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HJC Policy and Poli. Ed Newsletter - 8/20/21

1 message

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Fri, Aug 20, 2021 at 4:10 PM

To: Housing Rights Education Group <housing-rights-education-group@googlegroups.com>

Hello All,

[Delta variant cases are surging across the Southeast](#) and as of yesterday, the Charlotte Mecklenburg County Government announced that it would be closed to the public due to this rising cases within the County. A couple of weeks ago the City Council and the Board of County Commissioners seemed poised to return fully to in-person public meetings but now, it seems that will be delayed as Mayor Vi Lyles issues a mask mandate for the city of Charlotte and the Board of County Commissioners approves a mask mandate for the county. Many of the government meetings have already switched to live broadcasts on Facebook and YouTube so it's unlikely things will change very much in terms of how the format of public debate will work. We are likely looking at more Zooms and less in-person interactions which does not bode well for folks who already had issues with access to the technology for Zoom.

As far as how this will affect housing policy is unclear, the CDC moratorium is still in effect here in Mecklenburg County until October 3rd. However, evictions are still being filed with many landlords continuing to find loopholes where they can try to "enforce the lease." Landlords are putting immense pressure on the Biden Administration to roll the protection back with lawsuits being filed all over the country. It seems like there is absolutely no appetite on the part of the Administration or Congress to provide any sort of rent relief that can pay back delinquent balances.

For our situation in Mecklenburg County, the County is still having issues accessing the funds from the state to be distributed. The only County Commissioner who has reached out to us about this since we inquired about RAMP funds has been Commissioner Leigh Altman and she's seeking guidance from staff. It's notable to mention that when asked about state funding specifically in our correspondence she ignored the question until the question was asked on a third email (you know what they say - third time's a charm!). The state of North Carolina has been abysmal about their handling of this issue and there's been no clear answers as to why there is a bottleneck at the state level. We hope to find out very soon what the hold up has been.

Community Updates

- Howie Acres will be celebrating 75 years as a community on **Saturday, August 28th from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Howie Acres Park (4200 Redwood Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28205)**. We will be there with resources for housing as well as a survey for CBAs.
- On **Tuesday, August 24th at 7:00 PM**, the chair of the HJC Political Education Committee, Ismaail Qaiyim, will be part of a conversation hosted by the Levin Museum entitled *What is it Going to Take?: Housing and City Planning*. You can find the link to register for this discussion [here](#). The event description is as follows: *The Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides a roadmap for the city that will guide development and investment over the next two decades. This roadmap is long overdue since Charlotte's last comprehensive plan was in 1975, but it has stirred debate about gentrification, affordable housing, and the impact of city development policy on various communities.*

Join us for a conversation hosted by Mary Newsom, with UNC Charlotte Urban Institute's Angelique Gaines and Ely Portillo alongside Ismaail Qaiyim (Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition, Housing Justice Coalition), as we explore the history of urban renewal and various policy decisions that predate the 2040 plan and what we need to do to avoid making similar mistakes.

The Week of 8/9-8/13/2021

Monday, August 9th - Charlotte City Council Regular Business Meeting

Full Agenda [Here](#)

Full Video of Meeting [Here](#)

- Two notable items in this Charlotte City Council meeting:
 - 1) The City voted unanimously for a newly defined "protected class" that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, veteran status, familial status and natural hairstyle as identity markers for which a person cannot be discriminated against by law. City Council also changed the City's nondiscrimination ordinance (NDO) to add protections against discrimination in employment. The new NDO goes into effect on January 1st, 2022.
 - 2) The Charlotte City Council created the Charlotte Neighborhood Equity and STabilization Commission (Charlotte's NEST) and the Charlotte Equitable Development Commission. During the meeting, Councilmembers Dimple Ajmera, Malcolm Graham and Victoria Watlington all emphasized the Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition (CBC) as being part of these commissions. Mayor Vi Lyles said that she had been in dialogue with members of the CBC and liked to see their inclusion as well and recommended that all councilmembers push the commissions to their constituents so they could recruit members to the commission's prior to the deadline of Friday, August 13th.
- After the Charlotte City Council meeting on August 9th, it was revealed that the City has decided to extend the deadline for the Charlotte's NEST and Charlotte Equitable Development Commission to **Friday, August 27th**. This was due, according to this Observer article, to the low amount of applications received.

If you'd like to apply to one of these two commissions, please click on 'Apply for a Board' at the launch page [here](#).

These commissions are vital for continuing the work of the CBC and ensuring that the implementation of the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan includes voices that are accountable to their communities rather than those accountable to private partners.

There was no Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners meeting for the week of 8/9-8/13/21

The Week of 8/16-8/20/2021

City Council Great Neighborhoods Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 18th

Full Agenda [Here](#)

Full Video of Meeting [Here](#)

- Emily Kunze from the City Manager's Office gave an update from the Legacy Commission about the renaming of Jefferson Davis Street. You can view Ms. Kunze's presentation [here](#). Said that commission has started with Jefferson Davis and Phifer Avenue.
- The presentation went over the outreach and engagement with members of the community near Jefferson Davis Street. Residents who were able were given choices to vote on new street names. The top vote getter was Druid Hills Way. There will be a public unveiling on September 25th. Phifer Avenue will be updated during redevelopment of Hal Marshall County Center and the name that has been picked at this time has been Montford Point Street.
- The next streets to engage community members are Aycock Lane, Jackson Avenue, Zebulon Avenue, Hill Street and Morrison Avenue.
- Councilmember Julie Eiselt asked Ms. Kunze about the naming process and how names are decided. Ms. Kunze said that streets named after people are to be named for people who contribute to diversity and inclusion in the City, the individuals must have been deceased and a historian is checking names for accuracy of historical significance. Councilmember Tariq Bokhari said that has a committee they never got around to nailing down the process for naming streets but doesn't think there has been any missteps as of yet. Doesn't think that street names should be named after people. Said needs consensus of the body to make that decision.
- Head of Housing and Neighborhood Services Pamela Wideman gave a presentation on the naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) rental subsidies. The presentation can be found [here](#). City has a pilot program with Lake Mist Apartments and wants to broaden the program.

- Said that rental subsidies for NOAH units would be able to make up the gap for housing choice vouchers (HCVs). Goal is to add more households making under 30% AMIs to rental subsidy programs.
- Councilmember Eiselt asked about the cap for the development incentive to utilize the NOAH subsidies.
- Councilmember Bokhari asked about use of data in outcomes, talked about further expanding in partnerships and said that the committee should be looking at a for-profit model for how private businesses can get involved. Said that the Workforce Development should be involved.
- Councilmember Eiselt made a motion to place NOAH rental subsidy before the full Council. It was seconded by Councilmember Watlington and voted forward unanimously.
- Ms. Wideman made a presentation about rental subsidies being required to be used by city supported housing. The presentation can be found [here](#). This presentation is based on the source of income discrimination (SOID) discussions. The goal of the policy is to make sure that city supported developments do not discriminate on the source of income of potential renters. Any developer accepting city funds who discriminates on the source of income will be deemed in violation.
- Councilmember Malcolm Graham asked why the City could not enforce this on certain tax increment grants (TIG). Ms. Wideman said that this was due to the TIGs not having affordable housing tied into many of the TIGs. Councilmember Eiselt asked about leveraging TIG for affordable housing. Per Zoning, the City cannot tie TIG to housing requirements but can use it as leverage in negotiations for TIG infrastructure.
- Ms. Wideman said they would like the Committee to recommend this policy to full Council. Councilmember Eiselt made the motion to move forward, Councilmember Graham seconded it and the full Committee with the exception of Councilmember Bokhari (in absentia at time of vote) moved it forward to full council.

There was no Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners Meeting for the week of 8/16-8/20/21.

In The News

- [Charlotte's rapid growth raises thorny issues. Two new groups plan to tackle them - Charlotte Observer, 8/15/21](#)
- [Corporate landlords are gobbling up Charlotte's affordable homes and there's little the city can do to stop them - WCNC, 8/12/21](#)
- [Census: Mecklenburg Co. population increasing, real estate agent shares how housing market is shifting - WBTV, 8/15/21](#)
- [South End neighbors forced to move out as new development moves in - WCNC, 8/12/21](#)
- [How Charlotte's light rail sped up a 'takeover' of historically Black neighborhoods - Charlotte Observer, 8/20/21](#)

Back to Class (Political Education)

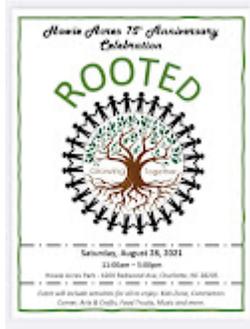
The Sand Island Story (1981) - Directed by Victoria Keith

Recently, HBO's *The White Lotus* ended its [critically acclaimed](#) six episode run. The show follows three suites of wealthy mainlanders as they interact with hotel staff of the titular Hawaiian resort. The show explores privilege, power, imperialism and class tension through satire and shows the underlying contradictions at the heart of expensive all-inclusive resorts. While the show offers a small window into the Hawaiian perspective, it's not the show's main concern. In Victoria Keith's mini-documentary, *The Sand Island Story*, she documents a Hawaiian community struggling to maintain their homes which is being assailed by the state government with aims of placing a state park on their land. *The Sand Island Story* draws a line from the initial American colonization of the Hawaiian islands up to the time of the documentary and how American tourism has played a large role in displacing native Hawaiians and getting them as far away from the shoreline as possible. Community members organize, plan and strategize how to beat back the Hawaiian government and the tourism interests that are attempting to take their land. A great standalone work that should complement any viewing of *The White Lotus*.

2 attachments



What is it going to take - Housing & Planning, 900x600.png
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