



CHARLOTTE™

**City Council
Follow-Up Report**

February 5, 2014

January 27, 2014 – Citizen’s Forum

Boy Scouts of America

Rick Hurt, introduced members of the Boy Scout Troop who came with him to speak before City Council. Below are the questions the Boy Scouts posed and the City’s response, accordingly:

Desmond Woodburn (Boy Scout, Speaker #3)

Crime rates are high. Are there any systems in place to address murder crimes? If so, which systems work best and how do we control it [murder crimes]?

Staff Resource: Deputy Chief Vickie Foster, Police, 704-432-2427, vfoster@cmpd.org

Building a safe city is one of the biggest challenges that local government must meet. While no city will ever have as low a crime rate as it would like, I have been very pleased to see crime in Charlotte decrease by 34% since 2008. Crime decreased by 6% in 2013.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department works hard to reduce crime in all of our neighborhoods. Police are highly visible and work to build relationships with citizens so that they can be partners in making Charlotte as safe as possible. Police fight crime at the neighborhood level and each of our thirteen patrol divisions address the problems that are in their assigned areas. Police work closely with citizens to identify suspects. CMPD is also making increased use of technology such as cameras in some of our neighborhoods that experience violent crime. The cameras are like having additional eyes and ears for police in those parts of the city and help them identify and capture suspects.

Any large city will always have some areas that have more crime than others. Overall, Charlotte is a much safer city than it has been in the past. Unfortunately, most of what citizens see on the news is the violent crimes that occur. What citizens do not hear enough about are all of the neighborhoods that are becoming safer every year. In last year’s citizen survey regarding police service and citizen perception of safety, 87% of the people surveyed said they felt safe in their neighborhoods. That’s the highest rating we have had in years.

Mr. Woodburn had specifically asked about murders and what police are doing to reduce the number. There were 58 homicides in 2013. In some ways, homicide is a hard crime to target. The victim and the suspect almost always know one another. Most of the murders in Charlotte are family members or romantic partners killing one another; individuals who know one another, get into an argument and settle the dispute with a gun; and murders that result from armed robberies and/or drug deals. One of the most disturbing trends is the number of murders where both the victim and the suspect are between the ages of 18 and 25.

Police are doing a number of things to help reduce the number of homicides. Police aggressively investigate drug and gang activity to reduce the violence associated with it. They work to get illegal guns off the streets. They also work with victims of domestic violence to assist them in getting help before the violence escalates.

Perhaps the most significant way that police are addressing homicides is through programs in which they interact with young people to keep them from becoming involved in criminal activity. Police have a number of programs such as the Police Activities League where young people can interact with police and other strong role models to learn to make appropriate decisions and find interests that help them stay busy and out of trouble.

Police are aware that an arrest can follow a young person for the rest of his life and have developed a Juvenile Diversion Program under which a youth who has committed a first offense is not arrested but is referred to the diversion program. Counselors assess the needs of the youth and his family and get the youth involved in programs that give him the skills to make the right decisions and to become a productive young adult. The youth is monitored during his participation in the program with a goal that the youth will not commit any more criminal activity. Young people whose first offense is a violent crime are not eligible for diversion. Police believe that working with youth at a young age is the most effective way of reducing their opportunities and desire to become involved in criminal activity including using drugs and joining gangs.

Charlotte has much less crime than many cities of comparable size throughout the country. While Charlotte is becoming safer every year, community safety will always be one of this city's top priorities and biggest investments in our community.

Keon Regisford (Boy Scout, Speaker #4)

What deciding factors do you consider when determining which sidewalk projects to work on in which neighborhoods first?

Staff Resource: Phil Reiger, Transportation, 704-336-4896, preiger@charlottenc.gov

Requests for the City to build sidewalks are prioritized based on City Council's Sidewalk Retrofit Policy. The policy relies on specific prioritization criteria such as proximity to parks, schools, shopping, and transit, and traffic volumes. All thoroughfares in the city, where sidewalks have not been built before, have been evaluated and prioritized based on the above criteria.

Several new projects are selected each year for programming and construction, based on funding available. Sidewalks along thoroughfares are considered for programming before sidewalks on non-thoroughfares (that is, local or subdivision streets). Assuming current funding levels continue, the City of Charlotte can expect to complete sidewalks on all thoroughfares in approximately 20-25 years.

Theodore Johnson (Boy Scout, Speaker #5)

Are there any programs to help men at the Men's Homeless Shelter to get back into the workforce?

Staff Resource: Pam Wideman, Neighborhood & Business Services, 704-336-3488, pwideman@charlottenc.gov

City staff has contacted Mr. Carson Dean, Executive Director of the Men's Shelter Charlotte, and he has provided the following information about programs to help the men staying at the shelter transition back into the workforce:

At the Men's Shelter of Charlotte (MSC) staff provides services to help men address substance abuse and mental health issues including recovery and support. There are on-site social services provided by Mecklenburg County and nonprofit partner agencies. Men staying at the shelter can participate in self-improvement activities, Bible study, social activities and peer support groups. For men staying at the shelter and in need of employment income, the Men's Shelter has an Employment Specialist Case Manager to help them seek employment. The Employment Specialist is also working to engage employers who are willing conduct interviews with the individuals. The men can take GED classes and, through the MSC Housing and Employment Resource Center (HERC), they have access to a full computer lab for job searches and resume writing. Volunteers come to the MSC to help individuals complete on-line job applications. The MSC also has a partnership with Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont where the men can participate in career development services and employment skills training.

On behalf of the City Council, the Mayor will be sending a letter to each Boy Scout that includes the staff responses to each of their questions.

Water Fluoridation Program in Charlotte

Staff Resource: Barry Gullet, Utilities, 704-336-4931, bgullet@charlottenc.gov

Phillip Alexander, asked about fluoride in the City's water supply. Mayor Pro Tem Barnes asked if the City is exceeding the necessary amounts of fluoride.

Attached is a copy of the report from Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities Department (CMUD) that appeared in the January 24th Manager's memo. A copy of this report has been mailed to Mr. Alexander.



Floride Jan2014.pdf

Funding Request for Program in Hoskins Community

Staff Resource: Katie McCoy, Budget & Evaluation, 704-336-5017, kdmccoy@charlottenc.gov

Pastor Brenda Stevenson requested funding for an after school program and senior center for the Hoskins Community.

Following a recent telephone conversation with Pastor Stevenson, Budget and Evaluation staff has confirmed that Pastor Stevenson asked about funding to construct an expanded facility for after school and senior care at the Hoskins Community Center. As a point of clarification, Pastor Stevenson is not requesting programmatic funding; she is requesting construction dollars to expand the facility, which would then serve after school and senior care services. Staff has provided Pastor Stevenson with the following resources and contacts related to after school and senior care funding at the City and County:

City of Charlotte After School Funding Contacts

- Neighborhood Matching Grants: Atalie Zimmerman, azimmerman@ci.charlotte.nc.us, (704)336-4594
- Out of School (competitive Request for Proposal process for programmatic funding): Dawn Hill, dmhill@ci.charlotte.nc.us, (704)336-4445.

Mecklenburg County Senior Care Funding Contact

- Community Service Grants: Tiffany Waddell, Tiffany.Waddell@mecklenburgcountync.gov, (704)432-3062.