CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
May 17, 2021
Virtual/electronic meeting via Zoom

4:00 PM WORK SESSION

Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3712, the Charlottesville City Council met in work session on Monday, May 17, 2021, to hear reports. The meeting was held electronically pursuant to a local ordinance amended and re-enacted on April 19, 2021, to ensure the continuity of government and prevent the spread of disease during the coronavirus State of Emergency.

Mayor Walker called to order at 4:01 p.m. and Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas called the roll, noting the following members present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Sena Magill, and Councilors Heather Hill, Michael Payne, and Lloyd Snook.

REPORTS

1. **Report: City monthly financial report**

Ryan Davidson, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, presented the monthly financial report for general revenue projections and expenditures.

2. **Report: Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA) update on Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP)**

John Sales, Executive Director of the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA) provided an update on the Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP), sharing data as of May 12, 2021, including:

A. 70 families enrolled in the CSRAP.
B. 68 families are receiving supplemental rental assistance payments.
C. 2 families currently within their 90-day search period within Charlottesville.
D. 0 families currently within their extended 90-day search period within City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County.
E. 36 of 68 families receiving supplemental assistance are living within the City of Charlottesville (57%).
F. 32 of 68 families receiving supplemental assistance are working within the City of Charlottesville and are living in Albemarle County (43%).
G. Waiting list for CSRAP: 122
H. No new families are being processed for eligibility for the CSRAP at this time due to the increase of CSRAP funds during the COVID-19 to ensure funding is available for the current participants.

I. July and August Annual Recertification letters have been mailed out.
J. 12-month Annual Spend to date: $719,136
K. Annual Funding Committed: $791,049.60

Mr. Sales advised that the City would need to add funds to help additional families or place time limits on assistance for the same households. He also advised there would need to be decisions made about fair housing rent. Some other items that he suggested keeping on the table were budgeting for rent increases and creating incentives or security deposit assistance around the CSRAP.

Councilors discussed remaining funds, meeting the needs of new families when existing recipients are still in need, and fair market rent. Mr. Sales recommended 125% fair market rent within city limits and 100% in Albemarle County.

Mayor Walker asked to amend the corresponding item on the 6:30 p.m. agenda.

3. **Youth Council presentation**

In partnership with the UVA Equity Center, Youth Nex Program, and Youth Participatory Action Lab, the Charlottesville City Youth Council embarked on a yearlong research project to understand the disparity of students who attended the Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) from 5th-8th Grade (e.g. Walker Upper Elementary and Buford Middle School) and those who attended private schools in the area (e.g. St. Anne's Belfield, Tandem Friends School, Village School, Field School, etc.). The students were taught the basics of conducting a research project by students and faculty the Youth Participatory Action Lab at UVA. During this time they decided to create a survey for their peers to ask about their choices and perceptions of middle schools in the Charlottesville area. They also conducted and coded interviews with School Board members, students, faculty, and staff at CCS about these same perceptions.

The results of the project led to discussions about the inequities that students who do not have the choice to attend private schools face and what the students have heard would be necessary to keep more students in the CCS system, especially with a new middle school on the horizon. The students surveyed around 75 current and former CCS students in a Google form survey. They also interviewed two staff members at Charlottesville High School, two School Board members, and two parents of Charlottesville City Schools students. Staff recommended continued support of Youth Council research.

Misty Graves, Deputy Director for Human Services, introduced the Charlottesville Youth Council on behalf of Daniel Fairley, II, Youth Opportunity Coordinator.

Dr. Kimalee Dickerson, post-doctoral researcher at the University of Virginia School of Innovation and Human Development and at the Equity Center, spoke about the Youth Action Lab work with the Charlottesville Youth Council. She advised that the goal of the lab is to teach local youth social science research skills so that they can use their research findings to improve the community and make it more equitable.

Kennedy Eagle, 4th year UVA student, introduced the Youth Council report.

Sabrina Hendrix, Senior Youth Council Member, advised that one of the findings of student research was that parents were taking their children out of Walker and Buford to place in private school, then sending them back to Charlottesville High School. The research demonstrated a lack of diversity in the private schools.

Caroline Jaffe, Junior Youth Council Member, shared information about research methods used such as a survey of high school students, interviews with a teacher, school board member and guidance counselor, and coding for themes and patterns. She shared public versus private school student responses to the survey, as well as the impact people choosing to go to public versus private middle schools. She also shared limitations of the research which included that most respondents were White and there was a limited sample size.

Margaret Anne Doran, Senior Youth Council Member, shared research conclusions:
- Charlottesville's public middle schools offer a comparative education to the area's private schools; however, parents are still sending their kids elsewhere based on a false reputation.
  • Students who remain in the public schools feel left behind; they wonder what they are missing, and eventually realize that they did not miss anything, and they are equally as prepared for life after graduation as their private school-attending peers
- This disparity or perceived bias has existed since the opening of Buford and Walker.
- Bias against Walker and Buford exists and is largely connected to systemic racism in Charlottesville.

She also shared recommendations:
- Support of Remaking Middle School's plan to reconfigure Charlottesville's middle schools
- Upgrades to Buford's physical building
- Rezoning elementary schools to be more reflective of the diversity of Charlottesville
- Dismantling housing segregation
- Reviewing the following article:
  https://www.cvilletomorrow.org/articles/vmdo-has-the-contract-to-design-a-reconfigured-buford-and-walker-but-why-are-the-schools-like-that-in-the-first-place/?utm_source=Charlottesville%20Tomorrow&utm_campaign=7d29d936a3-

Other Youth Council Members: Olivia Bowers, Olivia Burke, Eve Keesecker

Council commended the Youth Council for a comprehensive and direct report, recognizing the limited data set. They asked questions about prioritizing reconfiguration versus redistricting, and about impacts from the coronavirus pandemic.

Mayor Walker also commended the Youth Council and its partners for their work and for helping to make the community more just and equitable.

4. Food Equity Initiative update

Tamara Wright of Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network introduced the Mid-Year Report on Year 3 Charlottesville Food Equity Initiative. She advised that the organizational structure was changed to a shared leadership model.

Richard Morris, Cultivate Charlottesville Farm & Foodroots Executive Director, Jeanette Abi-Nader, Cultivate Charlottesville Advocacy and Systems Executive Director, and Ms. Wright made the presentation, noting the impacts of systemic racism on food access and insecurity.

City Council adopted the Food Equity Initiative for the first time in 2018, beginning a course of systemic efforts to reshape community health, wealth, and belonging through the food system. The presenters shared some high-level accomplishments and a list of community engagement efforts.

In Year 3 of the Food Equity Initiative, Cultivate Charlottesville's Food Justice Network recommended the following overarching strategic values, funding priorities, and concrete goals for City Departments to deepen their capacity for food equity:

• The Power to Grow: Advancing Affordable Housing and Urban Agriculture
• The Right to Good Food: Advancing Equitable Transportation and Neighborhood Food Access
• Inspire Youth Choice: Advancing Healthy School Food
• Food Equity & Justice: Advancing Systemic Change and Collective Movements
• Build Community Wealth: Advancing Neighborhood Food Access & Markets
• Restore Earth, Climate and Environmental Justice: Advancing Environmental and Climate Justice

In response to a question from Councilor Payne regarding securing land for use, Mr. Morris advised that they are looking for long-term investment for land development in the City of Charlottesville, and Ms. Abi-Nader advised that they would be meeting with the City departments to explore potential land availability for shared use and accessibility by all.

Vice Mayor Magill suggested the use of terraced gardens and Mayor Walker encouraged use of land within walking distance of residents to reduce transportation challenges.

In response to a question from Councilor Hill, Ms. Abi-Nader advised that the group would come back with a formal food equity request in the Fall to include with related city department budget requests for the FY22-23 City Budget.

The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

BY Order of City Council   BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council