. I wanted some information about the truck parking. I know Jane Taillon was on the call when I met with the truck drivers also and there was some discussion about a lot or something off 85 or some vacant lot or former weigh station that we were looking at. Is there any update on a new location for truck parking? Do we have any progress on that?

Ms. Smith said I'm pleased to report as we've been really talking about this issue with the private facilities that there is one company who offers about 600 spaces in four locations around the city and he was just able to secure another location at I485 and that's going to include about 100 spaces there. So, in addition to the private side, we are talking with the NC-DOT and how we possibly can use some of the older weigh stations that aren't currently in use. I know they've done some preliminary evaluations. So, there's a lot of opportunity out there for us to continue that conversation.

Ms. Johnson said that's great to know. I hope the reporters are listening and that's top story. Hopefully District Four residents are listening also. What about working with the

State? Many roads in District Four are State owned as you know and I appreciate you mentioning David Cox because I know there's been more attention to that area, but how are we going to partner with NC-DOT? They do this cleanup twice a year, but we see litter on our streets daily. Solid Waste are great when you call, also Code Enforcement, I'm able to talk to Jane as well. So, you guys are great in being responsive and reactive, but what are we doing for those of us who have the State-owned roads? Is there a routine?

Ms. Smith said absolutely Ms. Johnson. What I'd love to be able to follow up with you on is the robust effort that the NC-DOT has on the State maintained roadways. So, interstates and many of the major arterial streets, there is a schedule to it, there is an intentional effort around it and it was just impressive the amount of money that they are putting into the cleanup effort. So, I'd love to be able to follow back up with you on that information.

Ms. Johnson said that's awesome, thank you, because I've even had the Senators on different calls. So, I appreciate that. As far as the litter, we have added signage on W.T. Harris, and I believe the fines have increased. Have the fines increased for litter? I know they've increased for truck parking, or you all were talking about that earlier.

Ms. Smith said we're talking about ordinance updates that would be increased for truck parking. Litter I believe, Lisa, correct me if I'm wrong, is actually legislated at the State level.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Ms. Smith said we'll follow up with you on what that fine amount is, but that is legislative at the State level.

Ms. Johnson said okay. The Quality of Life Team, do you know when those employees will start and what the process will be? Is there an app where people will be able to report problems or what's the next step?

Ms. Hefner said yes, great question Councilmember Johnson. So, we're currently in the hiring process for the new staff. There's a supervisor position and then the inspector positions that are posted right now. We will get that team onboarded quickly. Again, the work has already started, but getting the team in place will enable us to move more quickly and spread out into other places in the City. One of the things that we're working on now in terms of the technology and process enhancements is the reporting. As you know in the past, people have had to report truck parking when it's not during Code's hours to 911 and we're trying to create a way to make those reports go through 311, CLT+, Emerald Web, so that we can get those routed to the right place and the right people to respond. So, we expect that to take a couple of months to get all of those processes underway, but we'll make sure to have a robust communication about those reporting methods once they're in place.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. So, will there be a Quality of Life webpage on the City's page? I'd like to see that and I'd like information or educate folks on where trucks can park. That would be very helpful. I know there needs to be a sign in order to enforce it. Can they park in areas such as on the street where the Keith Y is? So, if that's not allowed, then residents need to know that and know how to report that because I'm telling you now, behind the Keith Y and I'm sure Mr. Graham will talk about this, there's really a lot of abuse there.

Ms. Ajmera said the Keith Y gets really a lot of traffic.

Ms. Johnson said right. So, okay. I appreciate the presentation. Mr. Jones, I appreciate the attention. You know I've been working on this for years. So, thank you so much for the progress. Thank you.



**Councilmember Mayfield** said team, thank you for the presentation earlier. I wish we could've gotten to this upstairs but we ran out of time. I do have a couple of questions and they're in alignment with what you've heard from my colleagues. You noted that we're going to have the cleanup for the fall litter streets program. It's a perfect tie in when you come into neighborhoods coming in off of Brookshire, off of Belhaven, off of other areas where trucks are lined all along the highway if we're looking at trying to have the streets cleaned, how do we identify that? One of the conversations that I had with someone in the community whose family are also in the trucking as far as driver industry. They shared, which I'm quite sure you all have already had conversations that there's a timer for the lack of a better word that gives you an hour notice before you run out. Some of our truck drivers have noted that by law you can only drive so many hours.

Also, weight is a factor. Well even though we ship a lot, we're not shipping in some cases as much. For some of our drivers, the way they are paid is calculated based off that weight. We have trucking companies for parking right here in the City. Just three of them, Uptown Truck and Fleet, Kingpin Parking, Charlotte Truck Parking. We have companies that charge by the hour, by the day, by the weekend. That \$25 that we're currently charging, it is cheaper to pay that fine and that has been shared throughout the industry that it's cheaper to pay that \$25 versus paying that fee at the actual designated trucking facility. It may sound bad, but if I tow your truck that's going to be a lot more than that \$25 and it's going to be a lot more than that \$60 or that \$110 that you would've paid for that parking because what you're also causing is if I'm coming off the highway and you have someone meeting you and they're in a vehicle and they are not completely out the road, unfortunately too many people come off the highway doing whatever the speed is. Whether that speed is 60, 55 or 70, they're coming around that curve. We have had a number of near misses that have happened. I personally, today is Monday, Friday was driving on 85 heading towards Sunset when a truck who was two lanes over and let's say I'm in my vehicle where I am and you're at the Sunset exit, decided, "Oh, I'm doing 70 miles an hour, but I want to get off on Sunset," and literally had I not been paying attention to what they were doing, I had to run up on the curb in order to avoid having this little vehicle totaled by a truck driver that was speeding. So, while we're having these conversations and while we're looking at updating our CLT+ app, we do not have an option in there for obstruction that says "truck." We do have on here in the CLT+ app an option for obstruction of right of way but it does not specifically give you the opportunity to pick truck, to take a picture of that tag and other things. Those are ways to help. I hope we are able to move forward with that \$100, but I also would like for you all to really consider and really look into what towing is because the idea of saying, "Well we allowed it for more than a year now," for you to say, "Well up to so many hours I have to pull over," but you have a tracker that gives you an hour notice that you're coming up on your time. If your choice is the fact that you feel that it is cheaper to pay the \$25 fine than to actually pay at one of our registered licensed businesses only truck stop companies, that is a challenge because it's causing a health and a safety risk in our community.

When we look at the litter piece, Mr. Manager, for me that's a direct conversation with the social districts. So, when you look at other communities we love to talk about the social impact of walking around, but a lot of those items end up in the streets not in the trash can. Unfortunately, you can also go through a number of areas where people have chosen to use outside space to relieve themselves versus getting access because you won't necessarily be able to get access into a hotel if you're not visiting or you're not patronizing the restaurant or the bar. These are things when we're thinking about litter and we're thinking about that partnership of cleanup, we have a lot of high grass. I am really excited that we're bringing on a weekend team to help because a lot of it happens after 5:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon. Being able to expand some of the options in our CLT+ app will help. We're having separate conversations regarding our traffic lights. We all have been in an instance where we've sat behind a vehicle and we've watched them literally open their car door and sit a whole bag of trash out at the light right before they pull off, or if you haven't a lot of us have experienced that. When we do a combination, we might be able to capture some of that because the only way we change behavior is to change behavior. Unfortunately, some of those behavior

changes need to be associated with a fine because we're seeing the impact of it. The question is, do we have the ability to look into that, would be very helpful. When we look at what is identified as illegal parking, again if we have the ability to look at towing as well because we should be able to track some of these trucks license numbers, VIN numbers so we'll have an idea of who repeat offenders are. So, if you have an update, I would love to hear so that we can know how we can better support you.

**Lisa Flowers, City Attorney's Office** said so, our ordinance does allow towing of anybody that's illegally parked. We'll have to get back to you on what ParkIt uses. I don't think they tow the first offender, but they probably do have a limit for repeat offenders but we can get back to you on that and if that needs to change we can certainly talk about it.

Ms. Mayfield said so, thank you for mentioning that. My impression of ParkIt is meters Uptown. I'm talking about trucks that are along highways that are on neighborhood streets. On Mount Holly-Huntersville Road right before you get to the middle school, there's a truck that every so often is parked there. We have a parking company that is literally around the corner. So, for me, the first connection should be outreach to help you know, here's three but we actually may have more that are in your immediate area. So, what is the barrier? Now if the barrier is you've identified it's more financially beneficial for you to pay that \$25 versus the actual rental fee, that's a different conversation because you are causing challenges in the community with blocking the bike lanes, creating a sight distance barrier when vehicles are trying to enter and exit residential as well as highway. It is causing a challenge and a safety challenge when you start cleaning out your truck cab to climb into a vehicle. These things are all dangerous and could cause specific challenges for us. So, those are a couple of pieces that I would like for us to check in to. Thank you, Mr. Manager and thank you team for your amazing work.

Councilmember Graham said let me too offer my thankfulness to the team and the work you've done over the past 2020. We raised the flag about the illegal parking in February of this year when we sounded the alarm that there were a number of Quality of Life issues not only in the University City area which I share with Councilmember Johnson, but proliferating throughout the City. In reference to illegal parking of the commercial vehicles, the storage of the trailers themselves where the guys would take off with the cab and leave the trailers there over the weekend using our streets as storage, the litter that they leave behind when they come and go and the crime that tends to center around these illegal parking lots from the drivers and people who visit them. I'll leave it at that. So, it's an issue. It's an issue that Mr. Manager I think we need to address with a level of urgency from my perspective and notwithstanding the work that's already been done by the team from the enforcement perspective.

So, I clearly understand and respect the work that's been done in terms of level setting, making sure that we research, that we understand, that we outreach, that we collaborate, but I think it's time for this Council to take action on what I think are relatively significant issues that are impeding the City as a whole. Certainly, working with stakeholders, the State and others are a part of that equation. The background information is good, I appreciate it. I was looking for the main course not the appetizer that we received today because we've been talking about this for nine months, 10 months. They're a number of neighborhood organizations that are looking at the Council to take some proactive action and your next steps says fall of 2023. I'm not sure what that means. Is it October 2023, is it November 2023, is it December 2023? So, when are we going to take action? What is that actually going to look like. I think Councilmember Mayfield is correct in terms of towing, \$25 is laughable. How high can we increase those fees and fines? How are we collaborating with the trucking industry to ensure that we identify that we're not trying to punish anybody because logistics is a part of the economy for our City. I get it, I understand it, but no one wants to run into the back of an 18-wheeler on Harris Boulevard or having their neighborhood being visually polluted by tractor trailers and the debris that they leave behind. So, I am ready for some action Mr. Manager, solid recommendations that we can act on. It's been nine months. Certainly, foundation setting is important, I get it, I understand it, but there's a

sense of urgency that somehow this Council, this Board, this City is losing control. So, the resources that we are putting in place are appropriate, this Council member is going to put more in the next budget cycle if we have to, but I think it's really important now that we roll up our sleeves and do the hard work in terms of answering the questions. So, that's my first comment.

My second comment is to go back to a conversation that Councilmember Ajmera brought up about Uptown Charlotte and Fourth Ward in terms of the Committee referral. Again, I hope we don't process this to death. There was a specific action that this Council took that the Friends of Fourth Ward wants us to revisit about adding additional ordinances that we took off the books. I think we have to answer those questions. Either we're going to do it or we're not and all the other things that we have to study along with it, we should do it but there's a specific ask, Councilmember Watlington, from that Committee about what are we going to do. Again, this is an issue that we brought to the attention of our staff as early as April 2023. So, the Friends of Fourth Ward have been patient. I represent them. They are running out of patience with me and others on this issue. I think it's about time that we answer the question. Either we can or we won't and any internal issues that we're facing with CMPD legal and CMPD Chief of Police about this ordinance. Obviously, we don't want to criminalize being poor, we don't want to do that, but if we're going to talk about Quality of Life and our issues, there's some issues that are happening in our Uptown area that I think we need to say that we're going to address those issues specifically that they outlined. Or, we say we're not going to do that but this is what we're going to do. They deserve an answer and that's why I believe Councilmember Watlington, sooner than later. Certainly, I will be at the public process on Wednesday, not as a participant but demonstrating support for the input. I'm not sure you're going to find out anything different than we know now based on what their concerns are. Maybe additional issues but the core issues, those ordinances that we took away and they want us to put back into place.

Then lastly, again crime is a Quality of Life issue and a conversation I had with the City Manager earlier today and that was [inaudible] where all the trends are going in terms of crime in our City and they're all going in the right direction for sure, but if you don't feel safe, you're not safe. People are watching the news every night, every morning about various shootings throughout our City and that's impacting their comfort level and the Quality of Life based on their perception about what's happening in Charlotte not understanding that we have the data that demonstrates that this may be going in a different direction, but again, if you don't feel safe, you're not safe. I think that's an issue that I would hope this quality of issue continues to draw CMPD in as well to begin talking about some of the things that we're doing and we're doing a lot of great things. Alternatives to Violence started in District Two and now in District Three, going throughout the City, \$1 million grant fund from the Congresswomen. We're trying to prevent some of these issues before they occur, but most of these things are relationship driven. When someone gets in an argument, instead of doing what I probably did when I was growing up, we had a fist fight, they're taking out guns and they're shooting folks and they're killing folks and it's just not on one part of the City, it's happening Citywide from District Six to District Two to District Three, throughout the City. Again, we've got this reality of where our stats are, which they're going all in the right direction in terms of reducing crimes. Crimes are low in certain categories, but that's not the perception out there and we have to educate and continue to do the good works that we're doing and then work with other community organizations because it's not just the City Council's problem. It's churches, it's nonprofit organizations, it's our corporate leaders, it's all of us working together to really deal with a lot of these Quality of Life issues that are stemming from growth in our community. Growth is not a bad thing, we just have to manage it and we have to manage it with a sense of urgency and really not begin to process things to death. I think a lot of people in this community, certainly I am, and I'm very patient, but ready now to vote and make some decisive decisions based on data, based on input, based on research. Hopefully we can do all those things a little bit quicker. Thank you.



**Councilmember Driggs** said so, my first comment is about safety. You cannot have Quality of Life in a community where people don't feel safe. I think we should acknowledge as you did, homicides are down in the last report I saw from 75 to 54. That's dramatic. That's a big success. I appreciate CMPD's efforts there. What we have seen a lot of is property crime and a kind of a general atmosphere of a breakdown in civil order. This has to do with street racing, panhandling, things like that. So, people aren't comfortable. They don't feel safe and that is a primary concern and we know from what we've heard from our Chief of Police and the District Attorney, the courts are a revolving door, people are not afraid to commit some felony offenses because they know that the police car is basically a taxi cab that takes them Uptown and then they have to figure out how to get home again. So, it's not within our authority to fix that necessarily, but it is well within our responsibility to be mindful of that and do anything we can about it.

I would also mention safety extends to things like Vision Zero as well and the priorities we have for making our roads safer to cut down on accidental deaths. In that area, my personal view is we're not investing enough. We have identified needs that we intend to work on. It takes money to fix these things, crosswalks, sidewalks, lighting and even things like sorting out site lines on intersections. They're a lot of intersections where you can't see. In fact, the neighborhood where I live, it's a little scary coming out because your lead time after you see a car is a couple of seconds. So, I would like to see us invest more. We have children walking on the edge of busy roads on the way to a bus stop where there isn't even a platform for them to stand. In some cases the topography is such that they have to walk on the edge of the road. There isn't extra space. That is a simple money allocation question. We are not investing enough in my mind. I do appreciate that many of the things that detract from Quality of Life are being addressed and you're doing a great job. I appreciate that.

I would mention aside from panhandling, we've had this conversation about short term rentals for a long time and I don't know that we've really solved that. It's tricky because there is a legitimate business there, but there is also corporate and other use of these properties for purposes that create a nuisance and detract from Quality of Life. So, I guess the last thing I'll say is Code Enforcement in my mind does a great job. I really appreciate the response I get if I contact Jane with a constituent issue. Wham, right on it. So, really appreciate that. The only thing I will mention is I have one neighborhood that's been a problem for years, Park Ridge, where they don't have an HOA. So, one group is constantly complaining to me and to Code Enforcement about the behavior of another group, and they're basically trying to use the City to impose the will of one group on the other group. I think my only suggestion there would be, should we have some kind of a mediation process where Code Enforcement in a situation like that goes into a conflict and tries to work out some sort of a cease fire and so on instead of constantly calling us to issue these citations and then to escalate and use the tools that we have so far to try to put a stop to problems like that? So, that's what I have. Thank you.

**Councilmember Bokhari** said thank you. First you guys obviously are a great asset to the City. It's amazing to be able to work with you. Mr. Manager, I think we need to bifurcate this conversation. There's the blocking and tackling of some of the more basic Quality of Life things that are being addressed that we're working together on a daily basis not behind the dais but with staff to get done. Can they use more funding? Absolutely, but the team is doing a really good job there. I think the theme here that a lot of us are frustrated by and want action on is a more holistic Quality of Life, not just conversation but lists of actions that we can take in a very near-term perspective to make a dent in what our constituents and we as individuals in this community constantly see and are having trouble with. Everything that has just been said, I couldn't agree with more and what I think we need in this immediate term is the problem with government, there's a political feasibility kind of lens and will lens. Don't worry about deciding what's going to be popular or not, give us a list of everything and let us debate it out amongst this group because at the end of the day, whether it's people that have sat up here at Fourth Ward and elsewhere about defecation occurring, the constituent requests and problems I receive regularly in District Six

where you're like, "Well that can't be a thing there." It absolutely is a thing there. It's at every corner of this City. The aggressive panhandling on every single intersection. I mean at some point in time, people are just scratching their heads like, "Why aren't you guys doing anything about it?" The reason we're not doing anything about it is because there's these multiple layers of government bureaucracy and no offense to anyone, but it's like, "This is going to be dicey, and this Council is going to react badly to that." Don't worry about that. Let us do it. Give us every tool that aligns to those things.

Someone was shot twice running four houses down from my house last week and it touches on multiple of these things. There were five shootings over this weekend. I honestly appreciate CMPD, everyone knows how much I just love them to death, but let's stop talking about 20 or so delta decrease in homicides because we all know that fluctuates year over year and property crimes up is a leading indicator for us of where all that's going. The difference between a homicide and a shooting that just missed is an inch. We've learned that over the years. When people are being burglarized and all this stuff is happening when we can proactively can get ahead of things like the homeless camp that we experienced a couple of years ago, we can do that now when it's not here, but we can't do it when it's there.

So, I would encourage you step one is to not worry about the political ramifications or what kind of nonsense we're all going to fight about, just give us everything and say this directly relates to these things that you've heard of. Let us have that out and at the end of the day, hopefully step one is we can adopt some real things. Step two is we can ensure they are enforced. Step three we can ensure that the criminal justice system then picks up where that leaves off and step four, which three and four have to happen simultaneously those are in need of upward mobility. Those in need of mental health help, those in need of wrap around services, they can get them, but while they're sitting on our streets, not only is it not good for quality of life for everyone, it's not good for those people. So, if you can do that, I think we will make a massive step forward. Hearing everyone talk, I was trying to think, "Where is this stuck? Where is this stuck?" That's exactly where it's stuck. So, if you can do that, that would be a big deal and you guys just keep being awesome.

**Councilmember Anderson** said thank you Madam Mayor and thank you to the team for what you've put together and what you've been working on. As you can hear from our colleagues, everyone has a personal story that's connected to safety overall in the City that I think is critically important of course, but not particularly salient to what you've put in front of us in this plan. So, there's a call and the under current to have a more holistic Safe Charlotte plan that speaks to some of the tenants that my colleagues have just spoken to. I do have a couple of questions about what you have presented to us in this particular report.

First and foremost, I'm very happy to see Mr. Manager, the Rapid Response Team be stood up. It was something that we talked about literally this calendar year, put it in the budget and now we're in the hiring process. So, that is a quick response. Perhaps rapid, that can be a little pun on how you guys have addressed this. Will the Rapid Response Team have the power to write tickets? Like parking tickets and other tickets or will they have to connect as you had on slide nine with some of their counterparts in order to actually take action?

Ms. Hefner said great question. That's actually one of the even more rapid steps that we took. So, the team has the authority. Code Enforcement now has the authority to issue parking citations. So, the Manager authorized Code Enforcement in July to enforce provisions within Chapter 14, which is where all of the parking regulations are and Code Enforcement has already started issuing parking citations specific to tractor trailers as we amp up the team and get the technology solutions. Have you seen the ticket books with the multiple layers? You give one to the vehicle and one goes to the office and one gets sent here. So, that's part of the technology solution that we're working on is so that our staff can take the ticket readers out and be more efficient and be able to scale across the City. Absolutely that's one of the underlying provisions here, is that the team will be able to issue citations.



Ms. Anderson said okay, excellent. I think that makes total sense. If you didn't say yes, I was going to recommend that to happen not only for the trailer parking but also as I've been speaking to Alyson and some others in staff. We need a holistic plan around construction parking, perhaps baking it into our permitting process, but there are some pockets throughout the City where there's high construction and in particular skyscrapers, multilevel units and those construction sites flare up in the middle of their plan where they have hundreds and hundreds of people on site. Of course it scales down, but that's an issue. I hope that the Rapid Response Team will be tapped into that aspect of construction parking. We've talked already about ticketing just sort of being a cost of doing business and potentially raising the price of citations. However, I'd like for us to think about having particular thresholds because it is a cost of doing business and developers and truck drivers and various different industries bake that into their petty cash flow, but if we had a threshold where if you've had a citation for one act and you've had that citation three times or four time within a six-month period. This is just an example. I haven't thought through the ramifications of all this, perhaps there's something larger that you get, a larger penalty that you will have to incur and perhaps some court appearances, etc., but I think we need thresholds as other cities throughout the country have for repeat offenders who are bad actors in this process.

The other piece that I hope this Rapid Response Team can help especially with Code Enforcement is the parking on the yards and on the lawns throughout the City. I have several neighborhoods within District One. Just drove past a neighborhood in your District One evening and it's literally seven cars on a front yard. So, I think this Rapid Response Unit can certainly act on that regard. There's a lot of these things that I don't want us to burden CMPD with because they're down in staff, there's criminal activity and crime of opportunity that they need to be addressing. So, I believe that this particular team can help with things like that, but that is something that is occurring throughout the City of Charlotte that we need to enforce.

Then lastly, I will just say we've talked about Keep Charlotte Beautiful and the bags of litter that's getting picked up. I actually pay attention to those reports that you guys send out. A lot of bags of litter have been picked up in District One, year to date for sure. I would like for us to think about, you have Landscape Management on slide nine, how can we extend the actual beautification of some of our neighborhoods with the planting of trees perhaps in partnership with Tree Charlotte, flowers, but going past the litter piece into actual beautifications and beautification of certain public areas throughout the City and certainly several within District One. So, I look forward to you guys coming back in front of us with an update, but I do want to say thank you for the work that you've done. I can see the difference and I know by the end of the year we're going to have even greater progress. So, thank you all for your collaboration and effort.

Ms. Watlington said so first of all I just have to say I love the energy around the dais on this conversation. We all know from our constituents that as we grow, particularly coming out of COVID that we're not slowing down and a lot of the things that we saw before COVID have been exacerbated by the last several years. So, this is a bigger conversation, it's a broader conversation about quality of life, not just the current focus areas that you guys are doing an amazing job on. We thank you for that, but it's about how do we preserve our overall Quality of Life and what we call our competitive advantage here in Charlotte. What kind of City are we known to be? Why do people come to Charlotte? Why do folks want to do business in Charlotte? Why do people stay in Charlotte? Those are the kinds of things that as we walk up and down our streets as our visitors come and patron our City, that is really the first impression that they're going to see. So, when we think about going into the policy discussion, I'm so excited that everyone here has such interest in it because we're going to need all hands on deck. It's not just City Council as many of us have already said, but it's our partners over at that DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), over at the County, even within the school system, our business community and absolutely our residents. I've had an opportunity to speak with a number of different stakeholders as we think about our City Center because what you've mentioned, many of you, is that what we see in our City Center is what we're seeing all over our City. We also understand that much of our commerce happens within our City Center. So, we've got to make sure that we focus

there and as we think about policy, that it not only applies to our Center City, but it applies and is relevant across the board, across all of our districts.

So, as we think about going forward and I'm very excited for our Monday meeting because it will be a first opportunity in our Housing Safety and Community Committee to start talking about some of these things. These are going to be short term implementation items, they're going to be some mid-term and then there's going to be some longer term implementation items. So, what I'd like to do is just provide a little bit of framework for how we're thinking about this because there's pieces coming from every direction and we want to make sure that we get our arms around it so that what we're doing, everybody is marching to the beat of the same drum, our residents are clear, our business community is clear about the expectation and where they can plug in and who's driving the bus at what time. So, as we think about the different buckets that we have right now, themes that have come up, there are four of them right now. The first one absolutely being Quality of Life which includes housing and homelessness. The second one, economic development. We know that there is a linkage between our commercial property, our businesses Uptown, our vacant buildings and crime and retail and the opportunity for folks to come Uptown and feel safe. So, there's a play there that has clear ties to economic development and how we recruit and retain and build our businesses.

The next pillar if you will is our public realm and that really centers around our built environment. Councilmember Ajmera, you were talking about our sidewalks and how we're utilizing our sidewalks and how people are being mobilized on our sidewalks which leads us into to our fourth pillar which is really around mobility. How are we getting around? Vision Zero, is it safe for people to go from one place or another within our City center and on our broader City streets? So, this is how we're thinking about it. Some things are going to be very much City-led, they fall within our jurisdiction. Some things we're going to have to work with our partners like in the County as we move more into homelessness and as we work up and down the housing spectrum. We know that United Way is our City quarterback for A Home For All. So, they're going to have a play there. Certainly, our business partners have a play as we think about engaging employees, property owners Uptown, even our universities Uptown and their student communities and how do we make sure folks feel safe in that regard. So, every stakeholder group has a part to play in this and everyone of the conversations that I've been having, I'm happy to say is absolutely understanding of the urgency and ready to be a part of the solution. So, that's how we're going to approach this. Again, some things are going to be immediate. There's quick, cheap and easy as I'll call it, things that we can do to be responsive to some of the immediate needs, but we know that there's interconnectivity and there's some linkages that we've got to face. So, we're going to do our part over at the City and we know that our partners throughout the community are standing willing, ready and able to do so. So, I would ask you to stay tuned and please stand-by. Thank you.

**Councilmember Winston** said I might be the outlier here, but this has been a bit discouraging to hear this conversation. The idea that my colleagues believe that somehow increasing punitive repercussions to people in our community who are just trying to make it is going to improve the Quality of Life for others and as being that priority, that is taking a huge step back and it might sound nice to a few people in our community, but it's by no means the solution that so many of you say you wish to figure out. For example, I assure people are not defecating or urinating in neighborhoods simply because an ordinance does not have a criminal prosecution associated with it. I assure of that. You need to step back and look at the bigger picture. Might it have something to do with the County closing the main library which has been the epicenter for a community that is extremely fragile and is utilized as a center of the community? That's what we should be looking at. Yes, maybe there are some quick easy cheap solutions like putting public bathrooms in the Uptown area so those fragile communities that have been made more fragile have facilities to use the bathroom in. So, where are they going to use the bathroom? Where are they going to use the bathroom if you attach a criminal penalty to it? They're going to go to the detention center. Where are they going to go when they get out? This conversation just doesn't make sense. It's a

regression from where we've been going over the past few years and I encourage you to change the direction of this conversation in Committee and as this progresses on the policy level. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, this has been a very good discussion. They're going to be things that are going to be difficult to accomplish. I'm looking at the Manager taking notes that every Council member had a suggestion or more than one, and he's taking those notes. I think our challenge is going to be not the Rapid Team and the work that you're doing, the challenge is going to be how do we define what these issues are and how they're going to impact people and what changes are going to be expected. So, I would hope that the Housing Committee has a template that could perhaps be something that would be even more successful as you come out with how you look at this and review it. How do we make sure that people understand the consequences and how do we actually have a reason and a rationale that we can explain and work through with all of our partners? I don't believe that we can do this without the County and the DA (District Attorney) and CMPD and the various other communities because I think we're trying to solve a problem that is across this country, now we are, Charlotte, and it is part of what we have to grapple with but sometimes that may push well what does it mean for Pineville, or what will it mean if we put people in other communities without having some solution? So, I am really hopeful, Mr. Jones, that you will challenge this dais to participate fully in this process to actually have the rationale and the issues thoroughly defined. I understand short term, long term, I understand also the process that we'll have to go through, but I really believe that we have gotten to the crux of the issue and it's going to be hard, but that's okay. So, thank you everyone for the comments and the suggestions and the care that you give for this community.

Ms. Mayfield said Madam Mayor, before we lose staff and while the City Manager has created a lot of notes, can I just please add for staff, let's also look at the consideration of our food delivery drivers. Whether that's DoorDash and others because we have had drivers that have had their vehicles towed when they've gone into a multi-family complex to make a delivery. Even if that means the potential of a permit for the drivers so that they can make the deliveries as we become a society where we're getting more food-grocery deliveries so that we're not penalizing them while they're doing their job. So, that we take it all into consideration as we continue to grow and move forward. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Thank you. We have one more item on the Manager's Report. However, I'm going to say that we're not going to go to do the social districts because so many of the people that are still in this room who chose to come down here came for the issues that we have on our policy agenda. I want to, out of respect, be able to have them come in. We have over 20 speakers for the next several items. So, we will have those speakers and allow these good folks to go home and watch us continue this discussion on tv or on the City's YouTube channel.

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## **BUSINESS**

### **ITEM NO. 15: AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT REQUESTS INCLUDING LEASE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY**

**Elijah Pitman, 1136 Whitby Moore Street** said alright. Thank you, Ms. Mayor and City Council. I represent a group of homeowners that are impacted primarily by letter C, which is a project at 7202 South Boulevard. We are asking City Council to delay an approval of that because at this point we feel that there is a lack of planning for this development. There's been a lack of community hearings. The development lacks parking and planned security. The development is going to impact traffic patterns in and out of an already congested shopping center, impacting Old Pineville Road, East Arrowood Road, South Boulevard and England Street. We need to have additional conversations about expansion of the access around those areas. We also need to have conversations around crime and CMPD response times to this area of the 28273-

zip code. We also have some concerns around the concentration of affordable housing projects in the Arrowood Corridor as well as need to create mixed income communities throughout the City. Right now, our big primary focus is getting the community together and address affordable housing as a group and rather than sticking it in anywhere we can find a piece of land, make sure that we put infrastructure in place to support the affordable housing as well. It's a TOD (Transit Oriented Development) area. So, the parking spaces are significantly less than the number of residences which is going to have a significant impact on surrounding communities as well as an already overburdened train station that has no parking for commuters as it is. So, we're just asking that City Council delay a vote on this until we've had some more community hearings so that we can make sure the plan is fully implemented and in place.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much Mr. Pitman. I should've asked if you have an actual program or project that you're talking about, if you would tell us that because we do have from A, B, C, D, E in this item can you tell us which project you're speaking towards?

**Richard Nesbitt, 7103 Preston Court** said for or interested in it. We're dealing with Item 15, correct?

Mayor Lyles said Item 15.

Mr. Nesbitt said yes and that involves housing on the East side of town which as I just noted myself, within a five-minute walk from that intersection of North Sharon Amity, Milton and Harris Boulevard. A five-minute walk from there you would encounter over 2,600 low income or residential homes and apartment complexes and things like that. This involves adding another 168 units off of Barrington Road which is right off of Milton, all once again a five-minute walk from that major intersection where North Sharon Amity ends at Harris Boulevard. The problem there is that it's just another way of expanding that whole complex of lower income homes in that area which is just saturated. If you move that thing out for more than five minutes, now you're talking close to 6,000 units. A survey was done, somebody else can tell you about it because it's part of number 16. The concern is that East Charlotte is just being dumped on without consideration of the impact on the neighbors and also on the people who will be moving in there too when there are other places within Charlotte, close to 20 according to one report that we got, that would like to actually have this housing, you know, spread it around. So, that's my concern and I appreciate the opportunity to let you know.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much Mr. Nesbitt.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said Mayor, can I ask a clarifying question before he leaves? I'm still trying to figure out which one of the projects.

Mayor Lyles said I'm asking Mr. Heath to tell us each one because I think sometimes, they may not have the number.

Unknown said Sycamore Station.

Mayor Lyles said Sycamore Station.

Ms. Mayfield said yes.

Mayor Lyles said so, Mr. Heath, if you would tell us each one before, that would be very helpful at the end of their speaking just to make sure. Alright.

**Mimi Davis, 6700 Linda Lake Drive** said good evening. I'm Mimi Davis. I'm President of East Charlotte Coalition of Neighborhoods and I'm here tonight to talk about the Sycamore Station site. I'm also a resident of the Grove Park Neighborhood which is very close to the sight at Milton and Barrington. I'm speaking today to oppose yet another mass build, the Sycamore Station Project near the Harris-Milton and [inaudible]



intersection. The project isn't on the side of the road that many of you know with the huge complexes, it's on the other side of the road. It's behind trees, it's on a dead end street, but when they put the 168 units next to another huge project that's 150 units, if you combine them, you have to kind of extrapolate and think of how many people could fit in there without knowing how many people have signed the lease, but it would be logical to assume that it would nearly be 1,000 people in this small area on Barringer Road just off Milton Road. A thousand people with large housing projects directly across the street from them. Add to this a Section 8 apartment complex along Harris just a few miles away, the 60-unit apartment complex at Rosecroft which is directly across Harris. It's almost a self-contained town of segregated poverty. The schools involved are Devonshire Elementary with a 29 percent proficiency in reading, 49 percent in math. They'll struggle more with more children. The high school is Garinger which I understand is already in the highest poverty attendance area of any urban high school in the state of North Carolina.

How do we close the achievement gap and how do the schools make test improvements? The City is struggling with upward mobility statistics. Grouping the more near struggling schools, lack of jobs, lack of transportation is a cause. There are no well-resourced and opportunity rich areas for them. Very nearby is the infamous BP Station. It's nicknamed by police officers because of the many calls for service, mostly loitering and drug related. The Hickory Grove Police Division responds to these calls, but like many divisions, are understaffed. So, response time is lengthened. A teenage kid can walk there from these projects, and it would provide some excitement and maybe much else. We understand from the community engagement meeting that there is not to be 24-hour security. We're hoping for at least cameras. Why is such a small area as the one near just this one intersection of these two roads bearing the burden of all these apartments? A young technically proficient neighbor estimated 1,800 units.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. If you have any additional remarks, please leave them with the City Clerk.

**Mary Ann Stegall, 6128 Randy Drive** said we feel that the East side has an over abundance of low-income housing. This is about the Sycamore Station. This housing complex will have a great effect on the already overloaded neighborhood like Mimi has said. The quality of education of the surrounding the schools will also be in jeopardy. Our police force is being stretched to its limits and this will continue to stress our officers located in the Hickory Grove Division. Also, we are acutely aware of the shortage of officers already. The crime in the area has basically increased. There's a BP Station, it's like in a triangle there between close to Milton, Sharon Amity and Harris Boulevard. There's shootings, you can buy drugs there at any time. It's a gas station that I don't go to because I'm in fear of going there. So, our main concern is safety, quality of life for the residents that's been there a long, long time and most of the people that's in our community, I myself have lived there for 41 years. So, we love our community, we love our neighbors and we just want to keep peace with where we live and how quality of life and be able to feel that we can come and go and not have to worry. If you approve this, it's going to bring over the 2,000 units in a three-mile radius which you heard Richard talk about and we just ask that you deeply consider the construction of this complex and how it's going to affect our neighbors and the families within. We ask that you please do not approve of this project. I'd also like to point out that this is also the area where two of our police officers were killed. Sean Clark and Jeffrey Shelton near this proposed site. So, let's keep that in mind when you're doing this vote please. Thank you for your time.

**Joi Mayo, 409 Goldstaff Lane** said good evening. My name is Joi Mayo and I'm President of the Kings Creek Community off Arrowood and Nations Ford Road. I'm talking about Item C, 7202 South Boulevard. So, if Arrowood Homes is approved, this will be five affordable housing units developed within a one-mile radius of the intersection of Nations Ford-Arrowood. I'm concerned with the concentration of poverty in this historically underserved Black and Brown region in the City. While expanding affordable housing is essential, I question the concentration of so many affordable housing units in one area that already has a lot of large amounts of naturally occurring



affordable housing. When I've spoken with City representatives and staff, they've explained that the land is cheap in this area and they can provide more housing as a result in this area opposed to Southend and Ballantyne. I argue the land is cheap in this area because of systemic racism and the under investment in the community, which is historically Black and Brown.

Government agencies and nonprofits should invest in other factors that contribute to poverty in the area like workforce development, rec centers for our young people and also seniors and anyone in the community, before and after school programs for youth as both of the local schools in the area have received Ds and Fs from the State's report card. I implore Council to delay the vote on Arrowood Homes and to instead invest in the largely Black and Hispanic population in the area. Thank you.

Motion was made by Councilmember Winston, and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to (A) Approve \$13,194,000 in Housing Trust Fund allocations for the following affordable housing developments contingent upon their receiving a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit award from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, where applicable: Arrowood Homes, \$2,500,000, (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 3, Aveline Legacy Druid Hills Duets II, \$462,000, (Homeownership) in Council District 1, Central at Old Concord, \$4,200,000, (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 1, Kings on Lamar, \$2,432,000, (Supportive Housing) in Council District 1, Swan Run Apartments, \$2,400,000, (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) in Council District 7, and Sycamore Station II, \$1,200,000, (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 1.

**Councilmember Anderson** said so Shawn, could you come up to the mic please or someone that acknowledged the community voicing their concerns about the Sycamore Station Project and its connectivity or proximity to other affordable housing projects on this corridor. Shawn, we've heard from some residents, potential number of residents being close to 1,000. You've heard some numbers thrown out. Can you just give us an overview? I know we have it in our packet but perhaps the residents don't have the number of potential residents who would be able to take advantage of Sycamore Station.

**Shawn Heath, Housing and Neighborhood Services** said yes. Thank you, Councilmember Anderson. Shawn Heath, Housing and Neighborhood Services. So, this project would be 168 units, 60 percent of those units would be devoted to households that are at the 60 percent AMI (Area Median Income) level which for a family of four would equate to \$60,000. I think it's always important to reflect on what are the job types that are included in these various household income ranges. Teachers, nurses, administrative assistants, police officers, just to name a few examples that would fit into that income range.

Ms. Anderson said absolutely. Of the 168 units, there are 134 units that would be dedicated to what you're describing as civil servant workforce housing. So, these would be residents who are working who have an active income and active participants within the City of Charlotte and the community. I will say that there are 34 units as well dedicated to 30 percent AMI and below, but the vast majority of these units are dedicated to workforce housing. The second piece I'd like to share is of the 168 units, there're nearly a third of these units, 48 units that are one-bedroom units that are meant specifically for workforce housing individuals. So, the other piece that I think is important Shawn in the summary of the project development, you speak about how some of this particular project connects to our concept of 10-minute neighborhoods because it's connected to specific retail and other vital infrastructure. Can you speak to as how this project was scored proximate to other vital elements of a 10-minute neighborhood?

Mr. Heath said yes. For most projects that come to us through Housing Trust Fund requests, they would be required to have a locational scoring done and the locational scoring has been in place for a number of years and we consider a number of factors. Proximity to amenities, access to jobs that are within a reasonable commuting distance, there's also a consideration of to what degree is a particular location experiencing transformation that could create displacement risk for existing residents. Then there also is a consideration of the current income diversity in a particular area. What you'll find on any given project is there's a maximum score, but most of the projects that we're supporting with Housing Trust Fund dollars will score anywhere between 20 to 30 on that particular calculation.

Ms. Anderson said excellent. Thank you for that. So, this particular project is within walking distance of grocery stores, pharmacies, health care services and banking. So, that's without the use of any particular car or owning a vehicle holding up our tenance of a 10-minute neighborhood. Lastly Shawn, I would like for you to talk about our projects that we approved out of the Housing Fund. We look at our leverage ratio to understand if these projects are highly leveraged, if it's beneficial and a good use of our dollars for the Housing Trust Fund. Can you speak about the leverage ratio of this particular project?

Mr. Heath said yes, I can. For this particular project, it has a leverage ratio of one to 20 which means that for every dollar the City puts into this project, other funders, other investors are putting \$20 in. That's an exceptionally strong value proposition for the City of Charlotte and this project also has a 50-year affordability commitment which would be a favorable affordability level compared to what we've seen over the last five years.

Ms. Anderson said great. Then the last question I have for you is we have concerns overall around displacement and whether some of the projects that we are supporting with our Housing Trust Fund dollars are having intended or unintended consequences as it relates to displacement. Is there any displacement or disruption that is going on relative to the Sycamore Station Project?

Mr. Heath said no. This is phase two of a development and there's no displacement scenarios associated with this project.

Ms. Anderson said okay. Thank you, Shawn. So, I just want to share with the residents. I understand your consternation around affordable housing and concentration around specific affordable housing units, but this particular project, a majority of the units are focused towards workforce development housing. So, these are civil servants who work hard and serve our City in a variety of different ways and unfortunately don't make a high salary for the work that they've chosen to do. So, this allots an opportunity for teachers and other civil servants to have access to affordable, quality, safe housing. This affordability period is a 50-year window which is a very long affordability period for this area. I've also read a few emails that I've received, and I've heard some positive voices for this project and of course I've heard some on the negative side. I will say the conversation around CMS, and we've been having a lot of conversations around CMS throughout our meetings over the last several weeks. I have high confidence in the Board and our new Superintendent, and I know they have a strategic plan to address school and school performance. So, I don't want to overstep our responsibility of how CMS is planning to ensure that our schools and our students are performing at a high proficiency level, but I know that they have a strategic plan that's focused on schools who are under performing.

So, I'm going to support this project because I think it speaks specifically to our need for affordable housing for workforce development, that these are individuals in our City who work, they'll be gainfully employed and they contribute to the City. I also will continue to work with the neighborhood along the corridor to ensure that as we have new development that comes up, that we're mindful about where particular projects like this and others could be concentrated because I do hear from residents not only in this corridor but in other pockets of the City that there's a high concentration of affordable

housing projects within certain spaces. So, we do need to be mindful as much as our dollars can allow us to share and spread out these projects throughout other pockets of the City. Thank you, Shawn, for your comments and thank you Madam Mayor.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said Ms. Anderson did a great job laying out all the facts especially with the income breakdown and talked about how this is really the workforce housing that we are talking about. So, approximately \$45,000 to \$60,000 per household. Do you know what's the average median income of the area?

Mr. Heath said I do not.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. I think that's also important as you present some of this because the last data point that I have for the average median income for that area is a lot less than what is required to live in this. So, I know some of the residents have specific concerns around safety. Could you talk about the safety measures that will be in place and address some of the concerns around proximity to the gas station and how some of those concerns will be addressed?

Mr. Heath said yes, and as it relates to safety for any of the City-supported developments, there's a progression of things that we would expect to see in place. It really starts with the vetting of perspective tenants and what's done on the front end associated with background checks and credit checks. Once that vetting occurs and residents have moved in, they're a number of things that are done from a physical security perspective. I believe the community engagement session was held on August 24, 2023. There were questions that were raised about safety. The developer provided a letter to participants after the session including the City and they've made some assertions that there are some things they're exploring and considering. I'm not going to mention those simply because they're exploring and considering, but I will say that they've made a commitment to additional security cameras above and beyond what they've done in the first phase of the project and also to expand the hours for the off-duty security personnel that are on site. I'm not aware of affordable housing projects that we support that have dedicated 24-hour security support, but this one does have off hours security, and they've agreed to beef up those security measures.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you for addressing that. I know you mentioned there will be a background check. So, if there is an occupant or tenant that's involved in any crime, do they get evicted right away?

Mr. Heath said that would really depend on the specifics of the lease for any given household. So, I can't comment specifically on that.

Ms. Ajmera said right. So, I remember when I served on the Charlotte Housing Authority Board and if there was a crime at the property a tenant was involved in, they took immediate action and that tenant was removed from the property. I would like to get additional information on that. What are some of those measures in place to ensure that we are keeping all the tenants that are living there, to Ms. Anderson's point, these are some of our civil servants that will be occupying this, we are talking about teachers, firefighters, police officers, to ensure that we are keeping all of our residents safe including our neighbors?

**Councilmember Johnson** said one of the things that I heard was there is a concentrated amount of affordable housing in this specific area. One thing I wrote down was concentrated resources. So, I'm of the belief we hear this term concentrated poverty, but I think that's an opportunity for us to really concentrate on solutions. So, this might be an opportunity for satellite services or wrap around services to be available and accessible for residents in that area. I know when I talked to Mr. Proctor in the past, he talked about possible wrap around services at the complex. It was something he thought of. Is he here or have you all had discussion about that?

Mr. Heath said I'm not aware that he's here this evening. He and I have not spoken directly about that.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Well, we've talked about that in the past, but even if he didn't do it, Ms. Davis talked about 1,000 units or there being several complexes. Maybe we can partner with the County to be able to provide wrap around services in that area so that we can help break those cycles and help folks to be upwardly mobile. I think that's an opportunity for us to provide concentrated solutions. We talked about the school and the failing schools and the overcrowding schools. I know we don't want to overstep our boundaries; I heard you Ms. Anderson, however if we did collaborate with the County and the schools to maybe recognize what the residents are saying if there are a large number of affordable housing units in a certain area. You know I'm an affordable housing advocate and I know folks need a place to live, but we also can address the concerns by addressing the residents from a holistic perspective. So, I would like to see concentrated resources and maybe that's working with the county. I can reach out to some County Commissioners and see what services or resources we have in those areas. Perhaps satellite offices and just something so that the neighbors feel more secure. When we talk about a 10-minute neighborhood, what's included in that area, in that 10-minute neighborhood, but if we had those sources, maybe tutoring, maybe mentorship programs, maybe something to address the core issues in that community, I think would be helpful for all parties. Thank you.

Last thing. Then the BP Station they talked about. If we could get the statistics for the crime at the BP Station and maybe strengthen the enforcement at that BP Station and really start to look at nuisance laws and just address the concerns that the residents have. I don't think the residents have a problem with affordable housing, but they want to make sure it's managed appropriately. So, if we could address those issue and address those concerns by having those resources for residents and ensuring the enforcement of crime. If we can do more, if this area feels like they're carrying a burden more so than other areas, then we should be intentional about the resources and the solutions around that so that they're not feeling dumped on in that area. This is workforce housing but also those 34 units that are 30 percent AMI, folks with disability and fixed income, this would be suitable and affordable for them. Some of the units are truly affordable. So, we hear you as a Council and I hope that we can address their specific concerns by pouring resources in that we have. I think that would be a win-win situation. Thank you.

**Councilmember Driggs** said so two major concerns, concentration and safety, if I try to summarize. The interesting thing is we used to have a location policy when it came to our investments in affordable housing that designated permissible and impermissible areas if veterans remember. The goal was to try to push for a dispersion of that housing around the community, but what we found in time was that the impermissible areas were the ones where there already was a lot of affordable housing and if you excluded those, you couldn't afford to do development in the other areas. We ended up making one exception after another without any policy basis. It was just like we were driven by the economics of being able to afford to create this housing back to certain areas. So, that's when the location policy that Mr. Heath alluded to was adopted that came as a set of various criteria. The truth is we're kind of stuck and I'm the District Seven guy. It's hard to get anything done in my district. It's so expensive. I have managed now to get a few situations approved where developers agreed to include some affordable units, but that's the problem. That's why we are having to look at a proposal like this.

The other thing on safety is there is a perception that there is a safety problem. My own impression from 10 years is that is not actually borne out by data. So, from time to time the subject comes up and we say, "Alright, let's not just be emotional about this. Let's see whether there's anything that actually demonstrates that this type of housing brings with it a rise in crime." Mr. Heath, I don't know whether we have recent research of what that looks like, but in the past when I looked into it with the police, they said, "No." So, I'm hopeful that that will not be your experience because I don't believe it has been. I do have sympathy for not wanting to see one development after another take place in the same part of town, but if we want to do anything, I'm not sure we can avoid that. So, that's all I can tell you. I intend to support this because I really feel that it



serves a public purpose and even though it does so at a cost, we have to do something in this area. Thank you.

**Councilmember Winston** said thank you. People who are desperate because they don't have a place to put their head because they don't have a home to go to will do desperate things to get housing or to make themselves safe. So, the idea that not building housing will somehow correlate to people acting desperate, as my colleague Mr. Driggs just said, the data just completely does not pair that out. I would encourage us to change that narrative in our community because honestly it's quite offensive. As it relates to Arrowood Road, you have billions of dollars of investment in public transportation that's directly adjacent to this. It's in walking distance to amenities like supermarkets, laundry mats, other things that folks need. This is an optimal place. Part of the reason why it is cheaper down there is because you have a lot of old industrial land and that is a place that you want to lock in affordability now because change is going to eventually come down the South Boulevard corridor or off the South Boulevard corridor depending on where you're looking at it from. So, I hope we get this thing passed quickly. Thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said was staff able to pull up the map? So, for full transparency, the question that I sent to Ms. Marie specifically was over the last decade, how many multi-family projects have been approved in the identified areas noted tonight? I am concerned that the unintended consequences are reconcentrated poverty in certain districts. We all receive a copy of this. Staff was looking to see if they can pull it up, but in the back is a map. This map is the heat map. Here's the map of which I'm waiting for it to come up so that you and the community have it. All of Council has received it, but it is the map of where these current locations are. We are only having a discussion so far about action item A that includes Arrowood Homes, Aveline Legacy, Central at Old Concord, Kings on Lamar, Swan Run and Sycamore Station. Sycamore Station isn't in an area that is not overpopulated. That is an area where we have the opportunity for more growth. I need the second map to come up. This right here is the first map that shows you where the locations are. If you look at this map that is up now that is put up for all of you and for those that are at home. If you had the ability to look at the two maps, you will see that we do have areas of concentration because we must go back and recognize that we changed our districts a year ago. When those districts changed, there was a shift and when that shift happened, that created some challenges.

What I am concerned about is that in another decade or so, we are going to see what we saw with Westwood Apartments, what we saw with Southside, what we've seen with Brookhill, what we've seen with so many. Westwood Apartments are now \$400,000 to \$600,000 homes because the apartments were leveled, but those were apartments that were at the time for 30 percent AMI. That AMI changes over the years. Our 80 percent AMI today is not the same AMI it was at 80 percent 10 years ago. So, when I look at this map that is currently up and I look at the map of where these locations are, for me, Sycamore, Swan Run as well as Mount Moriah Seniors are the ones that are on the outskirts where there's little concentration. Yet, if we look at Aveline Legacy, Aveline Legacy is in the top of this cluster where we already have a number of workforce projects. Fast forward, we may see a challenge. It is an idea to say we need to add wrap around services. It is because of the lack of those services for decades that got us to where we are. It has taken almost a generation for some to build wealth in their homes. When I purchased my home in 2001 for \$70,000 it took me over two decades to finally see any equity in my home. So, the idea that we're having this conversation just looking at the districts and not recognizing that we shifted the districts, and we have a clear heat map that shows on this heat map where we have concentrated some developments and not have true diversity with some higher end projects coming out. That is a challenge. It is a great idea for us to make investments, but we have to recognize again today's numbers, we're still using the same crescent and wedge theory, but we moved the crescent and we moved the wedge when we redid the lines for where the districts are.

So, it is not the same conversation that it would have been in 2019 much less 2020. When we look at these dots, again, for me, Swan Run which is down almost to where



you see Pineville-Matthews Road. Go over to the right where you see Matthews, is the Mount Moriah Seniors. Go up right up under Old Concord Road, further to the right is where Sycamore Station is. Those developments make sense, but just for A, only looking at A, when we get to Aveline Legacy, the Duets, there is a cluster of workforce and lower income where now they're dealing with the impact of a new property tax evaluation that has changed their property. They have equity, great, but \$640 is not enough to help them pay that new tax bill that went from \$1,000 to over \$2,000. I want us to really be as transparent as possible when we are focusing, when we have opportunities for growth and development that we can support that's not going to put a future Council a decade from now in the situation that those of us that have been around for more than four terms, have already been dealing with on a district level. We've seen it, we've had to fight through it. Just for Brookhill, that was five Council members for District Three that worked on that. It is only when we got to our fifth Council member that we finally had the right team come together to help. We can't be the ones around this dais to do the same thing in neighborhoods and for a future Council to have to deal with.

Shawn, you do an amazing job. You and the team and I recognize that we have some other opportunities that's going to be coming down the pipe, but if we do not take into consideration the overlay of the map, not just this one that says where it's at, but the impact of this one when we keep approving it, we're setting ourselves up to where we're going to continue to have to rely on government dollars to try to fix something that we probably could have corrected on the front end by even thinking about unintended consequences. The Manager, well I've asked and he's going to bring back to us, I've asked what is the impact potentially if the City of Charlotte becomes a majority rental City? If our tax base really comes from our residential single family, what is the difference? How much are we getting in taxes from multi-family versus how much are we getting in taxes from owner occupied residential? Because if you're a company and you're renting out a house, you're paying a corporate rate. I'm saying I don't know what that difference is, but what I know is if our base, the bulk of our funding comes from taxes, and comes from property taxes, what are we doing now that we put individuals in a place where, yes, you now have equity that is taking you a generation potentially to gain. What is that doing if we do this, if we continue with these particular projects? My colleagues are going to vote how they vote. I am saying for me, out of A, I can support Swan Run, Sycamore Station, Mount Moriah Seniors, which Mount Moriah is in B. So, out of A, I can support Sycamore Station as well as Swan Run Apartments. Thank you.

**Councilmember Watlington** said yes, just a couple of things as I'm listening to the folks around the dais. There are a couple of things that I think we can do some more work around. I share your concern Madam Mayfield about rental versus ownership and the use of our Housing Trust Fund dollars towards rental properties versus investment in owner occupied dwellings. I think that's Citywide and when we talk about who we want to be and what kind of City and what kind of pride that residents have in their City when they've got an ownership stake, I think that's critical. So, as we move forward with our public dollars, particularly if we're going to be asking for an increase in Housing Trust Fund dollars, we've got to figure out a way to help folks be owners in our enterprise. So, that is one component of it. For me, I share the sentiments of some of my colleagues that some of the projects are clear, yes, we can go knock these out. I've heard two to three being Arrowood, Central and Sycamore that people have concerns about, have additional questions about like in regards to the surrounding AMI and I've heard enough folks galvanize around this idea that we really need wrap around services for a number of these. I'm wondering if the Council would be amenable to splitting up the vote on a few of these and then possibly deferring two to three of them for that additional investigation?

Mayor Lyles said I think we have a motion on the floor. I don't know if you're just speaking towards A or all of the remaining ones as well.

Ms. Watlington said okay, I'm just talking about A in this case.

Mayor Lyles said so, I think we have a motion on the floor for adoption of A and a second.

Substitute motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, and seconded by Councilmember Mayfield to approve Aveline Legacy, Swan Run, Kings on Lamar, Sycamore Station, and Sycamore for \$500,000.

Ms. Watlington said the bulk of the units are 80 percent AMI. So, that to me is truly workforce housing.

Mr. Heath said I just wanted to make sure everybody understands that the only reason there's an A and B is because A is local funding, B is federal funding.

Ms. Mayfield said right.

Mr. Heath said some projects are receiving a combination of local and federal funding. So, they're listed twice. Mount Moriah is only federal funding. So, it's only listed in action B. Just wanted to clarify that.

Mayor Lyles said got you. Thank you very much.

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Mayfield and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Molina, and Winston

Mayor Lyles said we're back to now the vote, and I call for the vote on the original motion.

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Bokhari, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Molina, and Winston

NAYS: Councilmembers Anderson, Mayfield, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Winston, and seconded by Councilmember Anderson, to approve (B) Approve \$4,325,000 in federal fund allocations (Community Development Block Grant, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS, and HOME Investment Partnerships Program) for the following affordable housing developments contingent upon their receiving Low-Income Housing Tax Credit awards from the North Carolina Housing Finance agency, where applicable: Arrowood Homes, \$3,000,000, (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 3, Mount Moriah Seniors, \$825,000, (nine percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Matthews, North Carolina, Sycamore Station II, \$500,000, (four percent Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) in Council District 1, (C) Adopt a resolution approving an option agreement and long-term ground lease of city-owned property located at 7202 South Boulevard (parcel identification number 205-173-03) with Arrowood Homes Owner, LLC, for the development of the Arrowood Homes multi-family affordable housing development, (D) Approve an annual reimbursement to Housing Collaborative in an amount not to exceed the city portion of the parcel's property tax bill for Swan Run Apartments for a Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Rental Subsidy Program over a 20-year period for 14 new long-term rental subsidies at Swan Run Apartments for households earning 30 percent and below the area median income, and (E) Authorize the City Manager to execute, amend, extend and renew contracts and other required documents to complete these transactions.

The vote was taken on the motion to approve parts B through E and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Bokhari, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Molina, and Winston

NAYS: Councilmember Anderson, Mayfield, and Watlington

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 626-627.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 16: FREEDOM FIGHTING MISSIONARIES HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT**

Motion was made by Councilmember Winston, and seconded by Councilmember Mayfield to (A) Approve the use of \$2,000,000 from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for Freedom Fighting Missionaries to support housing security and stability for low-income criminal justice-involved residents, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to execute, amend and renew contracts as needed to complete these transactions.

**Kenneth Robinson, 6203 Rockshire Drive** said real quickly with my two minutes, thank you. I definitely want to give a thank you to Shawn Heath and the team at Housing and Neighborhood Services and the City Manager for working so hard on this for us. When we first started our organization, and correct, I am Kenny Robinson, Founder and Executive Director of Freedom Fighting Missionaries. When we first started our organization and received our first grant, I presented to Cardinal Innovations at the time that if you are Black, have a criminal background and are a Charlotte native that in fact you have a disability equivalent to a blind man. That still stands right now. It is so difficult to be Black and to be from Charlotte and to have a background that many of the people that we are talking about across these issues are the ones that are experiencing homelessness right now in Charlotte so much so that I commissioned a report to be done by the Urban Institute and UNC Charlotte because there was no data surrounding this issues of post incarceration. Some of the data that came out of that report that I am a reviewer on is, Black individuals make up 31 percent of Mecklenburg County population but 76 percent of the incarcerated population. Black individuals make up 31 percent of Mecklenburg County population, but 77 percent of

the homeless population. We are predominantly talking about Black people who are experiencing homelessness. Of the 3,000 Black people who are homeless each month in Mecklenburg County, 80 percent consistently are Black. Of that 80 percent, 85 percent of them have a criminal background, and that is their barrier to homelessness.

I am here in support of the project that we put forth with an understanding that as you heard many in the community opposed it and opposed it with great vigor. We made an agreement to shift some of that funding to make an agreement with the community. We're talking about a community on the east side of Charlotte that are correct in some of their concerns and some of their concerns are, why so much affordable housing and not a park and not place making and not increased education for the community? So, I'm asking this Council to consider extending the Corridors of Opportunity to include the areas around Milton Road, the areas around East Charlotte so this community can get some of the things that they need there besides just affordable housing. That was my concession that I was willing to forego a project to create 16 townhouses in hopes that the community on the East side can get something more than just affordable housing. It was very difficult for me and my team. We worked very, very hard, coming from where I come from 10 years ago in federal prison to be standing here now talking about building housing. Thank you.

**Mayor Lyles** said Mr. Shaw, you spoke earlier under the name Richard Nesbitt?

Mr. Nesbitt said that's the first two-thirds of my name.

Mayor Lyles said so, the second time you gave us the name of Rick Shaw?

Mr. Nesbitt said yes.

Mayor Lyles said so, which name would you like for us to use?

Mr. Nesbitt said Richard.

Mayor Lyles said okay, Mr. Nesbitt. You have two minutes.

**Richard Nesbitt, 7103 Preston Court** said thank you. I actually will start off, thank you for this opportunity to say that Kenny Robinson is an admirable person. I agree with his sentiments. There's a definite need and the bottom line for my position is that we are not ready. There are multiple elements of this, although Freedom Fighting Ministries are doing good things for people, for individuals. They don't have a track record of doing things in an organization of the construction people and the government intermediaries and so forth. So, that's one reason that I don't think they're ready to do this yet, not to kill it. Great idea, we need it, but not now without some improvements. The other concern for me, because I live in Grove Park and this is adjacent to the Grove Church where they want to put in 16 units is that it's a poor choice. It's a high crime area, it's a high traffic area, it's already saturated with public housing all over the place there. Like I said earlier, within five minutes you can run into close to 1,600 homes. There are better choices and it would take time and more money maybe to put them in better places and actually what I'm hoping that the Council will see is that there is plenty of room for change and there's no need to rush into this tonight or even within the next three months. The community would be glad to help get things done with the City Council's approval. So, that's it. I do appreciate the opportunity to let you know that we're behind Kenny and FFM (Freedom Fighting Missionaries), but there's a lot of room for improvement. Appreciate it.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. So, Emily Shaw?

Mr. Nesbitt said that's her.

Mayor Lyles said if you would state your name for the record please Ms. Shaw.



**Emily Wu, 7103 Preston Court** said it's Emily Wu. My husband put me in. My name is Emily Wu.

Mayor Lyles said can you spell Wu for us?

Ms. Wu said W-U.

Mayor Lyles said W-U, thank you.

Ms. Wu said I'm upset that Kenny pulled the project okay. Like all large cities, Charlotte needs affordable housing. We are in a crisis. The project at Grove Park Presbyterian Church and the Freedom Fighting Missionaries on the surface seems like a great idea. The Housing Authorities have done a great job on due diligence to approve it. The City Council is ready to approve it. However, this project is not only about affordable housing it is also about the need of getting citizens back to the life they should get. So, the City Council needs to see what is good for these families. All 16 families in one location are all out of prisons. It's not a great idea. We need to wrap our hands around these people and help them out. Let's disperse them within the City in SouthPark, in Ballantyne, in places where they can get good jobs not just minimum wage jobs, not as a restaurant server or whatever. We need to get them to the area where they can see that they can move forward, not just staying flat. There's a four-lane highway in front of the Grove Church, W.T. Harris. These families are expected to cross that highway to get to the grocery store, to get to the shops, to get to all these things. It's not safe for the children and I've seen lots of children crossing that highway. The closest place, the BP Station, the famous BP Station, it's known for drug dealers, panhandlers, aggressive panhandlers and also sorts of unsavory characters. Talk to our CMPD because every time they come to our community meeting, that's what they talk about, about these people. They put them in, it's a revolving door. They said they could not do anything about it. For low cost childcare, there's the Boys and Girls Club on Milton Road. However, the Director there graciously would tell you that they are so proud that they have third generations using that facility. We are not lifting them out of poverty. What are we doing wrong? So, ladies and gentleman, I need you all to be brave, to be heroes. Don't kill this project. Give them the money. Let's find a way to do it in a good way for the City. Thank you.

**Mary English-Tri, 6217 Grove Park Boulevard** said I'm Mary English-Tri. Good evening members of City Council. My name is in fact Mary English-Tri and I am a resident of Grove Park here to speak in support of funding the Freedom Fighting Missionaries for their affordable housing development. We purchased our home in Grove Park in 2013. Neither my husband nor I are native Charlotteans, and we were drawn to Charlotte, and particularly the Grove Park neighborhood because of its diversity. It was important to the two of us to choose to build our family amongst neighbors that represented the entire community of Charlotte. Our home is less than one mile from the Grove Presbyterian Church. While we do not attend the Grove Church, we have enjoyed the opportunity to gather in community there after the Fourth of July parade, participate in their baby music classes and see the support they provide to the community through their other services like the pay what you can farmer's market, monthly free meal and after school programs. In many ways, the Grove is doing the work that many churches wish they had the ability to support.

So, when I heard that they may be involved in supporting an affordable housing opportunity on their property, it came as no surprise. While they are not fully committed at this point, I hope that they as well as you Council members are not discouraged by some of my neighbors to not support this life changing opportunity for 16 families. I'd never heard of Freedom Fighting Missionaries until about two weeks ago when a post was made in my neighborhood Facebook group. I was excited for an opportunity to support affordable housing in my neighborhood, and I started looking into the nonprofit and was immediately intrigued and impressed. They are fighting to help stabilize those individuals that many people in society would prefer to overlook, ignore, and not afford a second chance, but not just individuals, families. While a relatively young nonprofit, they've been able to make impact in their short life and develop strong partnerships



that support their client's success. During the community meeting they hosted last Thursday, Kenny and his team at Freedom Fighting Missionaries were able to share about their typical clients as well as some specific client stories. Single moms with kids, they were trying to make sure are clothed, fed, bathed, housed, and educated without having a stable place to live. Kids we know as McKinney-Vento students.

This 16-unit development would potentially mean removing 32 students from that status allowing them the stability to better thrive in their school environments bolstered by the support of the programs at the Grove. While many of my neighbors have voiced concerns about safety or too much affordable housing in East Charlotte, I am not deterred from wanting to see all of our Charlotte neighbors housed and those with children thriving, and I enthusiastically support this partnership and funding opportunity so our community can support these new neighbors as we support each other. This is the type of beloved community I'm striving to be a part of by championing projects like this one. I ask that City Council support this funding opportunity for Freedom Fighting Missionaries and the 16 families they hope to assist in its initial development and the many more to benefit for the years to come. Thank you.

**Kate Murphy, 5735 East W. T. Harris Boulevard** said hi my name is Kate Murphy and I serve as the Pastor of the Grove Presbyterian Church. When doing the work of equity, there will always be strong opposition whether you're talking about reconstruction, civil rights, school desegregation or the work of combating our challenges of affordable housing in economic mobility here in Charlotte. Loud voices for the status quo will always show up to fight to preserve it. To be frank, the status quo approach for me in my role and in my life would be to avoid opportunities like this and yet what I'm called to do is stand with those who are marginalized in the face of injustice in the same way that you have been elected too. I would ask you to send a message that bullying to preserve the status quo is not what this Council will support even if it feels convenient right now, and by bullying, I mean as we heard tonight describing an affordable housing project as dumping. Like the people who would live there and their children are garbage. Like coming in a community meeting and interrupting speakers and saying, "If you build these houses I will bring a bulldozer and tear them down. I will not be a good neighbor if I see these children in the streets, I will call the cops on them." Freedom Fighting Missionaries temporarily redirecting funds for supportive services is empowering self-development, but the City Council's capitulating to a subset of voices spreading misinformation and threatening to call police on people just for trying to improve their lives, that would be tragic. Thank you.

**Bob Glusenkamp, 2200 McClintock Road** said my name is Bob Glusenkamp. I'm a member of the Grove Presbyterian Church. Thank you for identifying affordable housing as a major need in our City. We know all of our residents are safer and can flourish when returning citizens and criminal justice involved citizens have the support as they work to rebuild their lives post return. Freedom Fighting Missionaries is providing that critical support. This is a small 16-unit townhome project that propose public-private nonprofit faith-based partnership that seeks to partner with the City in supporting the stated goals of the Mayor and City Council, especially at a time when land is scarce and expensive. Rescinding the funding for this project sends the message to other nonprofits and churches in the City that the City will work against their efforts to provide affordable housing and discourage the kind of innovative and creative partnerships we need to create a community where all citizens can flourish. Most importantly, we'd lose the opportunity to house 16 families. These mothers and their children will have to continue to hide in shadows, live in their cars, hide in storage units, institutionally in shelters if they can find a place, or unstably every night in different places. Thank you.

**Chris Brown, 6301 Randy Drive** said I think we all have a lot more in common about this than a lot of the arguments and back and forth that went on last week as well as today. I think everybody in this room would agree that the most important thing for each of us is their family and from what I heard within this hour, the safety of their children. I don't agree with things being sprung up on you without a plan, a definitive plan with metrics backing that plan with information around if this happens then this will happen. I agree with Mr. Robinson's efforts. I think he's got a wonderful heart. He's a hell of a

salesman. He's really good at his job. I have a background in the same type of people he's trying to get housing for here. So, I get it, but I just can't sign off on not knowing who my neighbor is going to be. The plan for defining who will live here is not outlined. There has been no third-party measuring company hired. The church has not signed the agreement for the land overhead, nor has it gone to vote at the congregation. They can't tell me that a murderer won't be one of these people living here. I know that 90 percent of its target is women with children, and I have no problem with that, but it can't guarantee me that my child is going to be safe as she walks across the same land and go play in the playground. I need to be able to trust that she will be. I'm going to quote some things that I learned tonight. "If you don't feel safe in your neighborhood, if you don't feel safe, you're not safe," from Mr. Graham. "You cannot have a quality of life in the community where you live if you don't feel safe," Mr. Driggs. "We need a list of actions that we can take." I viewed this Mr. Bokhari as a risk-based approach that you're attempting to get. To identify the risks in order so you can best handle the [inaudible], which completely represents exactly what Ms. Mayfield represented. Even with the simple car analogy that you have. If you a car doesn't pull off the side of the road to make a risk-based approach with no information there. No accidents or people hurt by their action. Simple risk-based decisions, which we would not have the data to back up here, because this is the very first time that this type of project with this type of funding has been established within North Carolina. One of Mr. Robinson's points of order, primary points from last week, it's great, but on the flip side we don't know the answer to if something goes bad. We can't compare it to people that are just low-income housing. These are people with background in doing criminal activity and you can't guarantee me or tell me, "Here's the plan for who's going to be in here," and can we trust them or not. I don't think that's hard to ask. I don't think it's too much to ask who's going to be there.

**Maureen Gilewski, 7518 Linda Lake Drive** said thank you Mayor Lyles and thank you Council members. It's true that East Charlotte is the host of many affordable housing projects; however, over the past decade I've learned that supported affordable housing is preferred to unsupported. Our schools and businesses and subsequently the residents who live there are the most impacted by concentrations of poverty. As Council representatives, you should be willing to ensure the best outcomes, not just a data point of units approved. You should not ignore the health of the greater community impacted by the concentration of affordable housing. Imagine standing in front of a class of 30 students from underserved communities. You have to obtain scores and you have very few resources. You should not be dishing to the County Board of Education and Commissioners without a wide-eyed plan of intensive support required. Communities do not like surprises that are perceived as threats to their stability. A community meeting before an affordable housing project appears on a Council agenda is the best first step. Transparent community communication at the start is the best policy. I urge you to work on a policy that would change the lack of transparency we now have so the community and project stakeholders can work through the relationship. Please, do not leave communities on their own to right the unintended consequences your decisions leave behind. We have an army of volunteers, but we need your help. Our volunteers and teachers are burning out. I also urge you to collaborate with the county to be an ongoing supportive partner with financial and human resources. It's the only way we can have a win for the community and those needing housing. Thank you.

**Ashley Schreiber, 20220 Zion Avenue Cornelius** said hi. My name's Ashely Schreiber and I am formerly incarcerated. Early on in 2020 I was one of Freedom Fighting Missionaries first clients. I was released when COVID had shut down most of the world and I knew that I needed reentry services upon my release. I used Google as a tool to try to find someone who could help and everyone was shut down. Goodwill, all of the well-known reentry services, they were all shut down, but Kenny Robinson came to my sister's house, met me in his car, served me, asked me what I needed, helped me with everything along the way. I don't mean just right then. He has mentored me for the last three years. I came to a point when I wanted something more in my life than what I had. I was working a basic job in fast food and restaurants, and I decided to go to school for a peer support specialist and now in full circle, I am an employee. I was the sixth employee for Freedom Fighting Missionaries, and I now work with clients. I see on a regular basis the need for services for the minority population, for the Black and

Brown people how they are singled out. I am at an advantage. I had a place to go. The number one reason that people return to prison is because they don't have housing. That is the number one reason and people can come out and have support. They can do well. So, I'm just here standing strong and standing firm that this is a great idea and I ask that you support.

**Jennifer Vollmer, 1515 Noel Place** said hi, good evening. First, I want to say that I was really disappointed that we didn't even have a moment to remember Keith Lamont Scott this week. This is the anniversary of the Keith Lamont Scott Uprising in Charlotte, and we didn't acknowledge that. The second thing I want to talk about is this group of folks that are opposing this. As a White woman, I want to say that I was disappointed. The only people opposing this are White people in this neighborhood. I'm not saying there's no Black people. The majority and the loudest are the White people and that should be a red flag. That should be an indicator to us that it's probably a good thing and it's probably going to have a positive impact on people in the Black community. As somebody mentioned earlier, we have right now three mothers with children living in storage spaces. I have a half of dozen families living in cars. I'm glad we have some place to park the trucks, I wish we had some place for them to go that was safe. We have nowhere for people who live out of their cars to go. I'm just so upset and deeply ashamed that it's my own people that are doing this, that don't want the change, they don't want anybody different in their neighborhood. I had somebody in the lobby call Kenny an ex con supervising criminals. I had the man sitting behind me just a little while ago threaten to punch me in the head because I said that it was racist what they were saying. This is racism straight up. I felt like when I went to the community meeting we were at a Klan meeting with no hoods. Y'all support, please.

Mayor Lyles said alright. Thank you. So, we have a motion on the floor. Now it's open for the Council's discussion. I hope that you'll appreciate their courtesy for you and give them that same courtesy as they speak.

**Councilmember Molina** said thank you Madam Mayor. As many of the community members on the both side said, we had a meeting this past Thursday at New Waves of Joy Baptist Church who was gracious enough to share their space with us so that we can conduct this meeting. There was a large amount of passion in that room on both sides from community members. As the person that represents the East side, I think it's my job to listen to both sides and that's exactly what we did. I want to stress that first of all, Pastor Kate, I think she is a courageous woman of God and I think the people who attend church with you and serve God with you have a leader parallel to something that I haven't seen my entire time in Charlotte. So, I would love to just tell you congratulations on your courage, your commitment to God and His purpose for us on this planet and that you continue to fight that fight because it's an important one. There are humans that we serve, but for the seeing someone like you stand up and stand in the gap and be courageous, they wouldn't find that belief and know that God is real. That's not to offend anyone, but as a Christian woman I was very heartened the moment I heard her speak and just to continue to hear her outside and out front and be willing to not only stand behind a mission that is the first of its kind but then to put God first and say, "We're going to offer our space to be a part of the solution." That's courageous. I would love to see more spiritual communities and religious leaders do the exact same thing. We all have something to offer our community to make it a better place and I just can't speak highly enough. I think you're a courageous example.

I've had a lot of conversations with the community members and I want to let you all know that I hear you. Most importantly I think I'd be remiss without saying the most important conversation that I've had over this weekend is one with Kenny Robinson. I want to let my colleagues know, they were gracious enough to extend me more time to hold this community meeting and I've reported back to many of you individually to tell you the outcomes of that. So, I appreciate your support and allowing me to go to the community to gather information so that we can make a great decision. I just want to make sure that we're still clear, Kenny gave me a great example that awakened me because of course I don't work in this specific area of our community to provide resources for our community members but he said to me, he said, "Marjorie, I feel like

that it's dangerous for me to put the people I serve there and then someone weaponize the police against them." When he said that to me, it almost broke my heart because I hadn't even looked at it from that point before he said that to me. When he said that to me, he also gave me that he doesn't want to move forward specifically at the Grove Church for that reason. He said that we can still continue to identify places where he can still serve the population that he serves and he wanted to iterate to me that he's still going to be committed to the mission of service to our community members that have been formerly incarcerated. So, what I'm moving to do is to have us still provide that \$2 million in support to Freedom Fighting Missionaries, understanding that they do not wish to move forward specifically at the Grove Park Church. We've identified another particular place that they can actually pursue to provide that housing resource. I'm looking at you Kenny. Am I right? Am I representing your words correctly? Okay. So, conveying that information I just want to make sure that I'm specific in saying to the community members that are both for and against. This is something where you've been heard and the leader of Freedom Fighting Missionaries on his very own accord has decided that based on the people he serves and the needs and the delicacy of the people that he serves, that that particular spot is not where he'd like to move this mission forward. So, I feel comfortable asking my colleagues to join me in still providing that resource to him so that he can continue that mission. That he can financially support the wraparound services and that we can pursue another location to move forward for the housing portion of it as well.

We're good. I just wanted to be specific and speak on the record to say that that's what the leader, Kenny, has decided and I am asking my colleagues to support and move forward with supporting him financially so that he can continue his efforts in this mission.

**Councilmember Johnson** said so many of you know that I have an organization Triumph Services where we provide peer support services. So, I work in the behavioral industry. I have a niche for working with clients with brain injury which is very prevalent in homelessness and also incarceration. I also have a reentry house. I've been in the reentry industry since 2009 but in housing since 2013. I've worked with Kenny Robinson. I've called him for men who've come home from prison and he walks his talk. I'm so honored to support you. I'm honored to support you as a grassroots organization that I've been fighting for, for four years. I'm honored that you have a seat at the table. I'm honored to support you as a man with integrity, lived experience. So, to make this concession for the benefit of those you serve is very commendable. Not only do you have the leadership, but you have that lived experience that makes you extraordinary in the work that you do. So, I'm looking forward to supporting you. The supportive services piece is huge. It's huge for this population, it's huge for the organizations that do work in this industry because we know that we can call Kenny and he's going to come over. He's helped clients. Bring them coats, bring them underwear, get their ID, whatever it is they need because we take for granted some of the basic services that we have that someone coming home from prison is just not able to do. So, thank you for the work that you do. I applaud you and I'm honored to support you.

I think this is very important. Thank you, Pastor Kate, for the work and your courage. I just look forward to continuing to serve you. This is huge for us as a Council to support a grassroots organization. So, if you're making that shift for supportive services, that is equally important for this population. Mr. Jones, I've asked you numerous times, I want to say it again. I hope we can have a reentry simulation for the City staff and police officers, it's so important to give you a glimpse into what the challenges and the barriers that people face. For Kenny to say that 85 percent of those who are homeless on our streets have a criminal background, we know that there's a problem. As I said, this is the population I work with. I serve on the COC (Continuum of Care) and the Reentry Housing Alliance. So, the work he does is so important. He's serving those that are the hardest to serve. So, I just want to say again publicly, I'm honored to support this motion. If you're leadership and you want to make that concession for the supportive services, you know the work that you're going to do and the lives that you're going to touch. So, I look forward to supporting you. Thank you.

**Councilmember Graham** said I was quoted earlier and I stand by that quote but that quote resides in perception not reality, because [inaudible] and people are afraid of perception when the reality says something else. If we're going to do affordable housing in this community, we need to have a continuum of affordable housing for everybody and it shouldn't be redlined out of certain districts. We all are one community, we all have different circumstances and we all have the ability to live in our reality. The reality is that people need help, the reality is that Freedom Fighting Ministry has been providing help for people. The reality is I'm very supportive of this action item and supportive of the district rep and her comments. Charlotte has always been and will continue to be a welcoming City in all of its communities and the concession that he's making is an unfortunate one. He shouldn't have to, but that demonstrates a certain level of integrity and the willingness to focus on getting the job done and protecting those who he wants to serve. So, my hat is off to you for your willingness to do that. My hat is off to members of the community for being welcoming. Not everybody's drawing a line in the sand. There's others that spoke tonight saying that they welcome you and the service that you provide and the people that you're trying to help change their lives around. So, I just hope that when we talk about housing for the community that we're talking about those who need sheltered housing. We need SRO housing, single room occupancy housing, we need housing for people that are formerly incarcerated. We need a wide variety of housing throughout this City and working with an organization like FFM who can provide those resources to people and understand where they're at, but more importantly where they need to go and providing a hand along the way is really commendable, and if the City can provide a hand as well to ensure that we provide safe affordable housing for a group of population that needs a helping hand, then I'm willing to support yes for that. Thank you. Good luck.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said well what I wanted to say, it's sad. I do agree with Councilmember Graham that as a Council, we do need to seriously consider continuing affordable housing in all parts of our City. I certainly appreciate the work that many of our nonprofits do and I know some of our East side speakers said how you are an admirable leader and they admire the work that you do. I've seen you in action Kenny and I appreciate. I'll be supporting this. Just know that you have the support from the community and the Council to continue to support the most vulnerable members of our community.

**Councilmember Anderson** said I want to say that as we continue to try and be innovative and strategic about addressing our lack of housing stock that's more affordable, the opportunity to partner with faith-based organizations to utilize the land that they own to bring on more affordable housing in a variety of different forms is a great way for us to connect and from a public-private nonprofit perspective partner. This project actually could have been the beginnings of a rubric and a model for how we can get it right in one community connected with a well-established faith-based organization and then begin to replicate it as communities throughout the City of Charlotte see fit. So, I am somewhat disappointed in us because I think it was an opportunity to actually innovate in a way that we could've built upon over the next 12 to 24 months. I hope that Mr. Robinson is not discouraged by this pivot and hoping that potentially another faith-based organization could step up and connect and collaborate with the Freedom Fighting Missionaries the way that Grove Park was contending to do. I think there is a lot of goodness in getting this framework and model right so we could scale with partners like Kenny. So, I will of course be supporting this motion that Ms. Molina has brought onboard in hoping that we see good things from what Mr. Robinson stands up along with his organization so it can be a model for us in the near future.

**Councilmember Winston** said thank you. I wasn't happy a couple of weeks ago when we delayed this vote. I'm still not happy at this point in time but I'm appreciative because we have folks in our community that are willing to come out and speak their voice. There's value in that even if it's disgusting. These folks that came up here and talked today, they don't have time for us to go down your checklist. I started this meeting by reading a joint proclamation about suicide and these people that Mr. Robinson and Freedom Fighting Missionaries are trying to serve are on the edge. They're on the edge. They don't have time. You don't get to go to Zillow and see who your neighbors are and



get an account of who your neighbors are, get a realtor to find you a home. They can't tell you the background of your neighbors. It's ridiculous. Some of what I heard that was said at this meeting and some of the things that I heard tonight proved to me that the past is still the present in this City. Who are these people? Who are these people that you're afraid to live across the street from? These are folks who are in this room right now, yes, these folks are your bus drivers, they pick up your trash. One of those folks is going to be a City Council member sitting here in December 2023, and you're saying that you wouldn't want her to live by you? Now it's right in this country, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment does allow these folks to be discriminated against and it's disgusting. Something that we shouldn't perpetuate and it's not something that we have to stand for. Luckily the future is also the present where folks like Freedom Fighting Missionaries, Kenny Robinson and the folks in this gallery. We need to do this and we need to do this again and again and again and again. Those folks have jobs, those folks have support, but they get discriminated against when they try to find housing. It's simple as that. I hope we nip this in the bud. I hope this is successful. It is sad that we had a faith community that was willing to provide their land and provide a door, a seat at their table and that we have to find a different place that might not be as optimal for a community in need and we're just going to have to accept it. I guess that's what compromise is. I know Mr. Robinson will keep pushing. I know Freedom Fighting Missionaries and the community that surrounds them will keep pushing, I'll keep pushing and I hope this City Council keeps pushing. Thank you very much.

Mayor Lyles said okay. It is now time for the Council to make this decision.

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

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**ITEM NO. 17: AMEND RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS FOR PROPERTY ON STARWOOD AVENUE**

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt a resolution to amend the restrictive covenants on property located at 10742 Starwood Avenue (parcel identification numbers 105-271-74 and 105-271-75) to: Modify the type of permissible affordable units to include townhomes, Increase the required number of affordable units from one to two, Extend the timeframe for completion of development of the affordable units, and (B) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute all documents necessary to complete this transaction.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 628-629.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 18: ADOPT RESOLUTION ON REFUNDING ARENA CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION**

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Winston, and carried unanimously to (A) Adopt a resolution authorizing and approving the issuance of Refunding Arena Certificates of Participation Series 2003F and 2013G up to \$100,000,000, and calling for the execution and delivery of various documents necessary to complete the financing, and (B) Adopt Budget Ordinance 629-X appropriating \$100,000,000 in bond proceeds to the Tourism Debt Service Fund.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 66, at Page(s) 366.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 54, at Page(s) 630-634.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ITEM NO. 6: CLOSED SESSION (AS NECESSARY)**

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to consult with the City Attorney in the matter of Greeley v. City of Charlotte pursuant to North Carolina General Statute § 143.318.11 (a) (3).

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The Meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m. at the conclusion of the closed session.

  
Billie Tynes, Deputy City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 5 Hours, 38 Minutes  
Minutes completed: August 14, 2024