

# Safe Communities Committee

October 13, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.

The public and the media can view the meeting on the [Government Channel](#), the [City's Facebook page](#) or on the [City's YouTube page](#)

**Committee Members:** Larken Egleston, Chair  
James Mitchell, Vice Chair  
Dimple Ajmera  
Renee Johnson  
Victoria Watlington

**Staff Resource:** Marcus Jones, City Manager

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## AGENDA

### I. Overview of Agenda

*Staff Resource: Marcus Jones, City Manager*

### II. SAFE Charlotte Overview

*Staff Resource: Marcus Jones, City Manager*

- Provide overview on SAFE Charlotte components

### III. Feedback on Safe Communities Plan from Community Input Group

*Staff Resource: Federico Rios, Office of Equity, Mobility and Immigrant Integration*

- Feedback from the group on SAFE Charlotte recommendations

### IV. Discussion of Next Steps

*Staff Resource: Marcus Jones, City Manager*

- Outline next steps for SAFE Charlotte
- Confirm planned items for review at next meeting

**Next Meeting:** November 10, 2020 at noon

*Upcoming topics:*

- Review of SAFE Charlotte progress

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# Safe Communities Committee's Community Input Group Meeting

October 8, 2020 | 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Zoom Virtual Meeting

**Attendees:** Federico Rios, Denada Jackson, Emily Yaffe, Milena Price, Tonya Jameson, Rev. Christy Snow, Robert Dawkins, Rodney McGill, Cindy Decker, Corine Mack, Vicki Foster, Kass Ottley, Dr. Britney Broyhill, Don Thomas

**Facilitator:** Federico Rios

**Welcome & Agenda Review** – Federico Rios

**Introduction of group members:** Name and Title

**Review of City Manager's Presentation** – Federico shared the City Manager's presentation from Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Presentation Input** –

1. Rodney McGill –

- Good things, proposals and recommendations in this presentation.
- 5 years from now we must make sure we didn't just provide recommendations. Things can't look the same.
- Should there be an office that tracks the success of all programs?
- We can't wait for another shooting or another riot. I will not be part of it. We have an opportunity to set a standard.
- City Manager has offered money, but we need a process to track, otherwise we are just throwing money.
- The community, government, funders should be responsible for the success of programs.

2. Robert Dawkins –

- Violence dashboard is being created to track violence. The Office of Violence Prevention will track programs of the city and county. Public will be able to see it and reports will be provided weekly. County is in the process of hiring a fulltime manager for this office.
- Office of Violence Prevention has been created. County is working on hiring a manager for this office. Violence dashboard will provide public health data; city, county and state data.

3. Don Thomas –
  - Are we part of an accountability framework that allows everyone in this space to have some type of accountability so we're not having this conversation in 3 years? Is there a way to institutionalize it?
4. Corine Mack –
  - Even with the work the county is doing right now there has to be a level of accountability. Our leadership chooses people they are comfortable with not so much people who are going to best serve the communities who are disenfranchised. I was hoping this group would have some input or an opportunity to weigh in on any person chosen. There must be a holistic approach on how they do this work. You can't look at someone's resume or personal relationship. Sometimes people get happy when there's money on the table and a lot of times how they started with this work changes when there's money involved. We don't have time to make mistakes another 3-5 years.
5. Rev. Christy Snow –
  - When they talked about the million dollars and allocation, they discussed this money possibly going to non-profits and for profits and they are open to input. It's important to be clear what type of input we would like to give around that.
6. Cindy Decker –
  - Question: is there a way for people from this group to connect with the county is doing or are these going to be two separate entities? How do we keep all the information in a place where we all can access it?
  - There's a missing piece where the city and county are too busy and don't connect. I think more collaboration when it comes to this work is important.
7. Robert Dawkins–
  - Responding to Cindy: it's two separate line streams and one effort to affect Charlotte. Everything done feeds into the dashboard.
8. Federico –
  - Responding to Cindy: the county owns it, but we work in collaboration with them. What I hear you say is how can this group inform that process? **First step can be reconvening this group to hear about the work that the county is doing.**
9. Tonya Jameson–
  - Curious to see how the council acts upon this when they vote in a couple of weeks.
10. Kass Ottley–
  - I'm excited about the recommendations. I really want to see what will be put into motion and it how will it be monitored. Will it be short or long term? Wanting to see the fruit of our work and what it looks like.

11. Denada Jackson –

- Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> when this goes out people will have the opportunity to speak to the clerk's office and sign up to comment on the Safe Charlotte recommendations.
- How to sign up to speak on "Safe Charlotte" recommendations. Let folks know to start signing after Oct. 13. They can sign up until Oct. 26 (9am). They will speak on Oct. 26 around 6:00 p.m. <https://charlottenc.gov/CityClerk/Pages/Speak.aspx>

**Feedback:** What went well; what didn't go well; how would you like to be interacted with in the future?

1. Tonya Jameson–

- Switching breakout groups to the first part of the meetings was the best move we did.
- Meeting in person will help with technology and people being completely engaged.
- Email is the best way to stay in touch. Getting periodic updates from the OEMII team. Occasional reminders of when the Safe Communities Committee meets.
- Is there value for this group to plug into the intergovernmental Relations Committee? (Federico and Denada will have conversations and push this forward)

2. Denada Jackson –

- Safe Communities Committee will meet monthly starting November.

3. Dr. Britney Broyhill –

- Giving an extra week was helpful to understand and review when giving recommendations.
- It was hard not knowing what was being presented to the committee. In small groups we have different opinions, so it felt like if you had opposing opinion it wasn't presented that way. So maybe a full picture wasn't being presented to the committee.
- Quarterly updates are great, so we feel the work is ongoing and give feedback.

4. Vickie Foster –

- It was hard not knowing what the other group recommended. It would have been nice to have ten minutes to share what the small group came up with.
- Maybe we look at who presents, or everyone agrees on who presents. It would be good to know what is being presented and why.

5. Tonya Jameson –

- It is important to get Federico all forms complete and on time. This is another opportunity to get your point across.

6. Robert Dawkins –

- Can we have a total list of everything that was presented?

7. Kass Ottley –

- Changing the schedule around was good.

- The technology and being able to log in was difficult sometimes.
- I would like to be involved and receive updates so we can continue to do this work.

8. Christy Snow –

- Quarterly emails and meetings work well.

**Closing remarks:**

- Thank you!

# FROM THE DESK OF

Rev. Dr. Peter M. Wherry

The Honorable Viola A. Lyles, Mayor, City of Charlotte and Council  
600 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

Dear Mayor Lyles and Honorable members of the Safe Communities Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to serve for these past several weeks on the Community Input Group sub-committee of Council's Safe Communities Committee. I consider it a great honor to have worked with such brilliant and dedicated City staff and C.I.G. colleagues. I am aware of and grateful for the enlightened approach our city has taken toward the reimagining of policing in Charlotte. I am most impressed with the understanding among our City Council, Manager and Chief of Police, that doing such work involves much more than simply moving money around and firing some people. I have listened attentively to the Open Session of Council from October 5 and, as a citizen of Charlotte, I am proud of the Plan articulated in the Manager's PowerPoint. What follows is my request, as a member of Breakout Group 4, that you not foreclose on some items which I heard were not going to make it into the initial Plan to be voted on during the Council session on October 26

Most police are dedicated public servants and so I want Charlotte's professionals to be the most respected and competitively compensated in America. I do concur with Mr. Driggs' observation that it is important to communicate to Police Officers, a sense of our appreciation and value for them, but my reason for concurring must be seen through the lens of a Black man of a certain age, who has experienced here in Charlotte, mistreatment by an Officer in CMPD. More importantly, I concur with Mr. Driggs because, as he is probably already aware, there is an inverse correlation between the level and sense of appreciation felt by Officers and their propensity to engage in excessive violence in performance of their duties.<sup>1</sup> I believe Mr. Bokhari's ideas about Charlotte becoming a police employer of choice were innovative and powerful. I fully support such improvements. I only ask that as we consider these necessary things, the focus also remain on the wonderful and comprehensive presentation made by Mr. Jones. The problems of policing in America and, especially in Charlotte, are not one-dimensional.

I further ask that this process, as positive as it has already been, not be tainted by a false equivalence which elevates incentives for police, to the same level of urgency as the pain of Black people and others of color, which has occasioned the angst and aggression in our streets. I will confess that my own psychic pain and sense of righteous anger nearly dissuaded me from accepting the opportunity of service on the C.I.G. The closely consecutive murders of

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<sup>1</sup> ***"The Force of Fear: Police stereotype threat, Self-Legitimacy, and Support for Excessive Force"*** by Trinkner R, Kerrison EM, Goff PA Law and human behavior 2019 10; 43(5):421-435.

See Also

***"Measuring Police Officer and Citizen Satisfaction,"*** by Nancy Bouranta, Yannis Siskos, Nikos Tsotsolas, Piraeus, Greece: University of Piraeus, Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management Vol. 38 No. 4, 2015, pp. 705-721.

- Harold Easter (January 26, 2020)
- Ahmaud Arbery (February 23, 2020)
- Breonna Taylor (March 13, 2020) and
- George Floyd (May 25, 2020)

drove me and it is now clear, the rest of the country, into a very dire place. As a Practical Theologian I have, nonetheless, learned over the years to pay close attention to the *zeitgeist* (the spirit of the times). The blood of these four Black citizens and others, cried out to me from the ground that there may be no more fruitful time than now in our city, and hopefully in our country, to creatively and aggressively pursue substantive and operational change in the way Black life is treated. One cannot force anyone to *value* Black life, but one can certainly better manage the feral, malign and ignorant impulses of violence against Black life by some people in power in our country, including the broader culture of policing in America. You, our City Council, Manager and Chief, have clearly demonstrated that you are serious about these aims of equity and peace. I am proud of the work you have already done. All my work on the C.I.G. and on Breakout Group 4, has been focused on these same aims. Because hopefully, our recommendations are all fairly clear as written, I will strategically highlight only a few.

We encourage Council to give full-throated endorsement to Breakout Group 4's recommendation requiring all future CMPD recruits live within the City of Charlotte or Mecklenburg County. As in any city, Charlotte has its own very distinct community history and culture differentiating it from bedroom communities all around us. Officers living immersed in Charlotte's unique culture will have fewer opportunities to succumb to "suburban bias" (Which at times may be class-based as well as cultural; aka "racial"). These same Officers will also approach their duties each day with a more concrete stake in the community they serve. As many incentives as are feasible should be extended.

This zeal for dismantling primal systemic violence against Black and Brown people (as well as those allied with them) will account for some recommendations made in Breakout Group 4's work which may on their face seem infeasible (ex. Attaching money damages from Civil Lawsuits, or even firing actions, to Officer pensions at the end of our document on Passive Protests and Peaceful Demonstrations). We heard the City Attorney report that pensions may not be attached. Noted. The point, however, is that for too long, there have been *no meaningful* sanctions personally levied against Officers who mistreat and murder people. The time for finding a monetary sanction has come. Jesus made clear that where [one's] treasure is, there will [their] heart be also (Matthew 6:21). We urge you to go further than we could and, Qualified Immunity, notwithstanding, craft some mechanism whereby offending Officers who are bad actors are held more personally accountable than they have or ever will be under the current regime of law. I am sure you are all painfully aware that the optics of Officers involved in the death of Harold Easter, for example, being allowed to resign, rather than face any judicial action for allowing a human being to die, are horrible. Although Mr. Merriweather, due to the facts of the case, saw no pathway toward building a successful prosecution, in a day like this, other factors should be considered. The point is, the decision to terminate the Officers and the District Attorney's stated conclusion citing "**...an object failure of operating procedure and general standards of custodial care**" should at least have been grounds for some financial sanction personally against Officers cited for termination or even administrative sanction, in-house in such cases. Our discussion concluded that such officers may display more careful regard for life, even Black life, if they are certain to face *some* financial liability, since no legal liability is likely in the near future.

We concluded that the time has come for the entire posture and purpose of CMPD at protests to evolve. In addition to abandoning use of chemical agents, et al., (BTW: we still advocate discontinuing pepper spray. Keeping pepper spray and discontinuing teargas to a person on the receiving end, is a distinction without a difference), our conclusion is that the reason for police presence at protests should

be to ensure that the constitutionally guaranteed right of protest is protected, especially from outside forces intent on creating disruption and violence. We even went so far as to envision Officers also riding or walking alongside protesters instead of menacing them with SWAT-clad Officers or bicycle lines obstructing movement. We have been gratified to see some movement toward this in recent street actions and, by the way, the new uniforms are exciting. Our work makes allowances for dealing with the unlawful behavior by select individuals, so we hope these recommendations are useable. Somewhat new features of this strategy are mandating that every protest organizer provide their own clearly marked "Observers" and that as a matter of course, the Ordinance be revised to require protests take place in the street as a backstop against damage to public or private property.

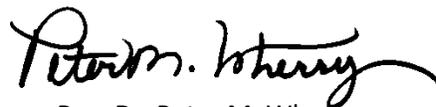
Our discussions revealed a consensus that in areas where Inter-Agency cooperation is required to implement a suggestion of the C.I.G., at least a public affirmation of the sense of the Council should be declared (ex. Qualified Immunity) or reiterated (ex. Subpoena Power for the CRB). We advocate collaborating with State Legislators and the D.A. to amend the rules of Criminal Procedure providing an exemption for legitimately qualified felons from Probation mandates which require the admission of guilt. This practice exacerbates the already disparate impacts of incarceration Black people. These declarations by Council ought to be followed by persistent, methodical action to eventually effectuate the change endorsed.

It was exciting to see Council, the Manager and the Chief in agreement on an expanded role for the CPCRT. Group 4 also discussed as did Mayor *pro tem* Eiselt, the advantage of CAHOOT having its own, readily recognizable, and I will add, "Non- 5-0"-looking vehicles as possibly a good model for our newly re-imagined CPCRT.

Finally, Group 4 has done our best to be collaborative, open-minded, direct, and honest brokers in this process. We have articulated, as best we could, our concern that the changes you will make in the wake of our work, will not be "tinkering around the edges," or "rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic," but will be substantive, thoroughgoing realignments of resources, Public Policy and power. For this reason, we are supportive of most changes recommended from other Breakout Groups, particularly those which were discussed plenary. I personally am greatly encouraged by the work Council, the Manager and the Chief of Police have already done to this end.

Thank you all for this privilege of serving our phenomenal community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter M. Wherry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rev. Dr. Peter M. Wherry  
C.I.G. Breakout Group 4

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# SAFE Charlotte

**Safety and Accountability for Everyone**

**OCTOBER 13, 2020**

# Community Led Change - Community Input Group

**Geoff Alpert**, *University of South Carolina, Criminology Professor*

**Trevor Allen**, *NC Department of Justice Director*

**Michael Barnes**, *Attorney and Former Mayor Pro Tem*

**Dr. Britney Broyhill**, *Atrium Health Senior Director of Advanced Practice*

**Meko Chosen**, *Activist*

**Robert Dawkins**, *Safe Coalition State Organizer*

**Cindy Decker**, *CMPD Bridge the Difference*

**Vicki Foster**, *Former CMPD Assistant Chief*

**Cherie Grant**, *City of Charlotte Economic Development, Corridors of Opportunity Coordinator*

**Denada Jackson**, *City of Charlotte, Office of Constituent Service Manager*

**Tonya Jameson**, *Citizen Review Board, Acting Chair*

**Fatina Lorick**, *McAddo Lorick, Attorneys at Law*

**Corine Mack**, *NAACP Charlotte-Mecklenburg Chapter President*

**Rodney McGill**, *Community Unity Center 100 Founder*

**Ryan McGill**, *Civil Service Board, Chair*

**Larry Mims** (NoLimit Larry), *WPEG Power 98 Radio Personality*

**Kass Ottley**, *Seeking Justice CLT Founder*

**Milena Price**, *City of Charlotte Office of Equity Administrative Officer*

**Federico Rios**, *City of Charlotte Office of Equity, Mobility and Immigrant Integration Assistant Director*

**Don Thomas**, *My Brother's Keeper Charlotte Mecklenburg Executive Director*

**Dr. Michael Turner**, *UNC Charlotte Professor*

**Rev. Peter Wherry**, *Mayfield Memorial Baptist Pastor*

**Lacey Williams**, *City of Charlotte Office of Equity, Economic Mobility Manager*

**Emily Yaffe**, *City of Charlotte Office of Equity, Immigrant Integration Specialist*

# SAFE Charlotte Timeline

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Recommendations at Strategy Session	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> C.I.G Meeting to review	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Overview at Council Business Meeting	<b>We are Here</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Report Issued	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Public Comment, Council Action	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>