



Charlotte City Council
Jobs & Economic Development Committee
Summary
February 6, 2023

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

- I. ARPA Funding Recommendations Update
- II. Hornets Practice Facility Update

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present:	Malcolm Graham (CMGC), Ed Driggs (CMGC), Marjorie Molina (CMGC), and Victoria Watlington (Virtual)
Other Council Members Present:	Braxton Winston (CMGC)
Staff Resources:	Tracy Dodson, City Manager's Office Holly Eskridge, Economic Development Monica Holmes, Corridors of Opportunity Lilias Folks John, Economic Development Jason Lawrence, CATS Priya Sircar, City Manager's Office Christina Thigpen, Economic Development
Guests:	Sean Moran, Innovative Partnership Group
Meeting Duration:	2:00p.m.-3:45p.m.

MEETING MATERIALS

All meeting materials are available online at <https://charlottenc.legistar.com> or viewed online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=um_rXS9Q-ek

- 1) February 6, 2023 Agenda
- 2) Presentation: ARPA Funding Recommendations
- 3) Presentation: CTC Redevelopment and District Opportunities

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Committee Chair Malcolm Graham called the meeting to order, asked everyone to introduce themselves, and provided an overview of the agenda.

ARPA Funding Recommendations

HIRE Charlotte/Workforce Development Recommendations:

Christina Thigpen presented information on the HIRE Charlotte and workforce development efforts. A steering committee made up of over 25 community partners across the employment ecosystem have collaborated for the last year and a half on creating job opportunities and a strategic framework around workforce development. Christina highlighted that at the Housing and Jobs Summit reskilling and upskilling workers was a top priority for city council.

Committee Vice Chair Ed Driggs asked if the initiative was resource constrained and how will the program connect candidates to these services. Tracy Dodson commented that they could “do more with more” but wanted to track the success of the programs to better leverage these funds. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will be a partner and the workstreams were created to implement community outreach to ensure everyone has access.

Committee member Victoria Watlington commented that she was interested in the pipeline development piece, being aware of programs we already have but that many neighborhoods may not be aware of and being intentional in our outreach to citizens. She asked that as they are trying to impact economic mobility, they invest in student pathways and those groups that need particular attention like those reentering and single women. Christina Thigpen noted that the workstreams can take a deeper dive into those targeted audiences and have customized resources available to them. Ms. Watlington discussed ensuring that time and dollars are spent on apprenticeships; curriculum is delivering the market needs for jobs in our community; and the program focuses on the broader region. Staff commented that they are emulating Apprenticeship North Carolina that has been a very successful model. The Charlotte Alliance is involved on the steering team to bring the regional perspective.

Mayor Pro Tem Braxton Winston highlighted the need to expand our partnerships and leverage training programs to include apprenticeship and certification programs with the unions. He noted that he received feedback from employers and employees that people graduating from some of the trade programs are not getting certifications to make them employable to worksites in our area.

Committee members commented that as the conversations move forward, they would like to make sure the program is regional, there is clear metrics and focus on the outcomes, and that the program works with the union/trade organizations.

Small Business Recommendations:

Holly Eskridge presented information on the gaps in the small business ecosystem and what the data shows needs to be done to support our local small businesses, especially in the corridors. The recommendations are based on comments from the city council retreat and the city council’s priority of supporting small businesses, especially those that are ethnic minority owned small businesses. Recommendations included a DEI focused early-stage entrepreneurship accelerator pilot that would be open to MWSBE businesses that are Charlotte-based innovation-led entrepreneurs and development of an ecosystem strategy that brings solutions for small business support programming. The strategy development would include a comprehensive assessment of the ecosystem to increase equitable opportunities and help connect small businesses and entrepreneurs with resources that match their business needs.

Tracy Dodson commented about the success they have seen when collaborating with their partners to develop strategies. She noted that there is currently a lot of energy around supporting small businesses and that this is a great opportunity to pull together partners to determine any clear gaps.

Corridor Recommendations:

Monica Holmes discussed recommendations to support the work in the Corridors of Opportunity. She reminded the committee that in the first round of ARPA funding there was a hold for \$1.5M for Corridors of Opportunity arts and culture specific funding. The recommendations highlight how they propose spending the first \$700K.

The first recommendation is a grant program to support corridor-based organizations and small businesses, promote growth in the corridors, and provide workforce development services in the corridors. This continues the work already started and focuses on the support of minority owned businesses in the corridor. The second recommendation would focus on incorporating arts and culture into the corridors by working with the Charlotte Symphony to support a mobile symphony/stage and permanent creative workspaces that bring cultural opportunities and access within the corridors.

The third program highlights having artists in the corridors that could then work on collaborative projects and help refine themes. Priya Sircar discussed how this builds on the work being done to engage the community and integrated collaboration with the creatives.

Unanimous vote (Graham, Driggs, Molina and Watlington) to move the ARPA funding recommendations forward for full City Council review.

Hornets Practice Facility Update

Committee Chair Malcolm Graham noted that the Charlotte Transportation Center (CTC) is first and foremost a transportation project. He highlighted that the Transportation, Planning and Development council committee met that morning and discussed all the transportation related questions, and that this next topic was to discuss the economic development segment of the project.

Jason Lawrence gave an update on how they came to a recommendation on a design concept for CTC. Based on public comment this was the below grade concept. On January 31, 2023, the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) adopted this as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the proposed redevelopment. They will begin environmental review as part of the federal funding piece.

Tracy Dodson discussed “where we go from here.” She noted that this is a complicated project and that they are working towards a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) framework. The MOU is nonbinding and says we are in general agreement to move forward. It creates that path forward by allowing the city to move into the preliminary design work by locking in on MOU points and working towards the actual joint development agreement. Tracy noted that city council will continue to see information on the project as they move through the process.

Tracy Dodson presented information on how the CTC and a practice facility could work in an integrated entertainment district that has been part of the area plan since the 1990’s. Tracy noted that if the work is intentional, it could create a unique and special experience for the community.

Tracy introduced Sean Moran who presented information on generating a new revenue source through naming rights for a performance center and district. He discussed how to maximize revenue, bringing in

select partners and creating a commercial sales strategy. Tracy noted the need to be sure they are working with the city's partners and being strategic on how this all weaves together.

Mayor Pro Tem Winston commented that we need to understand the needs of a transit rider as we look at naming rights and exclusivity.

Committee Vice Chair Driggs discussed the unanimous vote by Transportation, Planning and Development Council Committee that instructed staff to keep moving forward. He highlighted that the developer would pay for the tower and that the numbers are related to the bus center. Mr. Driggs also noted that the city has a liability for \$60M because of the city's agreement with the Hornets, so this is not a new spending decision, and that city council will have an opportunity to vote for the final terms of the corporate sponsorship agreements.

Chairman Graham commented on how vehicle traffic will be introduced to this district and how this can be a walkable district. He noted the importance of branding, the corporations already in the district, and how they will interface with future opportunities within the district.

There was agreement by the committee to move the discussion forward.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:45 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2023.