

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Regular Meeting

January 11, 2022

The one-hundred and fifteenth meeting of the City Council of Charleston was held this date convening at 5:02 p.m. at City Hall and over video conference call (Zoom).

A notice of this meeting and an agenda were made available on the City's website January 5, 2022 and appeared in the Post and Courier on January 10, 2022.

PRESENT (12)

The Honorable John J. Tecklenburg, Mayor

Councilmember Shealy	District 2	Councilmember Waring	District 7
Councilmember Sakran	District 3	Councilmember Seekings	District 8
Councilmember Mitchell	District 4	Councilmember Shahid	District 9
Councilmember Brady	District 5	Councilmember Griffin	District 10
Councilmember Gregorie	District 6	Councilmember Appel	District 11
		Councilmember Jackson	District 12

Mayor Tecklenburg called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

The Clerk called the roll.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now, if you would like to join us, Councilmember Sakran will lead us in an invocation and Pledge of Allegiance."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Thank you, Mayor. I think this invocation is timely and relevant given tonight's agenda and the fact we are welcoming two new Councilmembers."

Councilmember Sakran opened the meeting with an [invocation](#).

Councilmember Sakran then led City Council in the [Pledge of Allegiance](#).

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Alright. So, if I may let everyone know, in the most unlikely event that we would need to evacuate the building, we've got these two doors here out of the main Chamber, and then there is one door out of the room to my right. Then there is just the two stairways going down to the first floor and the one stairway going out the front of the building. So, if that were to occur, please don't use the elevator, and just use the two stairways and the one stairway. It's very unlikely, but I just want everybody to know those are our options.

So, we're going to go right ahead and move to the [certification of the election results](#) from last November's election, and we're going to take each Councilmember, one at a time, and have them come up here and their family or friends join them, if they'd like. Then, it being the pleasure of Council, we're going to do something very different tonight. Upon Councilmember-Elect Parker's request, we're going to have a virtual swearing in for her in my office across the hall with her children and husband. So, first up is District #2, Madam Clerk."

The Clerk said, "State of South Carolina, City of Charleston, City of Charleston Election Commission's Certificate as to the result of the Municipal General Election held November 2, 2021. We, the undersigned Commissioners of the City of Charleston Municipal Election Commission, being duly appointed, hereby certify the following as the results of the November 2, 2021 Municipal General Election to elect the offices of City Council Districts #2, #4, #6, #8, #10, #12, and Commissioner of Public Works. City Council District #2, Kevin Shealy - 248 and was elected, Write-in - 9; City Council District #4, Robert M. Mitchell - 533 and was elected, Tim Weber - 164, Write-in - 2; City Council District #6, William Dudley Gregorie - 273 and was elected, Write-in - 19; City Council District #8, Mike Seekings - 301 and was elected, Write-in - 7; City Council District #10, Stephen Bowden - 935 and was elected, Harry Joseph Griffin - 577, Write-in - 3; City Council District #12, Carol A. Jackson - 811, Caroline Parker - 933 and was elected, Write-in - 1; Commissioner of Public Works - David E. Rivers - 4,807 and was elected, Write-in - 184. These are the results signed by the Municipal Election Commission, Eli A. Poliakoff, Chairman; Vertelle Kenion, Commissioner; and F. Truett Nettles, II, Commissioner."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "[Councilmember Shealy](#), if you would join me."

Councilmember Shealy joined Mayor Tecklenburg on the dais.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Repeat after me."

Councilmember Shealy said, "I do solemnly swear that I am duly qualified, according to the Constitution of this State, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been appointed, and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of this State and of the United States. As Councilmember of the municipality of Charleston, I will equally, fairly and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill, exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law, the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Councilmember Shealy said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I appreciate it. First of all, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I want to thank my family for their support. I want to thank the people of West Ashley for allowing me to represent District #2 for a second time. I'm honored and humbled for this opportunity. You know, five years ago, I had no idea that I would be running for City Council. Some people in my neighborhood and around West Ashley talked to me about running, and to be honest with you, I kind of laughed it off at first. I hadn't ever been involved in politics. I hadn't planned on being involved in politics, to be honest with you, but a couple of things were going on at the time.

I was taking a men's Bible study class at the time, and it was talking about getting out of your comfort zone and taking a leap of faith, I guess, is kind of what the Bible study was about. So, it kind of got me thinking a little bit, and then my old Middleton High School buddy and guy that grew up on the St. Andrews Playground was leading that Bible study, and I hear his voice on the radio, and it went something like, 'When was the last time you did something for the first time?' so it got me thinking, and so I did. I did run, and then I was very blessed to earn this position. Fast forward four years, and I'm riding in my truck again kind of thinking, 'Okay, am I going to run for

re-election now,' and then I hear that same voice on the radio going, 'The only BS I need is beers and sunshine.' So, I'm thinking, 'Oh, boy, does that mean I'm not supposed to do this?' Of course, I did, and I do appreciate the opportunity.

A lot of things have happened over those last four years. This is important business that we're doing, and a lot of good things have happened in District #2 for us. When I came on board, we had a development that was getting ready to go up close to Bees Ferry and Glenn McConnell that would have flooded out most of western West Ashley had those development plans gone through, and so far those development plans haven't gone through. So, I thank my colleagues on Council, and I thank our City staff for the work they've done to keep further flooding from happening. Also when I came on Council a lot of people were asking me, 'What is this Lake Dotterer you keep talking about?' Well, Lake Dotterer is a lake that the City owns. It's part of our parks, and people that live along Lake Dotterer had been flooded out three times. Thanks to our Parks Department, Jason Kronsberg, George Bell, and some other people, they've been able to get in there, and we were able to lower that. Thank you, Mayor, for announcing that and letting people know that we're going to lower Lake Dotterer so that these people don't flood again, so it's been a big deal. We have done some further studies on Lake Dotterer, and we know what the issues are, we know how to fix them, and we're putting together plans, closely working with the County to hopefully eliminate that flooding problem in the future. So, I appreciate what you guys have done to help support that, those of you, especially that work with our Stormwater Department and those committees, for making that happen.

Our Team #4 Headquarters that takes care of West Ashley, they moved from the edge of District #2 to the heart of District #2, and because of that, we're much safer in West Ashley than we were before, and I thank Lieutenant King, Captain Cretella now, I thank them for their work and all of the people that have worked out there. We're a much safer area now than I think we were four years ago before Team #4 moved, so I thank you for everything that you guys have done. Where Team #4 used to be, we've got a brand new forensics building in District #2, and it's going to make us all much safer, the whole City of Charleston. It's also because of the location where we decided to put that. It's also going to maybe lessen a little bit of traffic. People that were heading downtown or a little closer to downtown now are not adding to that traffic because we decided to put offices down in that area of West Ashley. So, I thank you for those decisions that we've made.

Speaking of traffic, you know I've worked very closely with Charleston County on the widening of Glenn McConnell Parkway, the Mayor has worked very carefully with the County, and we've got a good plan for widening Glenn McConnell and helping traffic flow. Everybody in West Ashley benefits from that because we've got our parks down there, we've got West Ashley High School and the middle schools. It's a very important area that we're able to move back and forth, but the intersections of Glenn McConnell, Mary Ader, Wildcat Boulevard are all going to be improved. Rutherford Way, there will be an improvement to that intersection where it comes out on Glenn McConnell. So, we've got some good things happening, but we've also worked with the South Carolina Highway Department also a little bit further up where the intersection of I-526 comes into Paul Cantrell and Glenn McConnell Parkway, there at Magwood, Henry Tecklenburg Boulevard, all of that is going to be re-designed, and we're going to be able to move traffic much easier on and off of I-526, and it's going to improve things for everybody that lives in West Ashley and travels in and out of North Charleston and all of those areas that use that intersection. I-526 is also, I worked very closely with the Highway Department on that, I-526 is going to be widened.

Some people along Ashley Hall Plantation Road will have a sound barrier now that they used to not have, so a lot of improvements have happened, a lot of great work.

Councilmember Waring worked very hard to help us get a bridge on Ashley Hall Plantation Road that was deteriorating. It was a dangerous road for people walking across that bridge with traffic flying up and down Ashley Hall Plantation Road. Now, we've got good walkways, bikeways, and so we've done some good things. I thank Councilmember Waring, but I thank all of you for supporting that and allowing that to go through. I thank Dan Riccio and his staff because they've kept that bridge clean. Unfortunately, there were some people that thought it would look good with some graffiti on it, and Dan Riccio and his team have done an outstanding job of keeping that place looking nice.

I had the opportunity to serve on the Public Safety Committee, and I also chair the Health and Wellness Committee. There has probably never been a more important time for public safety and health and wellness right now with all of the stuff that's going on with the pandemic, and I thank all of our people that are in public safety. I thank all of our police officers, all of our firefighters. You're the very best, and I know because I've been through the Fire Operations Training. There are a couple of other Councilmembers that went through that with me, and I also was able to take the eight-week class for the Police Department at the Citizens Police Academy, as well, so I can tell you that our training is solid, and we've got the very best. But, I appreciate the opportunity to serve on both of those committees. Paul Wieters does an outstanding job with the Health and Wellness Committee. We are so fortunate in Charleston to have some of the best health professionals anywhere in the Country probably, but maybe in the world. All of them show up and give their time to the City and have advised us, and like I said, it's probably never been a more critical time to have their expertise.

Also with the Parks and Recreation Department, there's never been a more important time for our Parks and Recreation. People have flocked out there during this pandemic, and our Parks and Recreation people have done an outstanding job. We've put together a Master Plan now that I look forward to working on and see it put in place. We're going to have an enterprise manager person that's going to come in and is going to do great things and is going to be able to bring us some money and move us forward. We're going to break things out into five regions with the Parks and Recreation Department, which is going to help every area be stronger.

And gosh, Carol Jackson did a great job as our Human Resources Committee Chairman, and I had the opportunity to be the Vice-Chairman there. I want to thank our Human Resources Department, Kay Cross and, obviously, Heather Pope, too, did a lot of work. What a tough, tough time they've had and, again, Paul Wieters had the task of making sure that we tracked who had COVID, what was going on, everything that goes on with that, and what a tough, tough job he had. So Paul, Heather, and Kay did a fantastic job with that, but I want to thank all of our City employees for your hard work. We've got the very best here in Charleston, and I just want to thank you for the opportunity to serve, and thank you for all of my colleagues who work with me. It's an honor, and I appreciate everything. Thank you."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Kevin, thanks for that summary. By the way, you did win the election."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "If you hadn't, we would vote for you now. Just kidding. So, next, if I may call up [Councilmember Robert Mitchell](#), our senior member on City Council."

Councilmember Mitchell joined Mayor Tecklenburg on the dais.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Repeat after me."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "I do solemnly swear that I am duly qualified, according to the Constitution of this State, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been appointed, and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of this State and of the United States. As Councilmember of the municipality of Charleston, I will equally, fairly and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill, exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law, the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Councilmember Mitchell said, "I'm going to ask Mr. Jones to come up with me. I'm not going to be as long as you, Kevin, because I'm very short. You know I'm short. But, I got on Council in 1998, and I stayed on one term and got off of Council, and then I came back. People called me to come back on Council, and I came back on Council in 2006 to the present, today. First, if you know me, if anybody knows me, my trust is in the most high, God, and that's the way I live. I live that way and if anyone comes to me differently, they'll see something else about me because that's the way I live. I'm not into foolishness. I never have been into foolishness. I try to work with everyone. I have a very, very diverse district. If you know, I have the Eastside, which I have a lot of elements I'm dealing with. I have Elliotborough-Cannonborough, Mazyck-Wraggborough, which is the Garden District, and then I go all of the way to Rosemont. So, if you look at the district that I have, I'm out here in my district 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning. That's every night you will find me in the streets. I'm on the corner with the fellas, with the young people in the streets trying to get them to change their ways. I learned this on the streets of New York, living in New York all of those years, so I could be out there, and I know how to deal with it.

But, the thing is, we, as a people need to work together. That's the only way we're going to accomplish and get things done, by working together. You might have different aspects, and you might not agree on everything. It's not about agreeing on everything, but working together and coming to common ground. That's what I try to put out in the community all the time with all of the district I represent, the different communities I represent, if you may. I don't have a problem with it, and they'll tell you I'm always at all of the neighborhood meetings they have. I'm there at all of the meetings. I don't miss any at all. It takes a lot of time, but if you want to really do it right, and you want to be a good elected official, then you have to do those things. I consider myself as a servant, that's all. There's nothing big about me, I'm just only a servant. God placed me here to serve my brothers and sisters, and that's what I'm about. If anyone says anything differently, then they've got a problem, and that's their problem. The thing is, I want to thank the people of District #4, the residents of District #4, for supporting me again. They came out, and the young man

behind me, Mr. Jones, was one of the persons that was working with me. I had some people working behind the scenes. I had a lot of people giving me donations. I want to thank them also.

I grew up in the City of Charleston. This is my home. I left and went to New York. I went to NYU. I graduated from NYU and came back, but this is my home. I started out when I was 14 years old. The only person that was out there that I know of during that time was Councilmember Waring. Councilmember Waring's father and I go back. They call me 'Bobby.' You don't ever hear them call me 'Robert' or anything like that. They call me 'Bobby.' I was always in the Civil Rights Movement coming up. I got locked up over 25 times when I was 14 and 15 years old, making a difference in the community, bringing people together, that's always me, bringing people together and working in harmony and peace. I think if we do that, we could have the best City in the world. We're not going to agree on everything. That's not what it's about, but if we can always come to some agreement that we can work together, that's what we have to do here in the City of Charleston.

I hate to see that my City, where I grew up, and I know what happened in the City that I grew up in, go to waste like it's doing now with the shootings, the killing, and the things we are having. We are losing so many young people. We don't know if they could be lawyers, doctors, or whatever the case may be, but the thing hurts me a lot. I have kids, I have grands, I have great-grands growing up, so I want to have a place with them to be able to live, too, although my kids cannot live in the City of Charleston because it's too expensive now, but we have to do a little better job on that, too, and we are working on that. I'm the Chairman of Community Development, which is one of the most powerful committees in the City, the Community Development Committee, and we are working hard trying to create affordable housing here in the City of Charleston, which is very difficult. The dirt is expensive, not the house itself, the dirt, so it's hard to do it. So, we are asking some people to work with us, private partnership, that's the only way we can get it done. That's the way we have to work it. So, I'm going to do my best, and I'm asking you all to work with me, my colleagues, which have always worked with me. I don't have a problem with my colleagues here. They might say something I don't agree with, I might say something they don't agree with, but we can still work together, and that's what it's all about. So, I want to thank you all and hope we can move forward this year, even with our new elected Councilmembers that are coming forth, that we can all work together in harmony and peace to make this City the best it can and move it forward. Thank you."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is District #6, [Councilmember William Dudley Gregorie](#), if you will join me."

Councilmember Gregorie Joined Mayor Tecklenburg on the dais.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Repeat after me."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "I do solemnly swear that I am duly qualified, according to the Constitution of this State, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been appointed, and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of this State and of the United States. As Councilmember of the municipality of Charleston, I will equally, fairly and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill,

exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law, the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God.”

There was applause in the Chamber.

Councilmember Gregorie said, “I stand here in the joy of Jesus, and I feel privileged to continue to represent the residents of District #6. February 9th will be my 13th year as a City Councilmember. If anyone would have told me that after retiring from a job for 32 years that I would do anything else for another 13, but we’ve got four more to go. District #6 is vast, it’s mammoth, it encompasses the entire west end of the Ashley River from Sans Souci to Calhoun, the entire Medical University Complex, The Citadel, Wagener Terrace, Burke High School, and I can go on. It also includes a large swath of James Island from Maybank Highway to what’s that store called up there, Walmart, that’s vast.

When we did our first re-districting, District #6 was a minority district, but as we negotiated, my district changed from a minority district to 80% majority district. I think that in itself let’s folks know what can be done in this City, to have an African American leading a majority district. I feel honored today to be here, and if I start, like Councilman Shealy did, to talk about 13 years of accomplishments, we’ll be here all night because it’s been 13 years of accomplishments for the people of this City.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we start to deceive. I say that because I think, as a City and as a Country, this is a defining moment in our history. Truth is often quieted but, ultimately, truth prevails. I pray that all of my Councilmembers be on the right side of truth. For if you’re not, redemption, oh, redemption. We must be careful in all of the decisions that we make. We should be factual, honest, and always, always be for the greater good, not political gain, not what’s popular today, not because you need a vote today, but because it’s the right thing to do for the people of this City. This is a defining moment for our City as we tackle, and I’m going to say it, racism. We’ve got to tackle it, and we have an opportunity to do so.

I would be remiss if I didn’t thank Councilman Sakran. I would be remiss if I did not thank our Director, and she knows who I’m talking about, Amber Johnson. We have spent literally hundreds of hours, hundreds of hours, contemplating this defining moment in the history of our City and, hopefully, tonight we will be on the right side of history because it is for the greater good. Remember, silence is consent, and the rising tide lifts all boats. So, folks, especially, and I call them the newbies, be thick-skinned, be honest, be truthful, and don’t sleep because I call sleep the same lies ever, ever present. Let’s not be a sleep culture as Councilmembers. Let’s be forthright, let’s be honest, and let’s do the best for the citizens of this City because we owe them that.

So, in closing, I want to thank District #6. We have done a lot together over the last 13 years, and I’m looking forward that we the Council will put truth to power. Now, there are two seats over there, one has coats on it, and the other doesn’t. The Mayor asked who was with you, Kevin. He didn’t ask me, but, Mayor, I purposely left those seats vacant because tonight is the culmination of all of this, it’s the culmination. Those seats are vacant for past Councilmembers who sat here and got us to this point. That seat is vacant for Brenda, that seat is vacant for Councilman (Louis) Waring who I sat next to for many, many years who taught me early, don’t tell them how you’re going to vote. Never tell them how you’re going to vote.”

Councilmember Seekings said, "Well, you learned that lesson then."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Yes, I did."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Councilmember Gregorie said, "So, again, in closing, oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we start to deceive, and, remember, truth may be quiet for a while, but when it peeks it's head, we all must be on the right side because redemption, redemption is unbelievable. Thank you, Mayor."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "[Councilmember Mike Seekings](#), and would you like to invite anybody up here?"

Councilmember Seekings joined Mayor Tecklenburg on the dais.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Repeat after me."

Councilmember Seekings said, "I do solemnly swear that I am duly qualified, according to the Constitution of this State, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been appointed, and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of this State and of the United States. As Councilmember of the municipality of Charleston, I will equally, fairly and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill, exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law, the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Councilmember Seekings said, "So, thank you all very much, and I am not going to take a whole lot of time at this. It's kind of amazing, those who have been on this Council a long time have remarked on it, this will be the first of my 13th year on Council as what started out as a, I'm a runner, and what started out as a short 5K has turned into a marathon, and you see it all along the way. When you put your name out on a ballot, it is a unique and humbling experience. For anyone who has ever done it, win, lose, or draw, it is really the one sacrifice that we, as Americans, can make for those around us to serve for the greater good. I remember the first time I walked into the ballot box and saw my name I about passed out, and I think everyone understands that. It's a humbling experience, and for those who have done this for the first time, to Councilmembers-Elect Parker and Bowden, congratulations for getting out there and being part of the process. There are going to be days that you're going to have a great time at it, there are going to be days that probably won't be quite as much fun as you thought, but it is always, if you keep it in mind, for the greater good.

And if I were to give you any advice, and you haven't asked for it, so I'll give it very shortly, and I'm not getting paid for it, I would just tell you two things. One, show up, and, two, keep up, meaning, be prepared. Know what you're doing, and when you tell someone what you're going to

do, do it, right? It's amazing. To Councilmember Mitchell, who had to go out there and fight the good fight against opposition, good for you. It takes a lot of time and energy, and it really is also an amazing experience to know that you have been here for such a long time, and you've got to go back and earn your job every single four years. When you're an incumbent, and someone files to run against you, you're like, 'why do they want to fire me? Why do they want to do that?' So, to Councilmember Mitchell, obviously, that didn't happen, and it couldn't be a greater honor to have served with you now for 12 years. We'll definitely go back and audit those years and see who's been here the longest, but you have been here the longest in gross years.

Then, for three of us here today who ran unopposed, let me tell you that's the most daunting competitor ever, unopposed, and if you may, if you listened to the Clerk, you heard the numbers out there. In Council District #2, there were 9 votes for unopposed, in Council District #6, there were 19, and in Council District #8, my district, there were 7. So, along with Councilmember Shealy and Councilman Gregorie, we're going to go launch an investigation and find out who those 35 people are and what they had to say, and pay them and heed them some attention."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Councilmember Seekings continued, "Councilmember Shealy mentioned all of the things that we get to do on this Council and representing the City of Charleston, which is an incredible honor every day we get up, and it's amazing the stuff we get to do as a City Councilmember. He brought up one that I had forgotten about, one of the things that we did together, and that was attend Fire Ops 1. There was no Fire Ops 2. It was a one and done deal. They put us all through the rigors of being a firefighter in the City of Charleston, from being fully geared up, to toting hose, to opening cars with jaws of life. When it was over, we looked so bad and were in such bad shape, they said this process is canceled forever.

Thank you to my neighbors. We are all at the local level, elected by our neighbors. When I first decided to do this, the person I asked and knew, the answer would be immediate, was my next door neighbor. I knocked on their door and said, 'Should I run for City Council? Will you vote for me?', and they said, 'Yep and yep.' From that day forward, I remembered we're all neighbors, all of us are neighbors. You might not agree with everything we do, and as evidenced by my e-mail today, you don't, but that's okay. Demand of us to look you in your eye and tell you what we're going to do and have a darn good reason for it, and if we do that, and this Council does it, you will have had good representation. So, Mr. Mayor, fellow Councilmembers, and those two of you who are Councilmembers-Elect, I look forward to the next four years. It's amazing it's another four, Councilmember Gregorie and Councilmember Mitchell. When we're done, between us we'll have over 40 years of experience in these Chambers. Mayor, you're a little bit of a junior member here. So, we'll learn you a few things along the way, too, Mayor, but it's an honor. I look forward to working with every single one of you to make Charleston better tomorrow than it was today and continuing that along. For those of you who are here tonight, thank you for being part of the process. Sometimes we maybe act a little grumpy, but we're better because of you, and we're listening, and we do. So, with that, let's go to work. Thank you."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “And, now, our first [newly elected Councilmember, Stephen Bowden](#), representing District #10. If you would like to have any family or friends join you, please do so and ask them up at this time.”

Councilmember-Elect Bowden and his wife joined Mayor Tecklenburg on the dais.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Repeat after me.”

Councilmember Bowden said, “I do solemnly swear that I am duly qualified, according to the Constitution of this State, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been appointed, and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of this State and of the United States. As Councilmember of the municipality of Charleston, I will equally, fairly and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill, exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law, the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God.”

There was applause in the Chamber.

Councilmember Bowden said, “Thank you all so much. I am truly humbled and honored to be standing here this evening. Councilman Gregorie, I do not expect that I will have a problem not being awake. As you saw, my wife is pregnant, and the baby will be here shortly, so I will be spending plenty of time awake. This is something that when I set out to run, I almost never got to the point that I would be standing here in front of you, so I honestly didn’t prepare any remarks tonight. So, I will be quick. We have tremendous challenges in this City, we know all of them. The great challenge of our generation will be learning how to adapt to a changing time. Every day when I drive downtown to work, I look out into the harbor, and I’m reminded why I love this place. When I stand in rooms like this and feel the weight of history, I’m reminded why I love this place, and I do love this place. I look at the folks that I will have the pleasure of serving with for these next four years, and I see a tremendous group of public servants. And though we know what those challenges are, and they are daunting, I know that we’ll meet this moment. I am so humbled to join you in meeting this moment. So, thank you all so much. I look forward to serving each and every one of you.”

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “And so now if I may ask your indulgence for just a minute, [Councilmember-Elect Caroline Parker](#) and I are going to go across the hall, and we will be Zooming back in along with her family for her induction. You all, this is our first ever City of Charleston swearing-in virtually.”

Councilmember-Elect Parker joined Mayor Tecklenburg with her family in the Mayor’s office.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Repeat after me.”

Councilmember Parker said, “I do solemnly swear that I am duly qualified, according to the Constitution of this State, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been appointed, and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect and

defend the Constitution of this State and of the United States. As Councilmember of the municipality of Charleston, I will equally, fairly and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill, exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law, the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God.”

There was applause in the Chamber.

Councilmember Parker said, “Thank you, again, Mr. Mayor, for allowing my family to be a part of that. I know it was important to them, so thank you all for having me here. I, too, I did not prepare any remarks, so I truly, I thank God that I’m here. It was a calling. I felt my voice was needed here on Council. I know my district wanted me, needed me, and I’m really grateful to be here. I’m grateful for all of my constituents, all of my supporters, friends, family, contributors, just everyone that helped me get here. It’s really important that our democracy is built this way. It’s what we’re built on. I just took an oath to fight for the Constitution of not only this Country, but our State, and that’s why I’m here and what I hope to do. I do truly feel called to public service, and I’m proud to be here tonight, and I look forward to working with you all. So, thanks.”

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thanks and congratulations to you all.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Mayor, you’ll be happy to know that when you were back in your office, we formed a Blue Ribbon Commission to shorten the oath of office, and we will be presenting it at the next meeting of City Council.”

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “We’ll use that, actually, in about a month when we have a new representative from District #1. So, next I would like to give a short recognition to our two retiring Councilmembers and to the service that they have given. Councilmember Griffin could not be with us today, but I wanted to share with everyone very briefly an e-mail that Councilmember Griffin sent out last night to his fellow colleagues here on Council and to, importantly, the employees of the City of Charleston. This is from Councilmember Griffin: ‘To all of our amazing City of Charleston employees, from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you for the opportunity to work with you and to serve you. A very important role in being a City Councilmember is making your quality of life in the workplace better. I can only hope that I accomplished that goal over these last four years. I will cherish all of the relationships and memories that I have made with our staff while serving as a Councilmember for District #10 in the City of Charleston. I’ve said this many times at our City Council meetings, and I will continue to say this. The City of Charleston has the BEST employees of any municipality in the Country, and as I leave my role as a City Councilmember, please know that I will always be an advocate for you. I will always be just a phone call away. Thank you for all of your hard work, determination, and resilience while facing unprecedented challenges. Your friend, Councilmember Harry Griffin.’ And I just thought that his e-mail to our employees spoke very highly of Councilmember Griffin and his service to our City and to our organization over the last four years. He could not be with us tonight, but I wanted to share that with you all and thank him personally. I know that my colleagues on Council share that sentiment and thank our employees, as well.

Next I'd like to call up former [Councilmember Carol Jackson](#) and invite her to the stage to receive a plaque, two plaques. One is in recognition of Carol Jackson's District #12 distinguished service rendered to the City of Charleston from 2018 to 2022. Hold this one, and don't stop yet. We also have an additional plaque for Councilmember Jackson because in the last year she also served as Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Charleston, and this is in appreciation for your service as Mayor Pro Tem."

Councilwoman Jackson said, "Thank you, Mayor."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Please recognize Councilmember Jackson. There's a bio here that I'm not going to read, but Charleston became Carol's new hometown some years ago, and she decided to run, got elected, and served these past four years. I've got to tell you, and I don't mean any offense to any of my colleagues here on City Council, but Carol has been the hardest working Councilmember on this Council. She has attended more meetings and more meetings that she didn't have to attend. She would come to committee meetings that she had not been a member of just to learn about what was going on in the City. She studied all matters, she did her homework, she was always prepared. I think she's become an expert in zoning and water-related topics. I think you could easily be an expert here on out. So, we want to thank you, Carol, for your incredible service over the last four years and your friendship, and the microphone is yours."

Councilwoman Jackson said, "Thank you. I powdered my nose and freshened my lipstick for a second. So, I really do thank you, Mayor, and I need to start with thanking and praising the one who made me and the parents who bore me, and the holy spirit that guides me. I did move to Charleston a very short time ago. Even compared to the longevity of those who will always be 'Come here's' to the City, I don't make any bones about having a steep learning curve. That's basically why the Mayor saw me a lot of places that I wouldn't have needed to go based on the committee assignments or the commissions that I had volunteered for or been appointed to, but the way that I learn is by doing, and the way that I try to speak is by doing."

So, I am going to surprise all of you because at some point in my going through my little memory box, as I was putting away campaign materials this last fall and organizing my towering closet of tubs, as my children know it to be, I ran across something that was in my Council memory box, and it was copies that I had made of a Chinese fortune cookie, a fortune that I must have picked up right before COVID. I remember resolving this and trying to live into the shadow of people like Councilmember Seekings who have an art of listening and then speaking sort of at the end of a drawn-out discussion and making his points clear and quick. So, here's my Chinese fortune cookie, it says, 'Keep it simple. The more you say, the less people remember.' So, I apologize that I quickly forgot that resolution."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Councilwoman Jackson said, "Especially as our new colleagues joined us in 2020, and we spent inordinate months and hours and days on Zoom, and I felt like I really did need to speak up a little more clearly and a little more sagely, let's say, in just the time that I had spent really learning the City. I know that District #12 chose not to re-elect me to office this past election, and I feel like there is a pretty clear distinction in a lot of what the voters want and don't want from an

elected official. I appreciate that I'm of the school that serves the whole City, and we do need to keep our eyes on those prizes. You know, I went over to Cainhoy and walked the graveyards with Councilmember Delcioppo when she was brokenhearted about how a developer had pretty cavalierly just basically run their construction equipment over what were clearly enslaved graves outside of a clearly marked white society graveyard. It was a learning curve for me that I couldn't replace in just reading about it in the newspaper. So, I spent time doing those things because I do feel strongly that we have a whole City, and we could easily take ourselves apart and make the distinctions of one district over another or one watershed over another. Heaven help me, there are 30 watersheds on James Island, Councilmember Parker, and we need to take care of all of them.

Councilwoman Jackson said, "So, I feel like I have served the calling that I felt when I ran for office. I know that iron sharpens iron, and there are many people on James Island that challenged why we need to care about what's happening on the Peninsula, why we should be spending taxpayer money, no matter its source, to protect the Peninsula when we live on James Island, and I really hope that that kind of thinking does not go forward in our City. I join Councilmember Gregorie in saying that we have a purpose to serve the common good, the whole good, and I was very happy to hear Councilmember Seekings speak the same. We cannot be a City divided, we have to be a City united, and I will pledge myself, as a proactive, involved citizen, to be continuing that action, and I promise to say less and do more. Thank you, and God bless you all."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Alright. So, we have one more proclamation this evening, and we're honoring a former City Councilmember. I'm going to ask former Councilmember [John Bleecker](#), along with Councilmember Shahid, and Judy, and John's family, if they would like to join us up here, to please come forward. Okay, I'll come back to that. Will Council forbear me if I'm taking this one item out of order? Thank you.

At Councilmember Shahid's recommendation, I have a proclamation to share with you, regarding a very unique and wonderful citizen of our City."

Mayer Tecklenburg read the proclamation.

---INSERT PROCLAMATION---

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mr. Bleecker said, "Thank you, I'll try to be short. I have loved this City. I never had a job other than the military until I came to this town as a law clerk, and then I walked the streets of Charleston on Broad Street. I'm a Broad Street lawyer. I've enjoyed every minute of it. I just love my City. I didn't think I was as good as they say in this long paper, but I appreciate your adopting that and agreeing to that resolution.

Walking the street, I remember that Mayor Morrison was the mayor of the City, and he parked his Cadillac in front of City Hall. So, I knew when the Mayor was here because the Cadillac was outside, and I'd often see him going back and forth, and I would say, 'Wow, he is a very

important person.' I had the fortune of serving with Palmer Gaillard and the Council, and I'm one of two Councilmen that are still surviving. So, a good way to get a resolution like this is to live a long time."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Mr. Bleecker said, "So, thank you so much for recognizing me, and I appreciate you being here."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Councilmember Shahid said, "I said this out on Rotary Club earlier today that my first professional association with Mr. Bleecker was as a law student, and he hired me as a law clerk. I was about to rise to second year law student, and the first thing he did was to show me the broom closet, and he said 'this is how you're going to learn how to practice law.' He said, 'learn how to sweep the floor and dust off tables.' But, I learned a lot from him in those early years, and he now shares a space with me. This is an incredible legacy that he is leaving with us today, 90 years old, practicing law since 1960, still comes to work almost every day, seeing clients. We work together on a lot of projects. And, it's just been an honor to know Judy and John, and Judith, and Joanne, and Ann Francis' daughter, who is also a lawyer. We've got a lot of lawyers out here. Sandy Morckel, from our Rotary Club, is with us. And, I think that this is just a fitting way for him to celebrate his birthday tomorrow, 90 years old and still kicking up dirt. So, congratulations, Mr. Bleecker."

There was applause in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Happy birthday, too. Alright. Now, if we could go back and acknowledge, I think all we need to do is receive our [City Council Committee appointments](#) for this coming year. I look forward to working with everyone on these Committees. We do have some change in leadership on a number of the Committees, and we challenge our new Chairs of the various Committees to really dig in and have a very productive year.

So, the only matter which requires the approval of Council is the appointment of [Councilmember Brady as Mayor Pro Tem](#) for the upcoming year."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Move for approval."

Councilmember Appel said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have a motion to approve. We also have a long biography on Councilmember Brady, but, Karl, we know you already, so I think we can forego the reading of the long biography. Any discussion before we proceed to approval?"

No one asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Appel, City Council voted unanimously to appoint of Councilmember Karl Brady as the 2022 Mayor Pro Tempore for the year.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I think it was Councilmember Seekings who, having served as Mayor Pro Tem a few years ago, made the comment that it was like being the Maytag Repairman because you honestly go to a lot of the things that the Mayor gets invited to. And then, in the last year, as Councilmember Jackson was Mayor Pro Tem, there was almost nothing to go to because of COVID. So, I'm going to try to give you a few things to go do this year. I appreciate your service coming up as Mayor Pro Tem. Thank you, Karl."

So, next up is our [Citizens Participation Period](#). By our Council rules, it's only 30 minutes. And, I must say, when we've had so many speakers that we've had to keep the time below a minute, it really became hard for folks to even express themselves. So, we're going to keep it at a minute and just have 30 speakers today."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "We've got to approve the minutes."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Boy, I keep getting off. Yeah, I'll come right back to that, as well. So, we're going to have 15 people who have signed up in-person and then 15 people who have signed up online and try to keep us on schedule. And, Jennifer will also provide an email and a voicemail if anybody needs to share any comments with us if you're not able to share them with us tonight. Let's see. We do need to approve our [City Council minutes of December 21.](#)"

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Move for approval."

Councilmember Shealy said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have a motion to approve, and a second. Any additions, comments, deletions?"

No one asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Shealy, City Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the December 21, 2021 City Council meeting.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Madam Clerk will call out the names, and we ask you to come forward to the microphone and give us your comments for a minute. Please share your name and full address with us when you come forward to the microphone. Thank you. Madam Clerk?"

The Clerk said, "Yes, sir. And we will start with the first 15 people who have signed up in person. And, for anyone who is not called, we welcome everyone's comments. You can e-mail them to us at publiccomments@charleston-sc.gov, or by leaving a message at (843) 579-6313, and we'll share them with the Mayor and Council. So, our first speaker is Mike Frederick."

1. Mike Frederick said he had been a resident of Charleston for 25 years. He loved the City and thought it was one of the kindest, most generous, caring Cities he had ever lived in. When he heard that the City had a problem with institutional racism, he was absolutely astonished. There was so much in the news today about what was being taught in schools, that his first thoughts was "if they pass this Commission, what are

we going to be telling our children in school?” He said they would be telling the white children that their fathers and their grandfathers were racist. He said there was no getting around it that was what would be told. He said that, worst of all, they would be telling minority children that they were surrounded by White racists, and that it would be very difficult for them to get ahead in the world.

The Clerk said, “Time. Anthony Bryant.”

2. Anthony Bryant said that according to Cory Ellis, a U.S. attorney, he had made public comment at 2123 Courtland Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina. He said he had included all attachments. On January 6, 2022, the Charleston County Sheriff’s Office came by with a notice from DSS, which had the power to seize person, property, and passport supported by an executive officer, the U.S. attorney, and others that could use force against black people like him who would speak up. He said he would never stop speaking up and that free speech was important in the United States. He did not care whether others liked or didn’t like a given speech. He said that without speech, there was no truth.

The Clerk said, “Tracey Owens.”

3. Tracey Owens said she fully supported the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. She urged Council to vote in favor of its establishment. She said she thought it was the least they could do for the citizens whose ancestors had laid every brick in every street and every sidewalk in the City. She said they should be included in the decisions that affected where and how they lived.

The Clerk said, “Dwayne Green.”

4. Dwayne Green spoke on behalf of the Social Justice and Racial Healing Collaborative. He said he wanted to voice their strong support for the passage of the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. He asked Council to continue what they had started by giving the ordinance second reading. He said that in the wake of the Emanuel shooting, Council took some very important steps to promote racial equity, healing, and understanding in Charleston. The formation of the Commission was among the most important. The morning’s *Post & Courier* noted the concerted political efforts by groups to undermine the works of the commission and equate it with critical race theory. Not coincidentally, those groups also opposed the removal of the Calhoun statue from Marion Square, and supported the maintenance of divisive symbols.

The Clerk said, “Time. Michael Kogan.”

5. Michael Kogan said the Commission, having been wisely voted out of existence, had been resurrected under a new name. He said the original agenda was alarming: to remove historic monuments, rename streets, and to turn schoolchildren in the classroom against each other, dividing them into white oppressors and black oppressed. It was not racial reconciliation, but the sewing of hatred and suspicion. Since Council had voted the Commission out of existence, it had reared its head again, under a new name, with a so-called “pared down agenda.” He said he really wondered about that, considering what was initially intended. He said Mrs. Tecklenburg, whom he admired for her love of the arts and music, had acted, he believed, inappropriately,

by calling out people to attend the meeting in order to bring pressure to one side. It was not democracy, but government by pressure, bullying, coercion, and intimidation.

The Clerk said, "Time. John Mitchell."

6. John Mitchell said he stood before Council as the other proud native son of the Lowcountry, whose roots went deep and wide across the City. He asked that Council support the creation and formation of the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission and that Council work with the citizens of their districts who were descended from and stood alongside those that built the City and still made it move with the charm and hospitality that everyone loved.

The Clerk said, "Marcus McDonald."

7. Marcus McDonald, lead organizer for Charleston Black Lives Matter and a substitute teacher at Burke High School, urged Council to vote in favor of the Human Relations and Racial Conciliation Commission. He said his great grandmother, Elizabeth Porter Houston, who had meant so much to him, lived to be 103 and was one of the oldest members of Mother Emanuel AME. He did not want anyone listening to disrespect the tragedy of Mother Emanuel by speaking against racial equity and the progress of the Commission. He said the Commission would push forward to tell the truth about their history, empower the Black community today, and fight for a better future for black and brown children moving forward. He said that was his journey, and wished Council a good Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. He told those listening to read and listen to what he had actually spoken about, which was progressing the people forward. That was why he was there, and that was what they would do with the Commission.

The Clerk said, "Time. Allyson Sutton."

8. Allyson Sutton said she was a downtown resident and business owner. She said she supported the Commission and urged Council to continue their work and make it permanent. She also asked Council to hold off on further actions regarding the King Street BID. Both the Commission and the BID would impact who was able to live, work, and access economic opportunity in Charleston in the future. The Commission would ensure that racial equity and inclusion were central to policy, while the BID, as it currently stood, would only lead to further gentrification, Black displacement, and wealth disparity. Now was Council's chance to prove who and what they prioritized, tourism and the wealthy or the Black communities who had built the City for generations.

The Clerk said, "Ben Jacobs."

No one asked to speak.

The Clerk said, "Sean Coughlin."

9. Sean Coughlin said he was a parishioner and lay leader at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke and St. Paul and a local business owner in the technology sector. He said he was there to speak in favor of the City of Charleston dedicating its time, talent, and

treasure to the cause of equity and justice for all, to things like better public schools, more equitable wages, and more affordable housing for all of its citizens. It was only if they continued that good work that they might, in any sense, call their city a “holy” or “courageous” one.

The Clerk said, “Pringle Franklin.”

10. Pringle Franklin said she had been sitting and listening to the people outside yelling and screaming. She said she did not like what was happening to their City. Many of those who had already spoken, and different Councilmembers, had talked about Jesus. She said she followed Jesus, too. She said she thought they needed more time. She hated that people were hating each other. She heard both sides saying really ugly things. They needed to come together. She asked Council to postpone any further action. District 1 did not even have its representative. She did not think that was quite fair. She wanted Council to hold more public forums. She said she had read in the paper that morning that Mayor Tecklenburg had said they were not going to defund the police, and that those who said that they were, were confused. She wanted to have more public forums so they could find out what was really going to happen so that they could come together, as a community, for the greater good.

The Clerk said, “Bruce Burris.”

11. Bruce Burris said he was a seventh-generation Charlestonian, and that he concurred with his friend, Mike Frederick.

The Clerk said, “Dennis Curtin.”

12. Dennis Curtin said he had lived in Charleston for 4 years and had been visiting for 20 years. He had moved to Charleston because of the beauty, charm, and civility of the City. He said he was troubled that times were changing, and he had been very troubled by the looting and rioting on King Street in 2020 when the police sat by and did nothing. He was troubled by the murder that took place on King Street. He said that the laws were not enforced in Waterfront Park and that the police said they had been told not to enforce the laws. If the laws were not enforced, all that was left was lawlessness. He was troubled that the City was becoming more like San Francisco, and much of what had gone on in San Francisco was because the laws were not enforced. Charleston relied on tourism.

The Clerk said, “Time.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you, sir.”

The Clerk said, “Bruce Bahlav.”

No one asked to speak.

The Clerk said, “We’ll move on, Patrick Schlabs.”

Brett Barry said, “This is Brett Barry. Did you call my name?”

The Clerk said, "No, we're calling on Bruce Bahlav in-person. Alright. We'll move to Patrick Schlabs."

13. Patrick Schlabs, an Anglican priest, said the Christian New Testament was filled with contrasting commands, both to hear and to do, to trust and to act. As a Christian and a pastor, he said he was continually called to ask the question, "what am I to do with what I know? And, knowing what I know about the brokenness of life, how am I to engage this world and my neighbor with attentiveness and, ultimately, with love?" He said the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission sought to answer that same essential question on behalf of their City. He asked what they would do with what they knew. Knowing what they knew about the City's history of racism, slavery, and segregation, and seeing the ongoing effects of inequality in wealth, education, housing, and criminal justice, he asked what they were to do. As a person of faith and as a citizen of Charleston, he said he believed they needed to vote in favor of the Commission as a first step.

The Clerk said, "The next speaker I believe is Kay Hamlin or Kevin Hamlin."

No one asked to speak.

The Clerk said, "Alright. We will move on to Tyler Gadsden."

14. Tyler Gadsden, a student at the College of Charleston, said he supported the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. He asked Council and Mayor Tecklenburg to vote in favor of the Commission. He said he and many others believed that it was vitally important that City Council voted in favor of the Commission's previous and any future recommendations that might advance racial equity and empower Charleston's community of Black and other people of color. He said James Baldwin once said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." He asked Council to support affordable housing and minority businesses.

The Clerk said, "Indyah Bunkem."

15. Indyah Bunkem said she had lived in Downtown Charleston all her life. She said things had drastically changed for the worse in many ways. She urged Council to vote in favor of the Commission because it would help everybody.

The Clerk said, "Mayor, that was 15, but we only had two people left on the list in person. Did you want me to go ahead?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Go ahead."

The Clerk said, "Okay. Caroline Everly or Early. I might be reading that incorrectly."

No one asked to speak.

The Clerk said, "Tanya Matthews."

16. Tanya Matthews said she was a student researcher at the College of Charleston, and wanted to urge Council to support the Commission. She said she wanted to pose a question to Council. It had been said that hospitality, and community, and care, were pivotal to Charleston. She asked Council what "Southern hospitality" meant to them. When one thought of hospitality, it was community, but adding "Southern" was a form of identity, and identity was a form of inclusion and exclusion. She asked Council who they had included and excluded from Southern hospitality. She asked who they were excluding in order to bring more transient tourists into the City. If they wanted to be a community that was civil, kind, and hospitable, it needed to extend to everyone, regardless of race, background, and economic position.

The Clerk said, "Alright, we will move on to our list of speakers who signed up online. Ashley Smith."

17. Ashley Smith said she fully supported the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. She urged Council to vote in favor of the Commission and in favor of the Commission's previous and future recommendations. It was well past time for the City to start taking the necessary steps towards creating a brighter, more equitable future for their community and to begin paying reparations to the Black community that built the City. It was imperative that Charleston set the precedent in South Carolina and become leaders of change, especially after its dark, corrupted, and wrongful history of enslavement. It was a huge opportunity for the City to work together and to make a positive change, by holding accountable the community, its leaders, and the businesses that allowed the City to thrive. She said Council's constituents and the world were watching.

The Clerk said, "Tony Daniell."

18. Tony Daniell reminded Council what they swore to do, referencing the oaths of office that were performed earlier in the meeting. He read an email from Councilmember Appel saying, "We have refrained from installing 'no parking/standing signs,' as that essentially eliminated the legal ability to pick up and drop off in front of his house." He said that was a lie and not having a sign did not make it legal. It was still illegal, whether he put a sign there or not. He did not know why Councilmember Appel thought not having a sign there made it legal. He said he thought it was important that Councilmember Appel not place himself above the law. He was supposed to work with people. He addressed Councilmember Seekings, saying that he went to speak with him about an email from Charles Rivers and Councilmember Seekings had walked away from him. He wanted to know why Charles Rivers had written an email to some of the Councilmembers. He got the email via a FOIA request. He said he didn't think walking away was okay.
19. Donna Daniell said she had found out that night that she was not a part of the greater good. The last time Council met she had submitted for the record the rules governing the closing of roads, the fact that none of the requirements had been met, and pictures of traffic illegally blocking the roads for two hours every weekday in front of their house, a picture of the closed roads with a sign that read "dead end," that Councilmember Appel said was still open, and a picture of Councilmember Appel making a derogatory, racist gesture to a disabled, minority veteran, that

Councilmember Appel denied making. She said Councilmember Appel said he was impressed, but she said she would have used a different word. Embarrassed, ashamed, regretful, humiliated, or a recognition that he was violating his oath of office as a lawyer and as a Councilmember.

The Clerk said, "Time."

20. Margaret Seidler said she was an eighth generation Charlestonian and supported the creation of the Commission. She said racial disparities existed and were difficult to discuss. The Commission offered that opportunity. Recently, a personal research journey revealed to her a very different and difficult family history than she had been told. The shocking truth was that she was a direct descendant of multiple generations of slave traders and auctioneers working just doors from City hall. Her family brokered the sale of 10,000 enslaved human beings in the domestic slave trade. That was history. Raised in segregation, she had been taught that she was better than Black Americans. When she attended one of the first integrated high schools in the 1960s, that reality changed her view of superiority and had shaped the white person she was today. The disparities the Commission sought to address had remained over the arc of her 70 years. It was Charleston's time to serve as a national role model for what was possible.

The Clerk said, "Time."

21. Jerome Harris said that Frederick Douglas said that without struggle, there was no progress. Council, since receiving the report, had struggled with how to respond. He had testified in support of the original ordinance that had been submitted, and he similarly supported the amendment and urged its approval.
22. Sarah Fitzellen spoke as a member and on behalf of CAJM. They supported the creation of the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. She said that in June of 2020, Council created the Commission for the purposes of creating measurable outcomes, promoting greater accountability, and coordinating community-wide efforts to achieve racial equity in Charleston. In August 2021, the Commission had brought forth an extensive report which touched on numerous areas the City needed to focus on to create a better place for all people to live. There was urgency to do the work in Charleston now. The City had a robust tourist industry where people came from all over the world to see the grand pre-Civil War homes, beautiful beaches, and the market, but not everything was pretty in Charleston. The City had a long history with slavery and racism. Charleston was once the capital of the slave trade in America.

The Clerk said, "Time."

23. Suzanne Hardie said she spoke for CAJM in support of establishing the Commission. It was the vehicle to address longstanding and systemic issues that perpetrated the racial hierarchy and disparate outcomes in Charleston. She had heard from some that calling out racial disparities was divisive and disrupted peace. In truth, they were merely revealing the tension that already existed. She quoted Dr. Martin Luther King,

Jr., "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." For the health of their City, they needed to reject the ease of a false peace that covered up the tension and boldly seek justice, true peace for all. She quoted Dr. King again, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." In particular, as white people, or people of means, they could not think of themselves as separate from others in their community. What they did affected others, and what others did affected them.

The Clerk said, "Time."

24. Mike Trama thanked Councilmember Bowden and said he had taken his advice. He said Councilmember Parker was his representative. He had called, texted, and emailed her, but had not received any response. He said he thought she was gaslighting him, and that he was trying to work with her. He said his clients needed reparations now and he asked Council to fund Ms. Amber Johnson's work and the Commission. He said there was a billionaire debt collector named Ben Navarro, whom he felt was ripe to pay those reparations to his clients, so they could get jobs and stay out of prison. He said he had worked in outsourcing for many years, and Council did not have the skills to outsource their government operations to Navarro, somebody no one had voted for. They voted for Council. He asked Council not to let him create a BID.

The Clerk said, "Time."

25. Joel Sadler said he felt for the Mayor and City Council because he got to pick which Council meetings he went to, but they had to go to every single one. He said he respected their work and the way they had incorporated a number of different viewpoints to develop an equity Commission that everyone could agree on. He asked Council to extend that same level of rigor and consideration to the BID plan. He felt there were many opportunities there to mitigate against negative impacts on all residents.
26. Dr. James Yanney said he agreed with the sentiment of the people at the meeting that wanted to have justice and solve issues, but said he disagreed with the mechanism. He believed they had a tremendous amount of resources in all districts, and they were not listening to the neighborhood associations. There were a multitude of successful models in the Country that resolved those issues, but he did not see them in the report. He said he appreciated the amount of time and energy that went into the report, but asked Council to put off the vote on the Commission because there was a better way of doing it. He asked Council to go to the neighborhood associations and to go to the people because they had a lot of good ideas, and there were many models that they needed to look at.
27. Anna Faenza said she was a certified survival swim instructor. Holy Mackerel Infant Aquatics was her occupation. She taught children six months to six years of age the aquatic skills needed to survive in case of a water accident. She said her business was shut down on December 15th when she received a home occupation violation letter from the City of Charleston. There had been confusion as to whether or not a

backyard swimming pool qualified as a home occupation in the City of Charleston because the pool was not inside the dwelling. She urged Council to vote 'yes' to pass the ordinance that evening, which would make it absolutely clear that swimming instruction qualified as a home occupation, and that it did not have to occur in an enclosed building. If it did not pass, parents would have limited, if any access, to a type of instruction that could potentially save their child's life. She said she had made every effort to comply with the ordinance, and she would make sure to do so moving forward.

28. Mika Gadsden said they were on the eve of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and she urged all non-Black people who were submitting comments to stop weaponizing his words against Black people. She said she was the daughter of Jim Crow refugees. She said her father could recount the number of times he was denied dignity and refused service and access to facilities on King Street as a Wadmalaw native. Before they continued to explain to her what racism was and how to identify it, she said they could keep that to themselves, and let them recount their experiences. She asked about the King Street TIF and why they needed a BID when they had TIFs.

The Clerk said, "Time."

29. Lin Jay said she supported the establishment of the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. She said that while she acknowledged the tension created by the need for a racial equity lens, she countered the oppositions' panic by reminding Council that it was no individual's intention to shame another person. She asked if, as white people, they were afraid of the data and the studies carried out which showed contemporary inequities in housing, healthcare, education, and employment, or if they feared their history. She asked how they could do the work of being human if they denied what had happened in the past that continued to impact their present. She asked if they felt shame in learning about their national origin story and everything thereafter. She said they might, but that emotion should not immobilize their growth. Shame could be creative and constructive. Knowledge and the desire to be better could transform the discomfort they felt into robust empathy for others with different life experiences.

The Clerk said, "Time."

30. Allie Menegakis, a local attorney and executive director of South Carolina for Criminal Justice Reform, urged Council to vote in favor of the Commission. She said she had served on the Criminal Justice Subcommittee and was Chair of the City Ordinance Committee. They had only scratched the surface and had worked tirelessly in their free time to try and make the City a better place because they had asked them to and because it was the right thing to do. They had spent hundreds of hours coming up with findings and propositions, which had been rejected, and the Commission itself not extended, likely due to the core reasons the Commission was established: misinformation, fearmongering, and implicit and explicit racism, examples of which had been vividly portrayed at the meeting. It was the duty of elected leaders to not only do what the loudest and most popular voices wanted, but, more importantly, to

do what was right. The right thing to do was, at the very least, to extend the Commission's term to continue its work.

The Clerk said, "Time. Cava Compton."

31. Michael O'Neill said he submitted a petition with 1,250 signatures from Black, brown, and white citizens united in opposition to the Commission and obtained in just 6 days. He said the ordinance had been advanced in the most inconsiderate and disrespectful manner to the citizens of Charleston, just 3 days before Christmas, when many were with their families for the first time in 2 years. He said it was shameful, and none of them deserved to be treated so poorly. It seemed that something shady was being done to radically change their City charter without people being told how it impacted them. He asked how they could vote for a Commission when Mayor Tecklenburg claimed there was no proposal, yet went on to forward the proposal to a subcommittee, in violation of the City charter.

The Clerk said, "Time."

32. Katie King welcomed Councilmember Bowden. She asked Council and Mayor Tecklenburg to support the Commission. She said they all knew it was the right thing to do. If it wasn't worth doing, there would not be so many voices in opposition to it. She also asked Council to vote no on the BID and to oppose Reimagining Schools. She asked Council not to privatize their schools. She urged Council to listen to their constituents.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "So, we've gone through everyone who signed in in person earlier this evening, but I understand that there are some people who may have signed up online and now are here in person. How many folks here are in that category, where you're on our other list, but you haven't spoken yet? So, with Council's indulgence, I do think it would be considerate to allow the folks who have sat here all this time and have come here presently to come forward. It may run us a few extra minutes, but we would be glad to give you all a minute, as well. And since it's not on any order here, if you don't mind, those who have raised your hands, just, please, come forward one at a time, and state your name and address, and we'll be happy to hear from you, as well. Yes, ma'am. Please proceed."

33. Kay Hahn urged Council to accept the new Commission and their suggestions as to how they might make their City better. She said she had heard a lot from the Councilmembers who had been sworn in that night about truth and about how they needed truth, and that they trusted truth. She thought that was at the core of the problem. There was a lot of truth-denying, as well as fact-denying, and other sorts of denial. The truth was that they needed to work together equitably and make some progress in terms of their systemic racism.
34. Eugene Richardson said the City had done well to invest in racial bias audits of the Police Department. Failure to meaningfully follow up on those implementations would mean that money from taxpayers was wasted. They would not fall for the false choice between safety and equity. They did not have to sacrifice safety for equitable policing. Having black people make up 100% of the Charleston Police Department contacts for

loitering, as was the case during the first part of the year, when Black people made up 21% of the population had nothing to do with making Charleston safer. That and similar disparities that the Charleston data revealed were evidence that biased policing persisted and needed to be addressed. He called on Council to require third party review and oversight of the audit's implementation with the goal of reducing racial disparities. He also wanted to confirm his support for the Commission.

The Clerk said, "Time."

There was an interruption from someone online.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I'm sorry. We're allowing folks who are here with us to complete their remarks. Yes, ma'am. Please proceed."

35. Aliece Hurley, a student at the College of Charleston, urged Council to vote in favor of the Commission. Charleston was once the largest port for enslaved people in the United States. That legacy persisted in their systems, especially in policing. In a report from Charleston's People's Budget, Black people made up 53% of all arrests by CPD, despite making up 23% of the population. That gross disparity was just one of the many indicators of why the Commission was so important. She called for the recommendations from the Commission's report for an independent third-party audit of CPD and for the CPD budget to be examined for potential budget reallocations.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "You all. Please hold any applause or demonstration, please. Thank you."

36. Robert Sturdy, Chaplain of St. Alban's Anglican Chapel at the Citadel, spoke in favor of the Commission. Instances of racial violence in their recent past, as well as countless daily examples of disparate outcomes faced by their Black neighbors and friends as they navigated a range of institutions in Charleston reminded them that a gap existed between the society they would have liked to be and the one they actually were. When it was brought to mind, the City could feel those things deeply, but deep feelings not joined with decisive action wore off over, and over, and over again. The ordinance represented decisive action, joined by the City, to close the gap between the society they were, and the just society they aspired to be. He was so pleased to have heard many things about a God that many of them believed in, who felt deeply about the world.

The Clerk said, "Time."

37. Patricia Ploehn, a vestry member of the Cathedral of St. Luke and St. Paul, said she worked as a graduate student and community member in historic preservation in Charleston. She said she supported the original and amended Commission. Charleston was a City full of tangible history seen in the buildings and landscapes engaged with every day. She thought it important that they not only honor the enslaved people who built the entire City with their hands, and acknowledge the system that enslaved them, which existed in new forms today, but to also reexamine

and reformat systems that were currently in place in order to better love the people that dwelled around them.

38. Adam Shoemaker, rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, said he supported the Commission. Ignoring racial disparities that existed in their City would not make them go away. They could not give into fear tactics that tried to twist the mission of the Commission into something scary or something other than it was: an effort to address racial inequity and to build a City where their Black and brown citizens were just as valued and included as their white ones.
39. Bill Hecht urged Council to delay the vote. He said he had read the ordinance and thought it had major shortcomings in how it was written. If they wanted it to work, it needed a strong mandate. A strong mandate was supposed to have a clear definition of the main purpose which was equity. They needed to define equity. Secondly, he thought there was confusion about the previously rejected report. He asked if the report was a part of the Commission going forward. There needed to be clarity so that it could be successful.

The Clerk said, "Time. And, Mr. Mayor, we did receive some comments online. We received a letter from the Charleston Downtown Alliance in support of establishing the Business Improvement District. We received two letters from a family on Stocker Drive, Julie Moore and Thomas Rhode, in support of the amendment regarding home businesses and asked to approve the City's acknowledgement that home businesses were an important factor in the community. Eight people opposed ratification of the Business Improvement District and stated they historically drove up rents. Forty-seven people supported the amendment regarding home businesses and agreed that the Holy Mackerel Infant Aquatics program provided lifesaving skills to children. Forty-three people asked that City Council vote against the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. They said it was rushed and citizens had not had time to research, attend, and share ideas. Seventy-seven people supported the establishment of the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. Three people complained about citizens attending the meeting being required to show proof of vaccination and a valid ID. They said the requirement was not necessary or effective. And then we also received a petition from Mike O'Neill, which was distributed to Councilmembers electronically, opposing Item number L-10. And those were all the items that we received."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Great. So, thank you all for participating, and that's the end of our public participation period. There were so many others that signed up online. We're going to respectfully ask that, if you weren't called upon, that you send us an email or give us a phone call to our voicemail, and Madam Clerk would be happy to distribute that information to Council. Do you want to repeat that information?"

The Clerk said, "Yes, Mayor. I might just want to repeat the email address from earlier. It is publiccomments@charleston-sc.gov, or you can leave a message at 843-579-6313, and we'll share the comments with Mayor and Council."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Great. Thank you, so much. So, next up, is our petitions and communications. We have appointments to the Homeownership Initiative Commission."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid.

There was an interruption from someone online.

Councilmember Shahid said, "Point of question. There were some people who called in."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Were they not allowed to talk?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "With the volume of them and the time of our participation period, which we've extended considerably, I don't know how much over 30 minutes we went, but, yes, I think there's about 50 or 60 more people."

The Clerk said, "So, Councilmember Shahid, the Mayor announced at the beginning of Citizens' Participation that the Rules of Council set it at 30 minutes, and that's in the Code. And, we certainly understand, we had a number of people who signed up to speak. But, in order to have meaningful participation, we wanted to give everyone at least a minute's time to speak. So, those who did not get an opportunity to speak, or were not called on, they can email their comments to the email address that I provided or leave a message at that telephone number, and we'll get those comments to everyone."

Councilmember Shahid said, "We'll follow the Rules of Council, but I think it just needs to be clear that folks who attempted to talk or tried to comment, what the reason was, so that there is a clear understanding of what's going on today. Thank you. Thanks for the explanation, Madam Clerk, I appreciate it."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Sakran.

Councilmember Sakran said, "Thank you, Mayor. Just a clarifying question. Did these folks online sign up thinking they were going to speak?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "They did sign up online, yes, sir. And we allowed everyone who came physically to be able to express themselves, yes, sir."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Any way to determine how many are online?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Excuse me?"

Councilmember Sakran said, "How many folks are online waiting to speak?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I don't know how many people are still online total. I don't know."

The Clerk said, "I don't know how many are."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have another 54, about another 40 people signed up. If it's the pleasure of Council, we can extend the Public Participation further and call on all of them. We're going by Council rules. I know at the County they cut it at 30 people, and that's it."

Councilmember Sakran said, "I realize it's probably not a popular decision, but these folks have been waiting. There are several items on tonight's agenda that are contentious, and I think they deserve to be heard. That's my opinion."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "If it's the will of Council. You want to present a motion?"

Councilmember Parker said, "I do agree. I agree with the limitations that were put on who could access and come to this meeting tonight. I think it would be fair to allow virtual comment."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Did I hear a motion?"

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Sakran.

Councilmember Sakran said, "I'd like to make a motion to allow them, the number of speakers, and give them 30 seconds, if that's the pleasure of Council."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Do I hear a second?"

Councilmember Parker said, "Second."

On a motion of Councilmember Sakran, seconded by Councilmember Parker, City Council voted to extend Citizens' Participation Period.

Councilmember Shahid said, "I would like to propose an amended motion."

The Clerk said, "Excuse me."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Out of order."

The Clerk said, "I need to know who all voted in favor of that motion and who the 'nays' were. So, do you want to do a roll call vote?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Please. We have a motion to extend our Public Participation, to call on the names on your sign up list and allow them 30 seconds."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Shealy."

Councilmember Shealy said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Sakran."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Yes."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Mitchell."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Brady."

Councilmember Brady said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Waring."

Councilmember Waring said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Seekings."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Shahid."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Nay."

Councilmember Bowden said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Appel."

Councilmember Appel said, "Yes."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Parker."

Councilmember Parker said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Mayor Tecklenburg."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes."

The Clerk said, "I believe the motion passes. I believe it is 6 to 5. Let me just double-check."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "There's 12 of us here."

The Clerk said, "It's 6 to 6, so it fails."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "6 to 6, so it fails. Alright. Well, thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid.

Councilmember Shahid said, "I'd like to propose this motion. Mr. Mayor, that we identify the folks who have signed up, who wanted to talk, and for them to identify if they are in favor or in opposition to whatever issue is before us. That's simply it. And we just get a count from them, if they are for something or against something. They don't have to comment, but we can just certainly know the number of people who have made that known. We can do that outside, that's fine. As we proceed with the meeting, if somebody can handle that, so we can just get a count from them on what position they are taking and that's it, the number."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Can the folks online communicate via the chat box?"

The Clerk said, "No."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "They can't? Ok. Just thought I'd check. Alright, I just don't know how we would accomplish that during the meeting."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Point of order, Mr. Mayor. I'd like to explain my vote, which I think I'm allowed to do by rules of our council."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir. Councilmember Seekings."

Councilmember Seekings said, "No one wants to sit here for hours and hours and hours if we don't have to, but one of the observations about one of the votes we're going to take tonight has been process."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Has been what?"

Councilmember Seekings said, "Process. That the process has been fractured, has not been accessible, and this debate and what's happening now is a perfect example of that. And if we are going to have debate, full debate from our City about issues that are contentious, and there are many different points of view, we have to set up a process to allow people to be heard. And no matter what we do tonight, that's not going to happen. I mean, I'm going to make more comments when we come to vote on the Commission, but the way we've gotten to this point is not inclusive, and we're talking about inclusivity. That's a problem. That's a problem. So, I hope when we get to vote on this, fellow Councilmembers, you recognize that we have not heard from everybody. Whether we like what they have to say or not, we need to hear from everybody, and they need to have confidence that this process has been inclusive across the board, no matter what your opinion is. And starting with the first time we brought up the Commission, right before Christmas at the time of the holidays, at the time we're taking up the budget, and now where we've cut off debate, and all these people out there want to be heard, we've limited access to City Council chambers, rightfully so, by the way. I mean, we've got a health crisis out there. But again, that all has conspired together to put us in a procedural quandary, and I just don't think it's right

for us to go forward and vote on something when we know that there are lots of people out there who came tonight to City Council who couldn't get in, who are online and wanted to talk, and we're going to receive their comments ex post facto? That doesn't work for me. And so, just to leave of my chin when it comes to this, I think we should defer the contentious matters and go from there because, even if we extend the time, it's fractured, it's not complete, and it's got lots of holes in it, and we would be rightfully subject to criticism about it. Let's do it the right way. That's my explanation for my vote."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. No outbursts from the audience please. Councilmember Mitchell."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Mr. Mayor, I understand what some of my colleagues were saying about doing this and extending, but when you make a rule that you're going to have a thirty-minute period, a thirty-minute period is a thirty-minute period. You go to Charleston County, Charleston County has a thirty-minute period, and once the thirty-minute period is up, it's over. You know, when you are making rules and regulations, as you stated, rules and regulations are rules and regulations. And I say now, we have been dealing with this, not just today, but ever since last year. All this time last year, they were coming to this council, talking about this over and over again, the same people coming and talking about it over and over again. So, it's not that the people that are on that line have not been here speaking before. Some of them on that line have spoken before. The council meeting we had at Daniel Island, you saw what happened with that. It got out of hand, and I say the same thing is going to happen. We have a thirty-minute period, and this was discussed. The Mayor at one time lingered longer just to give everyone the chance to speak, and what happened? You know, we have to be about the business. We have rules and regulations that we have to abide by, so everyone has to abide by the rules, too. Thirty minutes, period. And we give everyone a chance to speak. Not just today, last council meeting, council meeting before that, December, November, they all had a chance to voice their opinion. They're coming back with the same things they were saying before. So why do you want to hear these same things over and over again? I don't know what school you might have gone to, but this is not the way things work. We have to stop it. You have to come to a point when you make a decision, you stand by the decision, and you take the whooping or the beating that you have to take. That's what I was saying. Some of my colleagues are looking at this and saying this to be here all night long. No. We have done that more than one time. Move on."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Waring.

Councilmember Waring said, "I hear you, Councilmember Mitchell. Why don't we, if we extend it, we put a time limit on it. If we want to extend it another 30 minutes, we'll be here another hour, hour and a half. Beyond that, I think, would be unreasonable, but there have been some people online that, you know, tried to speak, maybe out of turn, but certainly had the impression that they would be able to speak. So, I put a motion on the floor that we extend it another 30 minutes. If that passes, whoever speaks, speaks, and then the remainder can submit online. The rules allow for that, by the way, if Council were to vote to extend the time."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have another motion on the floor. Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have a second."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Mayor, I totally agree, but we're getting ready to set a precedent here. What I mean by that is we cannot say we're going to do that for this, and it's not going to be the rule across the board. I know we have the ability to extend, but at what point will we say we're not going to extend is my question. To me, I agree. If people want to speak, they should be allowed to speak. However, if there are rules in place, we need to adhere to those rules. However, if we're about to do something differently, all I'm suggesting is that, as we move forward, we cannot just do it for this particular situation. Any time we have many people, regardless of the subject matter, that have already signed up wanting to speak, I think what we're setting now is precedent if that can happen, period. I don't have a problem as long as we're going to be consistent."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Well, thank you. I will point out that there are some modifications to Public Participation that we are proposing in our Council Rules that you will consider for first reading this evening, later tonight, and then we'll give final approval to these at our next meeting. I do think, from a sense of fairness, since these new rules are not in effect yet, that it's reasonable to extend the time this evening. If we want to call it that we're going to cut it off at 15, then it should be advertised in our agenda, and it's fine by me to do it that way, if Council agrees, but we didn't advertise it exactly that way, so that's why I voted 'yes' a few minutes ago to extending it. We'll hear everybody out and have a good evening here, if everybody's agreeable. So, can I call the question again? Did somebody else want to be recognized?"

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Parker.

Councilmember Parker said, "Yes, thank you. Yes, Councilmember Mitchell, I agree, we have Rules of Order. Respectfully so, this evening we know that the rules of access to Council Chambers changed tonight, so I think that's something to take into consideration. There were folks that could not be here, and they signed up online to speak, and that's where, I think, that's where I would certainly be okay with the change. I understand, moving forward, if you're setting a precedent, but there is a change in the way that we have handled tonight's meeting, if I'm correct."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I think that's correct."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, "My understanding is there's a motion on the floor to extend by 30 minutes. Is that right?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Correct."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Well, I'm not going to vote for that. I don't think that cures the procedural problem that we have. If we're recognizing that we have a procedural problem, we need to fix it completely. We can't just arbitrarily shut it down. I think access has been an issue tonight, the manner which has gotten us here. We're, procedurally, in a really bad place, and I

think we can fix it all by resetting and starting all over again. Just putting another 30 minutes on it is not going to fix it.”

Councilmember Waring said, “Well, amend the motion.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “I voted in favor of just extending it, but I still don’t think it fixes it because we’re so fractured. People have left, people have probably hung up online, who knows what’s happened out there in the public while we’re still talking about this.”

On a motion of Councilmember Waring, seconded by Councilmember Shahid, City Council voted to extend Citizens’ Participation for 30 minutes.

The vote was not unanimous. Councilmember Seekings voted nay.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Alright, we’re going to extend it for 30 minutes. How many people do we have left?”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Roll call that vote, or was I the only ‘no?’”

Councilmember Gregorie said, “You were the only ‘no.’”

There was laughter.

Councilmember Seeking said, “Okay, that’s fine. I just want to make sure.”

The Clerk said, “Alright, it might be good if I just start calling everyone’s name. Did you want to start and set a time limit?”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Yes.”

The Clerk said, “It’s 34. So, I’m going to start calling out the remainder of the list for people who signed up virtually. Mara Bee, if you’re online, if you could press *6. Mara Bee. Sarah Thompson.”

40. Sarah Thompson quoted MLK Jr., “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.” She said the history and continued indirect oppression and exile of Black Charlestonians was horrifying, and they could not continue to deny it or stand with anyone that did. She urged them to commit to equity by voting yes to the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. She said Council needed to learn from the Commission’s previous and future recommendations and hold Jamal Sutherland’s killers criminally accountable. She said performative efforts and support were not enough. They saw right through it. This was history in the making, they would not let up, and they would continue to speak. The City, State, and world was watching. Black lives mattered. It was not hard to be a decent human being.

The Clerk said, “Time. Tracy Doran.”

No one spoke.

The Clerk said, "Sandy Morkel."

41. Sandy Morkel said she was part of the leadership team of Social Justice Racial Equity Collaborative, which represented 60 organizations and 40 community leaders coming together. She said it was a good thing to move forward, and she encouraged them to support it and move on so they could work on resolving these issues in Charleston.

The Clerk said, "Ruth Rambo."

No one spoke.

The Clerk said, "Ben Cash."

42. Ben Cash said he was opposed to the creation of the King Street BID and supported the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission. Regarding the Commission, it was not about blame or shame. It was about recognizing that the people who helped build Charleston's wealth had not shared in and benefited from that growth. They were in a position to right that wrong. He said the report was an investment in the community and included provisions to provide loans to Black-owned businesses, tools to increase Black homeownership, promoting access to telehealth to increase access to healthcare, and increasing access to educational programs. He said they all benefited from those things. He asked them to ignore national, political agendas and read the report. He asked Council to consider the impact it could have on their community as a whole.

The Clerk said, "Joyce Myers."

43. Ruth Rambo thanked Council for extending their time. She said it was an access issue, and she also mentioned that Council's microphones were cutting out, which made it hard for the hearing impaired to hear what was being said, and there were no closed captions. She was in support of the Commission and against the BID. She said masks were required, so she asked why Councilmember Parker wasn't wearing one.
44. Joyce Myers asked for the vote to be delayed until District 1 had a representative. She said the Commission had too much excessive influence by unelected individuals with divisive, un-American agendas to establish City regulations and laws they didn't need.
45. Carlos Milan Noble said he was opposed to the BID and fully supported the Commission. He urged Council to vote in favor of its official establishment. It was important they voted in favor of the Commission's previous and future recommendations to advance racial equity and empower Charleston's Black community for future generations.

The Clerk said, "Richard Scurry."

46. Richard Scurry asked Council to defer the ordinance because it was wrong to rush it through. What they were trying to accomplish was huge, expensive, and controversial. Both advocates and opponents needed more time to explain it to Charlestonians. He said more than 1,300 people had signed a petition online asking for additional time.
47. Belvin Olasov, co-director of Charleston Climate Coalition, said he was in favor of the Commission. Much like the climate crisis, the racial justice issues in the Lowcountry could not be addressed passively. They needed to be addressed with dedicated and proactive action from Charleston's power centers. Black Charlestonians had been pushed out of the City for decades, and the abominable state of public housing continued, with the majority of residents being black and brown. The wealth gap in Charleston continued to be shamefully large. He encouraged them to "do the right thing."

The Clerk said, "Tara Wood."

No one spoke.

The Clerk said, "Reverend Jimmy Gallant."

48. Reverend Jimmy Gallant said Reuben Greenberg probably had one of the best police forces in the Country, and he did a lot. He focused on presence and had his officers walk a beat and get involved in the community. He said they knew from the past that it worked really well. One police officer discharged their firearm in 18 years. Police departments from all over the country came to learn from Reuben Greenberg. He wanted to urge Council to look at the things that could work and be applied.

The Clerk said, "Pastor Eugene Richardson. We have some people that signed up on both lists. William Hecht. Patrick Schlabs. Reverend Charles Heyward. Dubose Kapaulack. Robert Lawrence. Rainey Forrestburg. Sheri Irwin."

49. Robert Barnes urged Council to reject the ordinance and delay forming a new Commission. The Commission's report had been rejected twice. It was being revived under a new name, but the proposals were the same. It's aims were noble, but many of the proposals were extremely controversial and divisive. If they were going to appoint a new Commission, he asked that they make their own proposals so that the Commission knew what they're voting for. He said they didn't know what they were voting for because the only thing they had was the old Commission's report, which had a lot of issues. He asked them to delay voting on it, allow the new Commission to create their own proposals to fit Charleston, and then vote on each proposal individually.

The Clerk said, "Thomas Hamilton."

50. Thomas Hamilton said the big lie was that changing the name of the rejected Commission changed what was included in the report. The greater good would not be accomplished with the passage of the ordinance. It racially divided the City and judged Charlestonians based on their skin color. In August, the report was rejected. However, the Mayor kept pushing it forward. The report still contained reparations, page 26, critical race theory, page 52, defunding the police, page 49, and eliminating bail, page 23. He said the Commission would divide Charleston and make it into the likeness of San Francisco and Portland. He asked them to vote no or, at least, table it until all Charlestonians had a voice on the issue.

The Clerk said, "Brett Barry."

51. Brett Barry said reviving the Commission legitimized its extremist report. Any Commission that put forth such radical proposals should not be supported by Council. The only thing new about the Commission being considered was its name. He saw reports of Councilmembers distancing themselves from the Commission's recommendations, yet they were talking about reestablishing it. He asked if the Commission's previous members would be banned from participating. If not, the radicalism was guaranteed to continue. He asked them to vote 'no' to the Commission.

The Clerk said, "Robert Barns. William Hammus. Mimi Wood. John Barns. Mammie Rand. Naomi Matthews. Dr. Bobby Baker. That was all that we had signed up."

Dubose Kapaulack said, "This is Dubose Kapaulack. Can I get in? You called me a second ago."

The Clerk said, "Yes."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir."

52. Dubose Kapaulack said he was opposed to making the renamed Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation permanent. He said they were told that defunding the police and critical race theory were not up for a vote that evening, but those actions were well within the purview of the Commission's recommendations. Statue removal was mentioned prominently, and many other revolutionary proposals were cloaked in nebulous, social justice jargon. Other cities that had gone the route Council was considering were not havens of racial harmony, and many of those citizens were now refugees in Charleston. Race relations in those cities were not better. He said local government governed best when it focused on what it did best, providing high quality public services at a cost comparative to rival cities in the area. That included public safety and making the City a good place to raise children and make a living. He said the Commission would do neither.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, sir. Yes, ma'am. I'd like to call on this lady, who's been waiting all night."

53. A woman said she had been a Charlestonian since 1967. It was a beautiful City, and she had watched it explode with new buildings. It no longer had the charm. Everything

about it had changed. As a former teacher in Charleston County, she asked them to think about CRT. She asked them to never present that. She felt that part of the problem was they didn't really understand what CRT was and what it would do to the citizens. It would pit blacks and whites against each other. There would be no reconciliation if they took that step.

The Clerk said, "Time."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. Yes, sir."

54. A man asked Council to defer approving the King Street BID. He was concerned tenants in the area did not fully understand that their occupancy cost would increase for a lot of services they were already receiving. Given that there were rising costs to downtown businesses in general, he thought extreme caution was necessary in order to gather more details for tenants.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, sir, and thank you for your service on the CDA. Did we miss anybody? The floor is open. Come forward. Alright, I think that is the end of Public Participation. Thank you, everybody, for sharing your comments with us. Can I ask Council, based on that one comment we heard about the hearing, to please, when you speak, have your microphone on and speak more directly right into the microphone? Sometimes they're kind of far away. We're supposed to get some new microphones. I don't know when we're getting them, but these are a little inadequate. The closer you speak, not too close, but closer than you normally do, I think that would help. Okay, so now we can go to our Petitions and Communications. We have up some [appointments to the Homeownership Initiative Commission](#)."

Councilmember Waring said, "Move for approval."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have a motion to approve and a second. Any discussion?"

No one asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Waring, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to approve the following appointments:

- a. Homeownership Initiative Commission:
 - John Rhoden – Reappointment (Represents Contractor)
 - Stacey Bailey – Reappointment (Represents Peninsula Resident)
 - Ruthie Smythe – Reappointment (Represents Real Estate)
 - Jonathan Altman – Reappointment (Represents Attorney)
 - Asis D. Martinez – New Appointment (Represents Peninsula Resident)
 - Mike Tecosky – New Appointment (Represents Banking)

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next we have a brief, very brief, update on the [City's response to COVID-19](#). I'm going to call on Tracy McKee, and she's also going to introduce to you all our new Wellness Program Manger online, Mary Cummings. Tracy. Is your microphone on?"

Several Councilmembers said, "No."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Let's check that. I'm not hearing. That's better."

Ms. McKee said, "Okay, there we go. I believe that Mary is with us via Zoom and, as the Mayor said, she is our new Wellness Program Manager. We're very excited to have her on board, someone with some medical background to help me relay all this COVID information to you all. Mary, did you want to take a moment to introduce yourself?"

Ms. Cummings said, "Yes. Hey, guys. Can you hear me?"

Ms. McKee said, "Yes."

Ms. Cummings said, "My name is Mary Cummings. I am the new Wellness Manager for the City of Charleston. I was born in Charleston, raised in West Ashley, attended MUSC for nursing school, worked there and then a little bit of time at East Cooper Medical Center, and then just took over this position in November. So, very excited to be here and work with everyone."

Ms. McKee said, "Awesome. Thank you. Thank you so much for staying on."

Ms. Cummings said, "Absolutely."

Ms. McKee said, "Yeah, so we'll be very brief tonight with our update. Go ahead to the next slide, guys. So, I think we all know we are in the middle of a surge in cases. Our charts, our graphs, look very much like the rest of the Country right now. Over the past two weeks, we've seen almost a 900% increase in new cases. Next slide. In Berkeley County, that has exceeded 1,000% over the previous 2 weeks. Next slide.

A little update on City employee cases. We currently have 85 active cases. This was from yesterday. I did get an update before coming to speak to you all. We now have over 80 employees that are in isolation waiting for test results. So, we are over 160 employees currently. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we've had 563 total cases. Mary is part of the amazing team that has done all of our contact tracing. Over 2,000 employees have been contact traced since the beginning of the pandemic, which is a very, very mighty task. They've been very, very, very busy this last week, or the last couple of weeks. Next slide please.

So, just a little update from MUSC. Virtually all cases in our region are currently now from the Omicron variant. You all have heard me say before that MUSC does do the sequencing on all the tests that they perform, so they are reporting that now. Not a surprise. The previous variants were transmitted in time in minutes. Omicron can be transmitted in a matter of seconds, so it is very contagious. People who are not vaccinated currently have an extremely high risk of catching and transmitting the Omicron variant. Vaccinations, as well as a booster of an mRNA vaccine, remain the most potent and durable way to protect yourself from COVID-19. That might be it. Next slide.

A couple of resources: testing, you can go to [SCDEHC.gov/COVID19testing](https://www.scdhec.gov/COVID19testing) to find a testing location. Then the VAX Locator from DHEC, as well, to get a vaccine. Mary and I will be more than happy to try to answer any questions you all have.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Any questions for Tracy or Mary?”

No one asked to speak.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “I want to thank them for their work. I do want to just point out, our primary concern continues to be the health and wellness of our citizens and our employees, also, secondarily, providing our City services to our citizens. So, unfortunately, this Omicron variant is so contagious that we’ve got more people positive now than we’ve ever had. Now the good news is they don’t get so sick, but they’re out of work. So between 85 that are positive and 50-something that are waiting, we’re got almost knocking on 10% of our workforce out of work right now. So that’s another reason, secondary to everyone’s health and wellness I must say, but still an important reason to try to be as careful and cautious as we can over the next couple of weeks while this thing is really spiking. We’ve seen around the world and other places where it spikes pretty quick, and then it comes right back down. Hopefully, that’s going to happen here. We’re not there, yet.”

Ms. McKee said, “We’re not there, yet.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “It looks like that last dot is still, you know, higher than the prior one. That’s where we are right now. We’ll continue our in-house, City mask policy until that peak goes back down. Alright.”

Ms. McKee said, “Thank you.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “No other questions on that. It’s time for our Council Committee reports. First up is [Committee on Traffic and Transportation](#). Councilmember Seekings.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I will be brief. The Committee on Traffic and Transportation met yesterday at 2:00 p.m. We had a full crew there. We took up a number of issues, one of which, I know, is of great importance to everyone sitting around this room, and that was we got an update from Mr. Kronsberg, Mr. Most, and our HCR consultants on the Ashley River Pedestrian Bridge. The presentation boiled down to its basic elements, tell us that we are moving forward with the project. It is going to be more expensive than we originally thought. We currently have set aside, and I talked with Ms. Wharton about this today, and she’ll correct me because I think she’s online if I’m wrong and the Mayor, you know this, too, set aside \$26 million, plus or minus, for this project. The projections, based on the 30% design and the design that’s put out there, if we design it back, it would be reducing the size of the lane going across the bridge from 20 to 14ft., changing the design and the material use of the super structure of the bridge. The guesstimated range, and I think it’s fair to say it’s a guesstimated range because we’re really not even at 30%, is somewhere between \$28-32 million.

So, clearly, we’re going to have a delta, no matter what. We didn’t have a long discussion about how we’re going to make up that delta because there’s still some question about what it’s going to be. The Mayor did indicate that he’ll be, with any luck at all, in Washington next week

and is planning on spending some time at the Department of Transportation and arguing our case to the Department about needing further funding for this project. I think it's fair to say that, at this point, we're fully on go to get from 30% design to a full design of this project, to actually price it out to keep it moving forward. We've got some limitations, by the way, on our Federal grant monies. We have to have certain benchmarks met, although they have been extended. So, the project is moving. It's got some challenges, but they're not challenges that I don't think that we can meet.

I think it's fair to say that, sitting around this table, there's a huge amount of interest in making sure it's successful. I would certainly encourage everybody at this table to stay up with what's going on with this project, to ask questions that you might have. We'll continue to get reports, and I think probably the next really significant report will be in the second quarter of 2022 when we move forward a little bit and see what the design might look like going backwards. When we went out for RFPs for the existing design, to go from 30% to full design, we only had 2, I believe, submittals. When you think for a project like this you might multiply that by a factor of 10, right? It's a very high profile project in Charleston. The reason is because of the cost, so we're cognizant of that.

I want to really shout out Mr. Kronsberg, and Mr. Most, and our HCR team. They're under an enormous amount of pressure on this. They understand that. They know this is an important project for us. I think they're willing to do anything – I don't think, I know – they're willing to do anything that its going to take for this project to go forward, and I would certainly encourage this Council to be supportive of that as we go. Yes, sir?"

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Quick question. Did we start around \$18 million for this bridge?"

Councilmember Seekings said, "I believe that our Federal grant was \$18 million and change. We then had City monies and County monies totaling about \$5 million, and then we dedicated another \$3 million from City monies, which gets us to the \$26 million. The \$18 million was the Federal grant. We knew we couldn't build it for \$18 million."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Right."

Councilmember Seekings said, "There was some thought we might be able to build it for the low-\$20 to mid-\$20 million. I think, to be fair, that's probably out the door at this point, just the passage of time, if nothing else, even if the design didn't change, the material costs, labor costs, and all that, as you know, have gone through the roof. So, we're going to have some challenges on the funding side, but I think we started, in our minds, again, before we got to 30% design in the low to mid-\$20 million. I think that's a fair statement."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Councilmember Shahid had another question."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Thank you. I participated in the meeting yesterday. I appreciated the opportunity to address the Committee. The comment that was made about making it narrower, there are still some concerns. I heard what the Mayor said about it, it's not

going to impact the safety of the structure, but just, if we're going to get more money, and I think we need to get more money, I don't want to retreat so quickly from the idea of the original width of this bridge because this bridge is going to last beyond our lifetime. It's designed specifically to carry pedestrians and bicyclists, and unlike the Cooper River bridge that is used more, I think, from my personal experience, as recreational, this is going to have, obviously, a recreational component to it, but it's going to have a moving people aspect, as well. So, I know the cost is there, and I understand that we're not attacking the integrity of the structure, however, I would just ask, Mayor, as we look for more money and, members of the Transportation Committee, as we go forward with this thing, let's aim higher than lower.

Mayor Riley was one of the most outspoken proponents of the new Cooper River bridge. I remember that the aspect was it was two lanes, and then it was three, and then he said, "No, let's think big on this thing," and we got an 8-lane bridge. Plus, and I think some school children in East Cooper came up with the idea of the pedestrian/bike part of it, so we need to have the vision for this thing. It may be more expensive, God forbid, it may be \$50 million by the time I finish talking ---"

Councilmember Seekings said, "If you don't hurry up, it will be."

There was laughter.

Councilmember Shahid said, "I will, but I just want to urge all of us who are involved in the decision making part of this thing to be looking at it from that kind of grand scheme and not the more narrow scheme. Thank you. I didn't mean to run off."

Councilmember Seekings said, "I concur with that. I think that's really the right look on this right now because we still have some room to move, and there's some room for some advocacy internally here for that project."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Appel.

Councilmember Appel said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and thank you, Chairman Seekings, for giving me the opportunity yesterday to participate in the Committee meeting. Obviously, this project is of the utmost important to me and my constituents, as I represent the part of West Ashley where the bridge will sort of emanate from into downtown. I want to throw my sentiments behind Councilmember Shahid's comments about not retreating too quickly. I want to give a shout out to Councilmember Waring, who has spoken often so eloquently about the need for robust, collaborative engagement with our other local government entities, the County, even the State. I have to tell you, this current bump in the road isn't going to be the last bump in the road. This is called building infrastructure in the United States in the 21st century. Ask Charleston County about bumps in the road with I-526. The list goes on and on. So, the more we assemble a robust team of stakeholders, with skin in the game, that want to see this project happen, the more resilient we'll be when we hit those bumps in the road, and we can keep running in stride. I mean, good lord, they're giving out money left and right in Columbia and the Federal government right now. This is a very opportune time. This is a very great project that checks a lot of boxes. It checks an equity box, it checks a mobility box, it checks so many different boxes. It's a wonderful project. I just want to echo the comments made this evening, and let's keep working, and let's get it done. Thanks."

Councilmember Seekings said, "So, more to come. Yes, sir, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Could I just pick up on that remark from Councilmember Appel?"

Councilmember Seekings said, "Of course."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I'll be in D.C., as was mentioned, next week. I'll be meeting with the Department of Transportation, explaining our situation, and seeing the possibilities of additional funding beyond the \$18 million. But while I'm doing that, could I charge you with getting with whoever else is willing and sit down with our County and our State reps, and staff will help you, and give them an update, as well, so everybody is on the same page and knows where we're at with this thing, that we're moving forward? I think it's a great idea to go ahead and give them an update and let them know we may be needing some help from them."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Well, I'm certainly happy to do that, Mr. Mayor, as the chairman of this committee for the next two weeks. Anyways, I think we all can communicate with our fellow elected representatives at the County and State level. If there's nothing else, I'm going to move on, but more to come on the bridge. I think we all, collectively, have a lot of work to do, but it's going to be a great project when it's all said and done."

You may recall back in July of 2020, if you can remember that far back, when COVID was really hitting us for the first wave, we undertook some measures through Traffic and Transportation. They actually emanated from Councilmember Brady. They came through the Bike and Ped Committee, through Traffic and Transportation, and to this Council, all adopted unanimously, and one of which was to see if we could put in place a pilot program to allow people to add dining in certain places in the City outdoors, one of which was in parklets. Parklets, simply stated, are areas of dining in parking spaces on the Peninsula, essentially, but not limited to the Peninsula. We adopted that policy as a pilot program, but as we adopted it, we also adopted it with an eye for it to be a permanent program, to allow some measures to be put in place through our design division and through our Planning Department that if certain criteria were met and neighborhoods and areas agreed, that we could have perhaps some permanent or semi-permanent parklets out there.

During the temporary phase, 2 businesses availed themselves of that program. One is on Cannon Street, and that one block of Cannon Street is a State highway. The other is on Line Street at the corner of St. Philip. That happens actually to be a City road. So, they were in difference positions as the end of this came. Unfortunately, we're not at the end of COVID, but we're at the end of the rope with DOT, and they sent a letter to Mr. Somerville, as our Director of Traffic and Transportation, to dismantle the Baba's parklet. I think we've issued the same directive now to the Line Street parklet, which is on a City-controlled street. Those parklets were popular across the board. They were successful. The businesses liked them. They weren't without controversy, for sure. I attended, and thanks to Councilmember Mitchell for allowing me to take the stage, the Cannonborough-Elliotborough neighborhood meeting a couple weeks ago, and there was a lot of conversation about these parklets. They actually formed a committee to sort of look, in their view, about how we can do these permanently.

One of the things that we've asked Mr. Somerville to do, and I don't know if you've ever seen a map of the roads and streets that we, in the City, own downtown, but it's a crazy checkerboard of stuff. It's no real rhyme or reason to it. The question came up, and really I think this was driven a little bit by my inquiry, what does it really mean if we control roads in downtown in terms of our bottom line and what it costs us? The County is still paving them. If you go and look at the roads that we own, you probably wouldn't even know it, one of which is Cannon Street, the next block over, between St. Philip and Coming. What do we spend on those? So, we're going to go do a little research as we think about trying to make this program permanent. We're going to have to bring streets into the City, perhaps, and if we do, we have to know what the bottom line for that is. Certainly, if we do it, we'd want to charge for people being in the public realm, we want to make sure there's buy in for it, we want to make sure there's a design that's safe and attractive. The directive from the meeting was to go forward, Mr. Somerville, report back to us sort of on a bottom line what this would cost us if we were going to take back streets. I think, and I certainly want to hear from you all, this has been a popular program, even though only 2 businesses availed themselves of it. I think there's some opportunity going forward.

The last couple of things, well, there are 3 more. We had a discussion about our nonconsensual tow ordinance. That's the ordinance that allows for towing from private lots. There are different categories of private lots, which became very clear in the conversation we had yesterday. I think the Mayor had in his mind nonconsensual tows from lots who charge you to park there a certain period of time. You put money into a little box, you put the sticker up in your car. There has been some anecdotal evidence that there may be some predatory practices there. When your time runs out, literally a second later, your car is towed. It's on the hooks. That's unacceptable, and I think that's maybe something we can deal with through the business licensing program.

Then there's those who just own private lots. They don't charge people to be on them, but people use them anyway. There are a couple of perfect examples downtown, one of which is where Jackson Davenport does its business. They've got 4 or 5 spaces there on King Street. It says 'for customers only.' They don't charge anyone to park there. Customers use it, and non-customers use it. They have a big sign up there that says 'if you're not a customer, you're going to be towed.' That's a nonconsensual tow.

One of the proposals, and it came from doing some research, and I want to thank Ms. Halversen for this because she really did an amazing job, is North Myrtle Beach. They've adopted a nonconsensual tow ordinance which requires, before the tow is taken, that a police officer, or a sworn officer, or a representative of the City, I think in North Myrtle Beach it's actually a sworn officer, be called, show up, and sign off on the tow. That's got some issues with it in terms of timing, right? So, I think in the end what we did is we directed Ms. Halversen to sort of distinguish between the predatory practices of those who are charging money to be on the property and just, boom, taking you right away and those who are actually being put out by those who are parking, using their spaces, and not doing it for the avowed purpose. That will come back to us. There was no action taken, and no ordinance was presented to us.

Just so you know, we have chosen a new provider of our bike share services. It's a company that you've probably heard of, Lime. A couple things. No, they're not going to do lime green bike share bikes. They have actually given us a prototype that has a bike that looks very similar to what is out there now with the blue. It will have a little green stripe on it to identify

themselves. No, they're not going to bring scooters along with it. It's going to be bikes. My mailbox blew up with that today. Yes, we're going to hope to have a seamless transition between where we are and where we're going. The current contract ends in February, so there's going to be some pretty quick work done, but look to see bikes, brand new bikes. They're going to be pedal assist, so they're hybrids. They are pedal, but they are limited in the speed they can go. So, look for that on a street corner near you sometime soon.

We did have a very brief executive session. You may recall that we, as a City Council, approved for the pedicab industry 6 additional tokens to be put out for bid. There were some issues with that bid process. We got some excellent legal advice from Ms. Halversen about what to do about that, and we directed our Legal staff to redraft the ordinance before we put these medallions back out for bid. So, with that, and for the last time, I guess, for a long time, that is my report as Chairman of the Traffic and Transportation Committee. I welcome all of you to ask any questions you might have. Thank you very much."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "God bless."

Councilmember Seekings said, "All of it for information only."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Sakran and then Shahid.

Councilmember Sakran said, "Thank you, Mayor. I just wanted to briefly just thank Mike, Councilmember Seekings, for taking kind of the lead on that. I know it's Councilmember Mitchell's district. I spoke to both of those business owners, and they're very thankful for the effort that we're trying to do on the parklets. Just as a business owner, I could tell you that, for one of those businesses, it 'got them through COVID.' So, our help, helping them get through COVID with that parklet, was immense. When you think about Charleston, you think about our streetscape and our relationship with automobiles. You know, parts of our City, it looks great. I mean, you look, it was all lit up, folks were walking by, it slows traffic down, it reimagines our streets, and I think we need to really think about what that could look like in our downtown areas. Like I said, both business owners are very supportive. I think, by and large, it's well liked by the community, but there are some folks that are opposed. But I just want to say, as a business owner, I think it's great, and I think we should try to expand that concept to other parts of the City where it fits in. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid then Mitchell.

Councilmember Shahid said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I'm intrigued by your comments, Councilmember Seekings, about City ownership of streets. The reason I'm bringing that up is because roads in our County, which became incorporated into the City, had a designated purpose of moving goods and material from point a to point b, but residential areas grew up around that. The State Department of Transportation is very stingy about reducing speed limits and, if you look at, we had this discussion with Mr. Somerville about Old Town Road and Orange Grove Road, which are heavily populated by residential communities, it's a struggle to get DOT to reduce the speed limit on that. So, my question is, if we have a more aggressive mechanism of taking ownership of more streets, wouldn't we have control over that, as far as issuing things with speed and other matters? My constituents are crying out, particularly on parts of Orange Grove Road, about reducing, it's 35 mph. On Old Town Road, it's 45 mph. That's a heavily populated area in

that triangle between Old Town Road and Orange Grove Road and other streets in that area. I love the idea of us taking over control of more of these streets and roads.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Well, it’s a double-edged sword. As you know, getting into transportation business is expensive. We do, I mean, I’ve got this map, it’s hard to see it, but it’s a checkerboard of roads that we control downtown. It’s a block at a time, here and there. A couple of anecdotal, well, three things. You know we took back Murray Boulevard so we could do the Low Battery Sea Wall because, if we didn’t, we were going to have to relocate all of our utilities below the streets because the DOT wouldn’t let us have utilities below their streets, so one. Two, we took back a portion of Rutledge Avenue at the corner of Bennett Street because the DOT wouldn’t allow us to put up a stop sign because there hadn’t been enough evidence presented to them of injury or death at the corner. So, they literally were waiting for us to send them a report of that happening before they’d allow us a stop sign. Mercifully, we thought better of that, took the road back, and the stop sign is very, very, very popular. The last one I’ll point out is when I represented part of West Ashley. As you come across the bridge, across the Wappoo Cut into West Ashley, the speed limit there is 45 mph. At the time, we sent a letter asking the DOT to reduce the speed limit, and we literally got a letter back, I have to go find it, I have it somewhere, that said, ‘well, we really believe that motorists are more comfortable at 45 mph across that bridge.’ So, it’s a double-edged sword. If we get too heavily into the business, we’re going to have to figure out how we maintain them. I’m sure Mr. Somerville is out there listening right now and is having heart palpitations.”

There was laughter.

Councilmember Seekings said, “We have to be pretty careful about that, but we’re going to get sort of pretty good insight about what it costs us to own these roads, particularly on the Peninsula, and then we can further that conversation. It is nice to control your own roads, particularly when it comes to safety, and we all know we have some safety issues in the area.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Absolutely. Councilmember Mitchell.”

Councilmember Mitchell said, “Yes. Councilmember Seekings, after you left the meeting, I think the Neighborhood Association President called you the next day, and they were going to vote on appealing it, but what they did, what he did, he said let’s form a committee and go through it. The one individual, Cutty’s on Bogard Street, he is satisfied. He said, ‘We’re going to take it. I don’t have a problem with it. Let it go.’ But the Neighborhood Association, a lot of the neighbors there, the residents there, they were complaining because they’re losing their parking space. That’s going to be another thing there in that area because they’re losing their parking space, and they don’t want to lose any more. They gave it up for a while, they do more of the variance for the people who park in that area, Cannonborough-Elliotborough. They do a lot of that. They give everybody variances, but they said right now they’re not going to do it anymore. They are very serious about taking parking space, about where the community came about and, after you left, that’s what they were talking about. That’s one of the main things they are talking about, losing that parking space that they have, and they need it back. So, they didn’t want to kill it, but they were ready to kill it. They had the votes to do it.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “I know they did. Firstly, we were sort of there to, at least, walk them through and get them, at least, to think about it. So, I think that’s ---”

Councilmember Mitchell said, “So that’s what they are thinking about and putting the committee in place. They’ll come back, and they’ll vote on it later.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Alright.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “That is my report, Mr. Mayor. Thank you.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you, sir.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Well, I didn’t want it to be brief tonight. It’s my last one.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “My only editorial comment is that I stopped by Councilmember Shahid’s office not too long ago, and he had acquired, or somebody had given him, a little annual report from Mayor Stoney from 1928, 104 years ago. In that report, it stated the need for the State government to share road funds with the City, so that it could take care of its streets. That hasn’t happened, yet. We started asking, at least, 104 years ago. To have the authority for those decisions would be a wonderful thing, but the expenses of maintaining the roads long term is, we’ll see, is significant.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Alright. Next up is our [Committee on Public Works and Utilities](#), Councilmember Waring.”

Councilmember Waring said, “Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for your comments, because the whole time I was thinking all of this gas tax that we pay goes to the State, and it doesn’t come back to us to fix these roads that we may be taking over, but anyway. The Committee on Public Works and Utilities did meet yesterday, and I know the Mayor gave credence to the effort of these pumps that are being purchased for Spring/Fishburne, but it is a game changer to take a tract from my colleague, Councilmember Appel. The Spring/Fishburne completion is a reality. We talked about differences to the new Councilmembers. We do work through differences on this Council, and this is a great example of the collaboration that Councilmember Appel spoke of. We need to thank the Governor and the State Infrastructure Bank. It was a grant that totaled an additional \$45 million. Staff went to work burning the midnight oil, getting that grant application in kind of like at the 11th hour, and the whole City has benefited as a result. So, to the new members coming on, some of the drainage projects that have taken place, Councilwoman Parker in James Island, those dollars are made available because that Federal grant came through. Because everything, it would be this big sucking noise taking drainage monies from all over the City to complete the Spring/Fishburne project, so it helped everybody in this City, so we have a lot of people to thank. The Mayor actually took the Governor down in the shaft. Did you go Councilmember Shahid? A number of Councilmembers went, a collaboration of Councilmen, Councilman Shealy, Councilman Gregorie, and it mattered. It mattered. So thank everybody for that collaboration on that one. So, when you see this come through, it was a \$158 million project originally that, through the fault of no one, costs just went up over a five-year period of time, inflation. Nobody factored in that kind of inflation. In fact, that brought it up to a staggering figure of \$200 million, so pats on the back go around to everybody on that one. So, all of these projects that you see a(i), a(ii), and a(iii) passed unanimously, and I so move their adoption.”

Councilmember Mitchell said, “Second.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Any further discussion?"

No one else asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Waring, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the Committee on Public Works and Utilities Report as presented:

---INSERT PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES REPORT---

a. Stormwater Management Department Update:

- (i) Spring Fishburne Phase 5 - Approval of Spring-Fishburne Drainage Improvements Phase 5 - Pump Procurement contract with Xylem Water Solutions in the amount of \$5,959,684 for the supply of three variable speed axial or mixed flow vertical column pumps with diesel engine drives (120,000 gpm) for the future pump station as part of the Spring-Fishburne Phase 5 project. With the approval of the project budget, Staff is authorized to award and/or amend contracts \$40,000 or less, to the extent project contingency funds exist in the Council Approved Budget. Approval of this procurement contract will institute a project budget of \$38,452,663 of which \$5,959,684 will be obligated by this contract. The funding sources for this project are: King St. Gateway TIF (\$26,003,011) and the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (\$12,449,652).
- (ii) Spring Fishburne Phase 5 - Recommend approval of Fee Amendment #22 to the Professional Services contract with Davis & Floyd in the amount of \$1,456,700.00 for the pre-construction services to support bidding and awarding of the construction contract for the pump station superstructure, permitting, code review, and design updates. Funding is available from the King St Gateway TIF and SC Transportation Infrastructure Bank.
- (iii) Concord Street Pump Station Upfit - Recommend approval of a Construction Manager at Risk services contract with Black & Veatch Corporation in the amount of \$1,699,540.00 for design services, project implementation plan, project and/or program management, grant funding assistance, permitting research, permitting services, design and construction administrative services, and CMAR representative services. Funding is available within the project budget allocated from the Drainage Fund.

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is our [Committee on Ways and Means](#), Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Move for approval, as amended."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Second, as amended."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "As amended for one of those items, correct. Any discussion on any of those items on Ways and Means?"

No one asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the Ways and Means Report, as amended:

---INSERT WAYS AND MEANS REPORT---

(Bids and Purchases

(Stormwater Management: Approval of Concord Street Pump Station UpFit Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) services contract with Black & Veatch Corporation in the amount of \$1,699,540 for design services, project implementation plan, project and/or program management, grant funding assistance, permitting research, permitting services, design and construction administrative services, CMAR representative services, to update and rehabilitate the Concord Street Pump Station. Approval of this contract will obligate \$1,699,540 of the \$5,996,000 project budget. The funding source for this project is the Drainage Fund.

(Stormwater Management: Approval of Spring-Fishburne Drainage Improvements Phase 5 - Pump Procurement contract with Xylem Water Solutions in the amount of \$5,959,684 for the supply of three variable speed axial or mixed flow vertical column pumps with diesel engine drives (120,000 gpm) for the future pump station as part of the Spring-Fishburne Phase 5 project. With the approval of the project budget, Staff is authorized to award and/or amend contracts \$40,000 or less, to the extent project contingency funds exist in the Council Approved Budget. Approval of this procurement contract will institute a project budget of \$38,452,663 of which \$5,959,684 will be obligated by this contract. The funding sources for this project are: King St. Gateway TIF (\$26,003,011) and the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (\$12,449,652). **(AS AMENDED)**

(Stormwater Management: Approval of Spring-Fishburne US17 Phase 5 Fee Amendment #22 with Davis & Floyd in the amount of \$1,456,700 for pre-construction services to support bidding and awarding of contract of the pump station superstructure, permitting, code review and design updates. Approval of Fee Amendment #22 will increase the Phase 5 portion of the professional services contract by \$1,456,700 (from \$337,842 to \$1,794,542). The funding sources for this project are King Street Gateway TIF (\$26,003,011) and South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (\$12,449,652).

(Police Department: Approval of an MOU between CPD and Beaufort County Sheriff's Office and other partnering agencies to share in the application and use of Cellebrite Premium Extraction Software. There is no match required for FY22 use.

(Police Department: Approval to accept an award for the FFY21 Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse

Site-based Program in the amount of \$900,000 to be used to fund a Project Coordinator, two Peer Support Specialists and software to support overdose follow-up. There is no match required for this grant. Per CPD, the estimated annual cost of the program after conclusion of the grant, if continued, would be \$285,000.

(Request approval of an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute a First Amendment to Option to Lease by and between the City of Charleston and The Lowline Housing, L.P.

(Please consider the following annexations:

- (i) 2216 S. Dallerton Circle (0.26 acre) (TMS# 310-07-00-044), West Ashley, (District 11). The property is owned by Danielle D. Cerasi.
- (ii) 1506 N. Edgewater Drive (1.59 acre) (TMS# 349-09-00-026), West Ashley, (District 11). The property is owned by Ellison C. and Jeanne R. Livingston.
- (iii) 30, 32, and 34 Wedgepark Road, 43 and 49 Lolandra Avenue (0.99 acre) (TMS# 418-13-00-254 through 256, 260, and 262), West Ashley, (District 3). The properties are owned by Glory Holdings, LLC.
- (iv) 2319 Lazy River Drive (0.62 acre) (TMS# 310-14-00-014), West Ashley, (District 11). The property is owned by Carl E. Seel, Sr. and Jean B. Seel.

First reading was given to the following bills:

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute First Amendment to Option to Lease by and between the City of Charleston, South Carolina and the Lowline Housing, L. P.

An ordinance to provide for the annexation of property known as 2216 S Dallerton Circle (0.26 acre) (TMS# 310-07-00-044), West Ashley, Charleston County, to the City of Charleston, shown within the area annexed upon a map attached hereto and make it part of District 11. The property is owned by Danielle D. Cerasi.

An ordinance to provide for the annexation of property known as 1506 N Edgewater Drive (1.59 acre) (TMS# 349-09-00-026), West Ashley, Charleston County, to the City of Charleston, shown within the area annexed upon a map attached hereto and make it part of District 11. The property is owned by Ellison C. and Jeanne R. Livingston.

An ordinance to provide for the annexation of properties known as 30, 32 and 34 Wedgepark Road, 43 and 49 Lolandra Avenue (0.99 acre) (TMS# 418-13-00-254 through 256, 260 and 262), West Ashley, Charleston County, to the City of Charleston, shown within the area annexed upon a map attached hereto and make it part of District 3. The properties are owned by Glory Holdings, LLC.

An ordinance to provide for the annexation of property known as 2319 Lazy River Drive (0.62 acre) (TMS# 310-14-00-014), West Ashley, Charleston County, to the City of Charleston, shown within the area annexed upon a map attached hereto and make it part of District 11. The property is owned by Carl E. Seel, Sr. and Jean B. Seel.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now we have our [bills up for second reading](#). We have ten of them. Number 9 is the BID that we received a lot of comments on, and number 10 is the Commission, so I would entertain a motion to take 1 through 8 together."

The Clerk said, "Mayor, actually, the applicant has requested that L-1 be deferred."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "L-1 will be deferred, so we've got 2 through 10."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Appel.

Councilmember Appel said, "Mayor, I just want to state on the record that I have to recuse myself from Item L-1, but since we're not going to be proceeding with it, we're good."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "If it's acceptable, can I entertain a motion to approve items 2 through 8 then?"

Councilmember Shealy said, "Move for approval"

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Any discussion on any of those?"

No one asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Shealy, seven (7) bills (Items L-2 through L-8) received second reading. They passed second reading on motion by Councilmember Mitchell and third reading on motion of Councilmember Mitchell. On further motion of Councilmember Shealy, the rules were suspended, and the bills were immediately ratified as:

2022 – 001 - AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 54 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON (ZONING ORDINANCE) BY AMENDING THE GARDENS AT RIVERVIEW FARMS PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES TO AMEND SECTIONS RELATED TO LAND USE AND PERMITTED USES AND TO REZONE TMS# 312-02-00-085, 312-00-00-064 AND 312-00-00-208 (ZONED RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND CONSERVATION) SO AS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD). (THE GARDENS AT RIVERVIEW FARMS PUD – JOHNS ISLAND) (APPROX. 28.70 ACRES).

2022 – 002 - AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON, BY AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2016-005, ESTABLISHING THE VILLAGE AT FENWICK PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES, AS AMENDED BY ORDINANCE NO. 2018-164, ESTABLISHING THE AMENDED AND RESTATED PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE VILLAGE AT FENWICK, SOLELY AS SUCH GUIDELINES APPLY TO PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY OF CHARLESTON, CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 11.730 ACRES (TMS NO. 346-00-00-004) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 5) (THE "CITY PROPERTY"), SO THAT THE SUPPLEMENTAL

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE CITY PROPERTY AT THE VILLAGE AT FENWICK SHALL APPLY TO THE CITY PROPERTY.

- 2022 – 003 -** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP, WHICH IS A PART THEREOF, SO THAT 1830 SAVANNAH HIGHWAY (WEST ASHLEY) (APPROXIMATELY 0.21 ACRE) (TMS #350-05-00-043) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 7), ANNEXED INTO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON NOVEMBER 9, 2021 (#2021-159), BE ZONED LIMITED BUSINESS (LB) CLASSIFICATION. THE PROPERTY IS OWNED BY TIFFANY'S HOLDINGS, LLC.
- 2022 – 004 -** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP, WHICH IS A PART THEREOF, SO THAT 1820 ALICE DRIVE (CAPRI ISLES – WEST ASHLEY) (APPROXIMATELY 0.50 ACRE) (TMS #350-14-00-095) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 5), ANNEXED INTO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON NOVEMBER 23, 2021 (#2021-165), BE ZONED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SR-1) CLASSIFICATION. THE PROPERTY IS OWNED BY JONATHAN AND EMMA SCHUMACHER.
- 2022 – 005 -** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP, WHICH IS A PART THEREOF, SO THAT 2155 WAPPOO DRIVE (RIVERLAND TERRACE – JAMES ISLAND) (APPROXIMATELY 0.22 ACRE) (TMS #343-06-00-175) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 11), ANNEXED INTO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON NOVEMBER 9, 2021 (#2021-160), BE ZONED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SR-1) CLASSIFICATION. THE PROPERTY IS OWNED BY NICHOLAS P KATSIBAS AND STACIA C KATSIBAS.
- 2022 – 006 -** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP, WHICH IS A PART THEREOF, SO THAT PROPERTIES LOCATED ON FORT LAMAR ROAD (SECESSIONVILLE – JAMES ISLAND) (APPROXIMATELY 3.37 ACRES) (TMS #431-04-00-038 AND 431-04-00-039) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 12), ANNEXED INTO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON NOVEMBER 23, 2021 (#2021-166 AND 2021-167), BE ZONED RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RR-1) CLASSIFICATION. THE PROPERTY IS OWNED BY SECESSIONVILLE POINT PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION AND JEFFREY J. WOODARD.
- 2022- 007 -** AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ANNEXATION OF PROPERTY KNOWN AS 2221 S DALLERTON CIRCLE (0.5 ACRE) (TMS# 310-07-00-059), WEST ASHLEY, CHARLESTON COUNTY, TO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON, SHOWN WITHIN THE AREA ANNEXED UPON A MAP ATTACHED HERETO AND MAKE IT PART OF DISTRICT 11. THE PROPERTY IS OWNED BY ZACHARY CARNEVALE.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Now, number 9 is the Business Improvement District. This will be for second reading. Can I entertain a motion?”

Councilmember Shahid said, “So moved.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have a motion to approve. Is there a second?"

Councilmember Shealy said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Is there any discussion?"

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Sakran.

Councilmember Sakran said, "Thank you, Mayor. So, we're taking second reading tonight. Is it a natural progression that we also take third reading if we want to?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "A natural what?"

Councilmember Sakran said, "Are we also taking third reading on the BID this evening?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We certainly can. That would come next."

Councilmember Sakran said, "I guess is that the intent for tonight, to take up third reading?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I hadn't heard any objection otherwise. The floor is open if you want to discuss it."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Sure. I just want to, for the record, I've met with Mr. Price, and I've met with Kendra and folks from the team that have put the BID together and, as I said last meeting, conceptually, I'm supportive of it, certainly, a month ago when folks, business owners on King Street, came and spoke favorably regarding it. My concerns, as I shared with them, was the operational aspect of how the BID gets implemented. So, my concerns are that business owners, landlords, are going to see a rent increase and pass that on to tenants, and I flat-out asked Mr. Price if that's going to be possible. The answer was, 'We're not sure if that could happen.' So, to me, that is a thing that we have to consider with the BID. The other piece of this is rents are so high on King Street. When we do talk about equity in terms of who can participate on King Street in terms of business, it's already at a place where it's disproportionately certain types of folks. So, these are the things, the concerns I have, regarding the BID, and another thing is it's being led initially by Explore Charleston, and I get that. My concern that I shared with Mr. Price was, you know, this has to be something for our residents that it's not geared towards attracting more tourists, essentially. If we're focusing on the tourists, then we're doing it at the peril of residents, Black, White, Hispanic, it doesn't matter.

So, my point is, I guess, as we talk about this BID and work through the process, I'm not comfortable moving forward tonight with a third reading. I really would ask us to take a second reading and really re-think the outreach process on this and make sure that all business owners have been included in the discussion. I don't know the data, and I'm not sure if anyone's ready to show that data of how many business owners have responded to the survey and are favorable. Before I take the final vote, I would love to know how many business owners that are affected, not just the property owners, but the actual business owners in those buildings. I want to make sure that they have been checked with and their pulses have been taken. So, thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Alright. So, I'll just offer a little information, maybe anecdotally. I used to be in the commercial real estate business, and a lot of leases do allow the landlord to pass along the expenses like the taxes, so this fee would be in addition to the tax. So, if that lease allowed the landlord to pass that along, they would be able to pass this expense along. Now, I think there was a vast majority of the properties where the estimated additional fee was less than \$500 a year. So, \$40, \$50 a month and then the benefits of additional business, promotions, so I mean you have to weigh all of those things. Certainly, it's clear from some of the comments that some tenants and some property owners are opposed to it. I think it's just a matter of the concept of paying anything at all extra. Is it worth the services that we're going to get extra? You're always going to have some folks thinking it's worth it and some folks don't, but the latest number I heard reported was that they had 55% approval in writing, a signature, and then an additional 10% verbal, so they are counting 65% right now or almost two-thirds of the property owners, for what that's worth."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Waring.

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I have more questions. I support it, as you know. What about the good actors? In other words, and I don't want to say all others are bad actors, but there are some people on King Street that led the way in having their properties be attractive. For example, I'll take the Bennett Hotel. I think they were one of the first ones that had the baskets out on the street lamp posts, and they were advocates of others doing so and contributed towards it. So, there have been owners that have taken the initiative themselves to make it the best that it could be, if you will, I would bring up Majestic Square. Do they get some kind of credit or whatever for what they're doing now, or would there be any allowances for people who are engaging in best practices right now to make their area look attractive on their own and, obviously, outlaying costs to do that? Has anybody considered that aspect to it?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Not that I'm aware of."

Councilmember Waring said, "I think something like that ought to be, and I'll tell you why. I'm just wondering, if I'm doing something and I'm not getting any credit for it, then I'm going to cut back on that because I have to pay this new amount. So, if I have to pay this new amount, then let the BID take care of that. So, I think that may be an unintended consequence. Then, the second thing is, and I think I know the answer to this one, but there aren't any City properties where we're going to get assessed are we?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "No, sir."

Councilmember Waring said, "Okay, that's what I thought."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Appel followed by Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Appel deferred to Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Just very briefly, I think just to be clear, what we're doing is we're just allowing for the creation of a BID. All of sort of the rules, the regulations, the governing

documents, that will all be put together going forward, and we'll have a lot of input into that, but it is simply to allow them to go out and create with their board, with their membership, a BID and then see how it all looks. They can take up how they would spend the monies, whether there's credits out there, all of those things are allowable, and we then have a review every year of how it's performing, how it's going, and the like. So, we've spent a lot of time, we've had public comment, we've had public hearing, all of those things on this. I know we're not quite there yet, but I would encourage us to allow for the creation of this and then participate very actively in the formation of those documents and have input with Mr. Price, Ms. Hill, and all of the people. The Beach Company which, ironically, I mean, I respect everyone's opinion about this, but the Beach Company came at the 12th hour time. It was beyond the 12th hour. They were on the board of creation of this BID and then all of a sudden sort of backed off. Let's see what it's all about, but let's get ourselves out of the way and let them create it, and let's see where it goes and how that they can dovetail with other initiatives to promote small business, minority owned business, and all of the like.

King Street is an expensive corridor. It's always going to be an expensive corridor. There is no getting away or around that, but if we can get some incubators out there and some programs to promote local business, that can be done through the BID very effectively. Really, they've got more of a hands on ability to do it than we do. I mean, we've got a lot of stuff going on, right? They're going to be singularly focused on King Street."

Councilmember Waring said, "I'm sorry. Mayor, can I follow up to what he said? I appreciate what Councilmember Seekings has said and I, as a matter of fact, agree with that, but the process which they are, even though it was at the 11th hour, it was a good question, albeit at the 11th hour. The process where everybody is going to be included to morph out the actual action steps once the ordinance is created. How do we make sure that people have that input during that process, and it's just not rammed through?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Right. So, can I ask Robert Summerfield, who is online, to give us some insight as to exact next steps, as we know, it in this formation and process? Robert, are you out there?"

Robert Summerfield said, "Yes, sir. Can you hear me? Yes, Mayor, so as Councilmember Seekings mentioned, this is just the first step. So, before we can get into the next phase of this, which is the operational agreement between the City and the managing group, the CDA, we need to establish the district, and that's what all of those documents that you have there that are accompanying the ordinance do. They set the rate and methodology and all of that. But, Councilmember Waring, to your point, absolutely this Council has to vote on that agreement, and that would be what we will be spending Q 1 into potentially Q 2 this year getting done. So, that's not an overnight thing, that is meetings with members of the community, that's meetings with the Councilmembers, that's meetings with the CDA Board which will evolve, as well.

I mean, part of that agreement, we would anticipate, involves some regular requirements for the Board in reporting back to City Council. Again, transparency. You all will have regular reports on the status of the BID because annually, as Councilmember Seekings duly noted, you will have to approve their budget. You will have to approve the assessment roll that goes to the County. So, this Council is involved every year and, unlike other funding mechanisms, this one sunsets in ten years. It's an absolute sunset meaning, if it's renewed, the whole process has to

be done again, so we will have to do this complete process again in ten years if this BID is successful like we think it will be and the Council wants to continue that and the community wants to continue that for a second term. So, it's a relatively, speaking in these terms, short period of time to prove itself, but this Council, every year, is involved in that decision making and will absolutely be integral to determining what that agreement looks like to set up the management structure or the organization structure."

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Summerfield. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir. Any further questions?"

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Appel.

Councilmember Appel said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I just want to state that, you know, let's remember how this all got started. 2020 was a tough year on King Street. Frankly, King Street was starting to maybe show a little busting at the seams in a negative way before 2020, but 2020 really exacerbated a lot of trends, vacancies, and things of that nature. We are fortunate in the City to have some real heavy hitters that are constituents and stakeholders on King Street, and like it or not, guys, hospitality, food and beverage, that's what pulled Charleston out of the ditch 30, 40 years ago or so. It's an important part of this community, and we've got some people that are taking up the ball and running with this BID that know how to get things done. They have a track record of getting things done, and these are a lot of the same people, frankly, that were not thrilled with the City in 2020 for a variety of reasons, and I think that we want to make sure we keep that engagement, keep that momentum going.

But, to Councilmember Sakran's point, absolutely there will be an opportunity to make sure that, from a programmatic standpoint, we do everything that we can to make sure that there is a diverse representation on the Board, that we're making sure that we address a lot of different issues. I think Councilmember Seekings raised a lot of those points, as well. King Street has changed and evolved for centuries. The Jewish and Lebanese retail profile on Upper King ain't looking great. It's changed. There's been a revolution on King Street, and guess what, guys? That's great. King Street is an economic engine. It's our Boeing. Somebody said that recently, and it's true. King Street is the big leagues, and if you're starting out a small business, maybe King Street isn't the best fit necessarily for you, so we need to make sure that King Street is rocking and rolling.

The constituency of King Street, the folks that are making up this BID, want this. This is an example of leadership from the ground up, where we're sort of providing some of the air support and the overall guidance. I think we move forward with this. Let's set up the BID. Let's work very hard with all of the stakeholders to make sure that we set up the machinery of this in a way that's fair and equitable. It's sort of like a TIF in a sense. We establish geographical boundaries of the TIF, and then every year we talk about how much is going to stormwater, how much is going to affordable housing, and things of that nature. It's not a direct analogy, but we retain control over this, and I think that a lot of times some of the negative impacts of measures like this can be overblown. So, with that, I would encourage everyone to support it, and let's move through the process and get to work on the next phase."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Alright. Any further comments or questions?"

No one else asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Shahid, one (1) bill (Item L-9) received second reading. It passed second reading on motion by Councilmember Shealy and third reading on motion of Councilmember Seekings. On further motion of Councilmember Shealy, the rules were suspended, and the bill was immediately ratified as:

2022 – 008 - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF THE KING STREET BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR THE FINANCING OF IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE KING STREET BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BY ASSESSMENTS AND OTHER REVENUES AS HEREIN DESCRIBED; PROVIDING FOR THE PUBLISHING OF THIS ORDINANCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER ITS ADOPTION; ORDERING THE PREPARATION OF AN ASSESSMENT ROLL AND THE PUBLISHING OF A NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF SUCH ASSESSMENT ROLL; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Now, it is 8:15 p.m., next item up is number 10, the Commission. I don’t know, it could take us a few minutes. Do you all want to take a five-minute break?”

Councilmember Mitchell said, “No. I move for approval.”

Councilmember Gregorie said, “Second.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “We’ve got a motion for approval and a second. Any discussion?”

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Parker.

Councilmember Parker said, “Yes, are you moving to approve item #10?”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “That’s correct.”

Councilmember Parker said, “Yes, I make a motion to defer.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Second.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Alright. We have a motion to defer, which takes precedence, so we’ll vote on that first. Any discussion about the motion to defer?”

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, “Just a few things, I would adopt the comments I made some time ago when we were talking about the process and how we’ve gotten here tonight, which has been circuitous at best. It has not been smooth. It’s very clearly controversial. It needs full participation. We haven’t done that. I just think at this point we really need to push this out, bring it back together, hear everything, put it all out there in the public, and this, the way it came to us tonight, didn’t work.

The other thing is, look, we've got an empty seat over there. That empty seat represents 12% of the population of the City of Charleston, and it's going to be filled in two weeks. What's the rush? I mean, what's the rush? Let's define what we're doing. I think that there were some comments made tonight that were really good about the definition of what we're doing here and what the directive is we're sending out there. We changed the name of the Commission, but I searched the word 'equity' today in the ordinance, it's there 13 times. What's the definition of it? We all have our own. Let's define it. Let's define it, let's focus it, and let's clarify it, and let's bring this back in a way that we can have meaningful public comment, and we understand what's going out there forward, and it's not from the get-go because, if we pass it tonight, it will be the most divisive thing we've done in these Chambers in a long time, and I just don't think, procedurally, we've brought it here appropriately, and I am going to support this motion to defer. If not, I'll vote against it. I think we should put this thing forward, and let's get it set right."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Parker.

Councilmember Parker said, "Yes, thank you, Mr. Mayor, and thank you, Councilmember Seekings. A couple of things, I mean, I spoke publicly December 21st when this was reintroduced a few days before Christmas. I will say again, I think bringing this to Council a few days before Christmas when three seats on Council were about to turn over, I personally don't like the optics. I don't think it makes the City of Charleston, it doesn't put us in a good light, especially when we're talking about fairness, equality, and things like that. Second, I, for one, even as a Councilmember, you know, now that the name has changed, I don't know what exactly that means. Did we just change the name of the ordinance but the report still stands? So, the fact that I don't completely understand that, I guarantee you the public doesn't understand that. Those are the comments that I've received, the phone calls I've received. People don't understand. I think that's a gaping hole. I mean, people need to understand what the change was. I still go back to it was voted down by the same Council in August. We have an empty seat here.

I'd like to also, I'll just say this because I heard it in one of the comments. Please listen to your constituents. My constituents spoke on November 2nd. I was adamantly opposed to many items in this report. I obviously think there are great things in this report, but I also think there are very divisive items in this report. Again, I go back to this quote, 'Please listen to your constituents.' I am sorry, but the person sitting here at that December 21st meeting did not listen to our constituents of District #12, and I think that that's very important to do, especially in this matter. So, it's a very easy vote for me because I have listened to my constituents. So, yes, I believe we should at least defer this and make sure the public is fully aware of the name change and what this is going to do. What is going to be brought about? What is the end game? I've been told that they don't want the 125 items in the report. It's just a committee. I don't know, as a Councilmember, and I know the public feels the same way, so further discussion needs to happen."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Gregorie.

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Yes, Mr. Mayor, I think that one of the things we talked about when we talked about Councilmembers was the importance of doing your homework, and I don't think, based upon what I'm hearing, that some of our Councilmembers have really done their homework. Because if they did, one, they would see definitions of equity not just in that report but also in the City's Comprehensive Plan, which has already been approved by the City, so the

City has approved a definition this Council has of equity. Secondly, we have one person missing, but we have had one person missing on all votes. Why is it because of this vote you want to call that as an issue? For me, that's problematic in and of itself, Councilmember Seekings, because I think if that's the case, we should do the same thing for the BID. Why did we vote on the BID with one person missing? So, I think that what you are doing here is you're trying to make up different rules because you oppose the document, and that's not quite the way it works. I really think that, especially you, Councilmember Seekings, we have been working on this for over a year. You have had the opportunity during that period to review, to comment, to object, to participate, but you elected not to. You elected not to. So, at the last moment, you are using, as an excuse, you're not having enough time to review the document, and I think that's a bit disingenuous in and of itself. I really do because these documents have been here for a while.

Secondly, we're not voting on 125 recommendations, we're not. This Council did not accept the report and the recommendations. Just as with the BID, it's a starting point. Well, that's what this is, too, with the new Commission, a starting point. So, I am a little concerned with the inconsistency of the application of your rationale because, to me, in and of itself, it reeks of, well, it's bothersome, to put it the best way I can, so I really think that this is just a strategy to dismantle this effort. There is so much misinformation and lies that's not just being put out there by the public, but it's being put out by some of the Councilmembers who have not read the document. You haven't read the document based upon what you are articulating. It's obvious. So, for me, I think that this is just another strategy by the opposition to kill it, and I'm being very upfront with that, but I don't think that you guys have really read the document and looked at the definitions and clearly understand that the Special Commission completed its work. They completed the report as they were charged to do. Whether we agree with it or not really doesn't matter at this point because they completed the report. The City did not accept the report. The City did not vote to accept the recommendations of the report, so what we're voting on is very similar. We're just putting the framework in place, and the fact that we just allowed that to happen on one side and all of a sudden we shouldn't do that now, I think it's a bit disingenuous and really not fair to the process. I guess my ten minutes are up, but I definitely saw this strategy coming. I don't think it's based on truth or fact and, unfortunately, I think this is really not a good way to start. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. I'm not advocating that you carry on, but the current rules do allow 15 minutes."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Oh, I've got five more minutes."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We're proposing to reduce that to ten minutes at which point you're almost there but, Councilmember Mitchell, and the motion on the floor is to defer at this point."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Mitchell.

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Yes, Mr. Mayor, I was just sitting here and just listening and listening. Some of the things I heard from people talking about it, they kind of disturbed me because probably because of the way I came up, and probably because of the things I've been

involved in, and because of what I try to do in bringing people together, and it seems like some people are still trying to tear it apart and say that we are trying to cause division with the people racially. Racism is here. Racism is alive and well in the City of Charleston. I don't know where you all are coming from. I don't know where the people who are living here are coming from. I've been here 73 years, right here. I'm out here in that street more so than anybody else on here, and I see it every day. James Island, I used to play on James Island, all of the time. It's changed. Sure, things have changed, and when the change came, we got some people doing some other changing that is not good. Johns Island, I keep telling you all, my family goes back almost 400 years on Johns Island, so I know the areas on Johns Island. I know James Island. My family goes back over 300 years on James Island. I know the whole area and people come in here, and we are trying to do something to bring people together, and they are still out there thinking that we still should be on the bottom and be under the bus, and that's what I'm seeing. With all of these people demonstrating and all of these kind of things, why? Because they don't want to see the truth, or they don't want to hear the truth. The truth is here, it's out here.

I get along with everybody. I can tell you, Councilman Sakran will know, Councilman Gregorie, and Keith, and Councilmember Shahid, you know. My district is very, very diverse, and you can't go in my district and say anything about me because of the way I work in my district. I don't pull punches. Because I'm out here knowing the history. I know the history. I've been involved in the history, and when I see people talking these kind of things because we are trying to do something, they say, 'Okay, we're going to try to bring people together; we're trying to see what happened to the Black and Brown people and trying to make things better,' but it's for everybody because everybody is going to reap from it when it happens. You're bringing people together.

History is history. I'm not talking about his-story, I'm talking about the real history. That's what it is. Charleston played a big part in slavery, if you all want to know the truth. If the slave master could not take care of the slave, where did they send them? To the City of Charleston, and we did it. They stood up there and read right there to us some of the things I didn't even know at the time. That's why we, as a Council, was not involved in it, but what did we do? What did we do? We apologized to the rest of the City of Charleston for what part the Councilmembers or the City played. I wasn't there during that time.

So we've got to stop it. When are we going to stop it, the have and have nots, when are we going to stop this carrying on? It disturbs me, but you know why I'm here at this table and sitting in this Council seat? I always believed that, and that's my belief, the most high God placed me here. That's why I've been here as long as I've been here, and he instilled in the people to put me back here so I can send a message out. I'm a messenger. People say, 'Oh, Councilman Mitchell, we don't understand when you're saying things.' I'm not here to be understood. I'm here to work together with the individuals, and that's why I've been here as long as I've been here right now. Most of my colleagues here, they know I don't play games. I can be the nicest person you'll ever want to meet, but I'm going to say what I have to say, and I'm going to tell you it's the truth. Truth. I mean, I don't have time for the lies, it's truth.

But, I spoke at the last Council meeting, I spoke to Councilmember Appel and Councilmember Peter Shahid. I said everybody talks about King Street. I worked on King Street. Your family owned things on King Street, but did you work on King Street? I worked there. Councilman Shahid might have been there. Councilman Appel, I don't think you might have been around too much from what I heard with your grandfather and all of that because you weren't

here. I worked in all of those stores on King Street, from Spring Street to Calhoun Street, worked there during my high school days, but it has changed. But to be fair, we cannot forget about the people who make the change happen that everybody wanted to move here. Where? In the City of Charleston. Oh, Charleston's so beautiful, but how it became beautiful is on the back of people who worked and got it done. So, all we are doing is trying to making a level playing field for everyone, and everybody wants to work together, but as long as we keep this division going, then we've got the other people from the outside, 'Look at what the Councilmembers are doing. Oh, so we better get on board with them. Oh, we're not going to do this, we're not going to do that.' We've got to stop it. That's all I've got to say, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Amen."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Bowden.

Councilmember Bowden said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. You know, I agree when Councilmember Gregorie said that we voted on other things tonight without the District #1 representative being with us. I think that's absolutely right. I don't think that's an excuse not to make a decision tonight. I think we all came here understanding that we were going to need to make a decision, and that's what I think we ought to do. I am not going to vote to defer this. I can't imagine a topic that could have created more citizen feedback than we got tonight, that I've sat at home hearing on YouTube, that I've sat in the crowd listening to for meeting after meeting after meeting, I mean, for what seems like a year. Everybody has had a chance to weigh in. Opinions are hardened, whether they're based on facts or not, and I think a lot of them are, and we're never going to be able to convince them of the facts. If they disagree, they disagree. If they think we are going to impose critical race theory in schools, that's what they're going to believe. They're wrong, they're obviously wrong, but that is what they are always going to believe, and whether this passes tonight or not is going to make no difference in that. I do think that this Commission has the ability to push us forward as a City, just like the King Street BID does. They do different things, but they both have, in the long run, an incredible impact on our City. I thought it was time to move forward on the King Street BID, and I think it's time to move forward on this Commission. I'm not going to vote to defer it. I am going to vote to pass it tonight."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmembers Waring followed by Councilmember Brady.

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I think several things we ought to hit on, we did debate the report. It came to Council, and it got voted down. I would say there are a lot of good things in the report, but I would say the three things that caused it to be voted down, this is one person's opinion, was defunding of the police, critical race theory, and reparations. What we're voting on tonight has absolutely nothing to do with defunding the police. By the way, there's no one around this table, inclusive of the Mayor, that supports defunding the police, and if you say what the facts are on that, go back and look at everybody's vote on supporting a police budget for the time the Mayor has been here, for the time Councilmember Appel has been here, Councilmember Shahid, Councilmember Seekings, myself, Councilmember Gregorie, Councilmember Brady, Councilmember Mitchell, Councilmember Sakran, also, our Lebanese brother, and Councilmember Shealy. Not 90% of the time, not 95% of the time, 100% of the time

this Council supports our public safety, police, fire, and actually our sanitation department, 100% of the time. So, when the public out there, and we heard them shouting, defunding the police on this issue tonight, factually, that's incorrect, but I guess you know campaigns are running. That's not what we're here to do. We're here to obviously make decisions. Critical race theory, we have absolutely no power over the schools, so if we jumped up and stood on the top of our heads, the school board can say they're out to lunch. That's not in what we're voting on tonight, critical race theory. It has nothing to do with this, obviously.

Reparations, man, I wish you could be in our, and you will be, and you will be, too, budget process. The Mayor has a very open budget process. We saw before and after, and I've got to tell you, we all, all 12 Councilmembers including the Mayor, have input I would say starting in, as a matter of fact, it was Councilmember Shahid's idea to come up with that committee, and the Mayor listened and implemented it. We probably start in late July working towards a budget that's normally voted on and finalized in December, so there's ample input. We sit down, and we talk with our police chief, we talk with our fire chief. They tell us what they need and, obviously, affordability has to come into it, but then they break it down and tell us what's essential and, as I said, 100% of the time it gets approved. When you see how we maintain our AAA credit rating, frankly, we don't have the money in there to pay reparations. As an African American and a descendant of slaves, frankly, and this is just one person, I don't want the reparations, but I do want those fair systems.

We shouldn't have to have bloodshed to have a unity link that goes from one end of the Ravenel Bridge to the other, but that's what this City had to have to create a unity link. We shouldn't have to have a cold blooded murder at a Bible study to have signs put up that say that, 'We're Charleston Strong.' We take pride in being Charleston Strong. We shouldn't have to have a tragedy for that to happen, but that's what actually happened in this town. But the blood has been cleaned up and the family members have been buried, but I remember the shock that went around this City when those family members went to the bond hearing and they forgave. We had a session at Morris Brown AME Church, overflow crowds into the streets. You were there, Mr. Mayor, and when the word came back that the families forgave, it went like a lightning bolt through the crowd, 'They forgave, they forgave, they forgave.' Those families were above us, in particular, some of the conversations that went on tonight. Those families made us better and, guess what, they never won an election. They made all of us better, so for us not to be able to, in part, we had a wrestling match for the Racial Bias Audit of our Police Department, but no one had to be shot in the back on video for that to happen in the City of Charleston.

So, what we're talking about is putting together a committee so we can talk about race, just talk about it, talk about your heritage, talk about my heritage. The man that came in here from I think the American Heritage Association, I'm a full believer they have some interesting things to say, so it's amazing the angst when we talk about putting together something to speak about it. I'm going to vote for this. I'm not going to vote for the deferral, Councilmember Seekings, respectfully, because you and I have been desk mates for a decade, and I know where your heart is. I am going to ask that, respectfully, that some of the politics be put aside. Put a committee in place so we can have unity as we go forward in these discussions and not, you know, get in a circle and start shooting at one another. Mr. Mayor, I appreciate the time that my colleagues and you have allowed, but I won't be voting for the deferral. I think we should put the committee in place and begin a wholesome discussion so we can remain being Charleston Strong. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "God bless."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Brady.

Councilmember Brady said, "Yes, thank you, Mr. Mayor. Several months ago, a proposal was brought forth to Charleston City Council to approve and adopt the report on the Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation. It failed. In the same meeting, a proposal was brought forth to make permanent the Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation. It, too, failed. I know because I voted against both proposals. The report, as presented for acceptance to City Council, contained provisions in it that ran counter to my beliefs and the beliefs of my constituents, in particular, the notion to defund the Charleston Police Department and the payment of reparations. The proposal for the Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation to become permanent had numerous flaws in how it was designed. It would have required half of City Council to serve on the Commission, which is more than any other Commission in the City. The City Council was not authorized to recommend citizen members to serve on the Commission, which ran counter to how most Commissions in the City are set up. For these reasons, I opposed the motion as presented.

Since then, there have been ongoing discussions with our colleagues on City Council, the Mayor's office, and members of the community regarding the inherent value of the idea of a Citizens' Commission that should look into how the City of Charleston can investigate the vestiges of slavery and Jim Crow era policies, laws, and practices within the City and to recommend how to address them. In addition, the proposed Commission, unlike other City Commissions, is not a permanent commission and is subject to renewal every three years by this Council. The proposal that received first reading at City Council in December is not the same Commission that was proposed months ago, despite the misleading information that has been disseminated by some groups.

To say that voting in favor of this newly proposed Commission is defunding the police is patently false. The new budget passed by City Council, of which I voted in favor, contains 4% to 7% pay raises for our Police Department. The police budget has increased, on average, at about 4% each year for the last six years, which means that, over that period of time, it has seen an increase of almost \$9 million. To say that by voting for this newly formed Commission, we are endorsing teaching critical race theory in our schools is also false. The City of Charleston, as it has been mentioned, does not operate or control the public schools of Charleston County. The Charleston County School District, which oversees the schools, has its own elected Board of Trustees and an administration charged with running them. However, what voting for this Commission does do is show to the Charlestonians who have been marginalized, not just now, but throughout our City's 350-year history, that Charleston is an inclusive and welcoming City and that it is not afraid to confront the injustices of its past, no matter how uncomfortable that may be.

Why would we, as citizens, not want to examine whether there are laws and practices which may still discriminate and marginalize a sector of our citizens? Do we not have a moral obligation to ensure that all of our citizens are afforded equal opportunity within our government? Unfortunately, there are groups and citizens who mistake loudness for substance, but as John Adams noted, 'Facts are stubborn things.' One need to only look at several court cases within living memory to establish a fact pattern. In 1954, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka overturned the doctrine of separate but equal established in 1896 in Plessy v. Ferguson and

mandated integration of schools in the United States. In 1967, Loving v. Virginia repealed anti-miscegenation laws that allowed people of different races to marry. In 2003, Lawrence v. Texas ruled anti-sodomy laws that predominantly targeted homosexuals were unconstitutional. In 2015, Obergefell v. Hodges established that same sex couples were entitled to the same rights to marry whom they chose as heterosexual couples. I would also mention that, in 1960, Ruby Bridges was the first African American child to integrate William France Elementary School in New Orleans. Ruby Bridges will turn 68 this year. All that is to say, I would put this to everyone, and I include myself in this group, if you have never had to have a court affirm that you were equally entitled to the same rights as your fellow citizens, then you fundamentally misunderstand the lived experience of being marginalized, whether that's de jure or de facto.

Therefore, my vote on this Commission is not a flip flop, as some have called it. It's actually what the civic process is supposed and designed to be, a maturation of understanding through dialogue and compromise. The United States Constitution, a document born of dialogue and compromise, was written in order to form a more perfect union. It is my sincere hope that this newly formed Commission on Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation can help Charleston become a more perfect City and fulfill the promise that all of its citizens can equally, equitably, and inclusively enjoy and access all that it has to offer. That being said, I will not be voting to defer this matter, but I would ask that we give it second reading and to be considerate to our colleagues who have asked for the understanding of the Commission and this report, or I should say of the Commission and how it has been presented in the ordinance. I would say to give this second reading, and we can vote on third reading at the next meeting when there is a new Councilmember seated, and hopefully we can have more public participation. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, Councilmember Brady."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Appel followed by Councilmembers Sakran and Shahid.

Councilmember Appel said, "I'll defer to Jason if he wants to jump ahead of me because he played such a--"

Councilmember Sakran said, "No, that's okay."

Councilmember Appel said, "Alright. Just trying to be nice. I haven't spoken publicly about this since, gosh, was it at the Daniel Island Gymnasium? I hope everyone's blotted that out of their collective memories, but I just want to thank Councilmember Gregorie and Councilmember Sakran for their leadership on this issue. I mean, my God, the work you all have put into this over the last year-and-a-half now, I think it is, is tremendous. I'd like to think that I engaged in this process in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. Lord knows how many phone calls we've had, and how many meetings in Councilmember Shahid's office. I can't even begin to tell you how much I think I probably ended up bothering you all on this. I just wanted to let the record show that I admire and appreciate the amount of work and effort that you all put into this.

To Councilmember Mitchell's point, the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow in Federal, State, and local discriminatory practices to African Americans is unquestionable in this Country. There is no doubt, there is no group of people in this Country that have been more unjustly and unfairly

treated over this Country's history than African Americans. I mean that is as plain as day. There is no question about that."

A citizen interrupted, "How about Native Americans?"

Councilmember Appel said, "You raise an interesting point there. I mean, they have not been fairly treated, as well, but I mean, it's not the Olympics to see who's, but who is that? Was that God? Is this a religious experience? So, I mean, I just want to set the record straight on that, and I'm not one of these people that believes when de jure segregation, racism, got wiped off the American political and legal landscape that all of our problems resolved. Yes, it's a huge, huge step that that happened, and that's not to be minimized, but the legacies of these practices and these institutions persist to this day. There's no question about it. To me, it has always come down to what do we do about it? What is the most effective, practical way to get results on the ground in a meaningful way? I mean, one of my positions has always been that we've had the power and ability all along. I mean, we're elected Council people in the City of Charleston. We have Standing Committees on Community Development and all of these other forums where we can vet best practices and ideas from the public, from other cities, other states. There is no shortage of opportunity for any single one of us to pick up a ball and run with it at any time. So, the big question for me has always been, what is the purpose of making this Commission permanent? And we had the Commission in effect for a year, we have a report, and it's been widely discussed. There has been a lot of misinformation circulated about it, there's no question about it, but at the same time, I do think there were some unfortunate choices of what to put into it that was, ultimately, counterproductive to the mission and the goal of getting the results on the ground that we all want to see.

So, to pick up on where Councilmember Brady left off, the ordinance that's before us tonight is not the same ordinance that came before us in September. Councilmember Brady, Councilmember Shahid, and myself, we've engaged in this process, and I think a lot of our feedback and comments were incorporated into this product we have today by virtue of some good work with Councilmember Gregorie and Councilmember Sakran. Whereas my colleagues, Councilmember Shahid and Councilmember Brady, voted for this in December and I chose not to, yes, I'm just not quite there yet. The reason for that is it all comes down to this, and I hope you all know me as a straight shooter by now, having worked with you all for a couple of years, I want this Commission to succeed. I want it to actually have an effect. I don't want this to be just a feel good, check-the-box thing that we just do to say we did it, and then this Commission goes off into the wild and is not able to effectively conduct its work and produce the sort of progress and change that we want. If we are sitting around in a position where we're so bitterly divided over this, I think that is a product of us not quite getting there yet. We've made a lot of progress on this, but here is my proof of that. When you actually talk to somebody, when you talk to a constituent that comes at you and says, 'You approve this Commission, you're defunding the police,' all of the things that we've talked about and debunked today, and when you talk to them about what it actually is, and how it's not the report, and how it doesn't make law, and how the City Council still maintains oversight and control over policies, it's been my experience that you win people over. You win people over one-on-one. I was talking with Councilmember Shahid about this before the meeting. That is possible, and all I'm saying is, is that if we can find a way to better define the role of what this Commission is supposed to do and what it's not supposed to do. We have done a phenomenal job talking amongst ourselves, a phenomenal job. I don't think there's been any issue that's come before Council in my short time that has been more debated than this but, respectfully, I don't

think we've done a good job of communicating to the public what this is and what this isn't, and it cuts in both directions.

On the extreme, let's call it 'right,' there are people that think this is a parade of horrors that we've also talked about, but I think there's activists in the left community that think if we pass this ordinance to establish this Commission, we'll have ended racism, we'll have solved all of our problems, that we will have done this monumental thing. Guys, and I know I'm speaking to the choir here on Council, have you all ever been to a Committee of Council meeting and a Commission meeting on any other subject? I think we need to be a little bit realistic and honest with people as to what this Commission can accomplish and what it can do so we don't set up false expectations. To Councilmember Waring's point, we don't got the bucks to do reparations, we don't have the means and capabilities to solve these deep-seeded, deep-rooted injustices in our society that are undeniable, right? I mean, it's like you're running a race, and one runner gets a two-minute head start at a mile, and you're wondering why the runner that was sitting in the back isn't catching up. It's unfair, and you have to find a way to solve that problem. That is a major, major intractable problem, but here is where the problem gets solved. It's in the boring, nitty-gritty details. Should we have a rent cap on ADUs or not? Here's some ideas for it, here are some ideas against it. That's where the progress is made. When we use vague, ambiguous terms that have been weaponized intentionally by some of the worst actors in our society, critical race theory, equity, white supremacy, these are poorly defined terms where what you see into these terms, it's a pick-your-own adventure. If you want to come into it with bad faith, you can find a way to spin it for bad faith and to whip people up. If you want to come into it with a spirit of equity or a spirit of good faith, you can come away with it with a completely different mindset. I think that if we articulated this Commission along the lines of what Councilmember Waring spoke about, it's a way for the City to come together, Black, White, and everything in between, to find ways that we can improve and make our City better, we could get to a point one day where there is unanimous approval for this across the table, and that matters because if we were to give birth to this Commission in a spirit of unity and in a spirit that, as Councilmember Waring pointed out, was present after Mother Emanuel under some very difficult circumstances, that will put an amazing amount of wind at the back of this Commission. It will allow us to engage from a robust position of strength, much like I was talking about with building the Ashley River Bridge, right? When you come into a complicated challenge united, right, you're able to accomplish more.

So, listen, if this Commission ends up passing tonight, I hope it succeeds. I hope its work is performed in a very common sense, moderate, you know, common sense, tangible way that can directly relate. We're not going to change people's hearts and minds on a Zoom call and a City Commission. Like let's check ourselves a little bit. My wife likes to say sometimes, 'Ross, settle down, it's just City Council,' and on some level she's right. I mean, real change on this issue is going to have to happen in the culture, in everything that's not City Council. It's interactions one-on-one with people over time. I just think that if we are very clear about what the goals and expectations are with this Commission, we effectively communicate that to the public and dispel the insanity on both extremes, we can begin this process from a position of strength and set this Commission up to succeed. I've spoken way longer than I thought I was going to speak. I do think that deferring tonight would allow that work to happen. So, I'm not about deferring because that person's not sitting there, I'm not about deferring for the sake of deferring so we can get more public comment and stuff. I'm thinking about it more from the perspective of how we can all continue to work together to make this the best, most effective Commission that it can, so that's my position on it. Regardless of how this vote turns out tonight, I'm here to work with any of my

colleagues on finding ways that we can continue to improve as a City around things like zoning, land use, and those kinds of disparities. Let's get to work, regardless of how this vote turns out tonight. So, thanks for everyone's indulgence and time, and I'll now stop speaking. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Sakran followed by Councilmember Shahid.

Councilmember Sakran said, "Thank you, Mayor. I was hoping that we wouldn't have a lengthiness tonight, but given the circumstances, I understand the need for that. I just want to thank the Councilmembers for having a conversation and taking the time to understand the report. Councilmember Appel, Councilmember Brady, and Councilmember Shahid, I appreciate that. It means a lot. The processing is a lot of responsibility and a lot--"

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Sakran, I'm sorry to interrupt, are you talking into your mic?"

Councilmember Sakran said, "I'm trying."

The Clerk said, "Okay. Thank you."

Councilmember Sakran said, "To Councilmember Brady's point, learning about the facts and conversations and discussions with folks that were on the Commission, and I think that helped to understand and clarify some things for Councilmember Brady, and that's how it should work. Where I'm frustrated is pretty much every Councilmember has spoken. Councilmembers want to speak again, the BID sailed right through, and we're having identical conversations. Nobody said that the BID process is rushed and, in fact, we talked about the Commission in March of 2020. We formed this Commission. It's been two years, so to suggest that you're not up-to-speed on what is happening on this Commission is either patently a lie and false or it's a political game. And if you're a new Councilmember and I will speak to Councilmember Bowden and Councilmember Parker, I was a new Councilmember. I came prepared. On day one, I was prepared. So the games that we're playing right now regarding this Commission, and the fact that we're not aware of what's in the report, are political games. When we were on Daniel Island, I had a whole two pages ready to go, but I was interrupted by the nonsense, the tomfoolery, and the insults to our medical professionals that evening. Regardless of where you stand on those issues, that was disrespectful, and I felt bad. I felt bad leaving because I felt like I didn't get a chance to acknowledge those that worked on the Commission, I didn't get a chance to acknowledge Amber Johnson but, guess what, I've got my 15 minutes, and I'm going to take up every minute of it right now.

To the folks, and this is for the record, the folks that participated on this Commission, Mr. Alvin Johnson, Dr. Felice Knight, Mr. Jerome Harris, who is here tonight, Ms. Tracy Doran, Ms. Crystal Rouse, Daron Calhoun, and Kimberly Butler Willis, I want to thank you for your leadership, long overdue. The interruptions at that meeting, and the interruptions tonight continue. I also want to acknowledge the hard work and commitment from Amber Johnson. To get us over to this point took leadership and perseverance, and I want to thank you, Amber. To Councilmember Gregorie, who was my co-Chair, thank you for your leadership and your wisdom, calling me and taking me off the ledge sometimes, but I appreciate that. I've had individual conversations with almost every

Councilmember, and while we may disagree on a few of these recommendations, I believe you know in your heart that this is the right thing to do.

The report came in August, individual Sub-Committees have been meeting on the report, and you all know that this is not some radical, extremist report. You know that. As Councilmembers, you know that in your heart because you've seen the work, you've had conversations with Commission members. Folks who have not read the report or participated in one Commission meeting, now mind you it's been going on since June of 2020, we've had 60 public meetings on this issue, all on YouTube, all public. You had every opportunity to participate in any of those meetings. If I was running for Council a year out, I would probably drop in on one of those meetings and learn. Tonight's vote is not about any one specific recommendation, so I just want to dispel the media reports and social media posts that we're voting on CRT and reparations. Tonight's vote is about allowing the Commission to continue its work, even if you don't agree with all 125 recommendations, just like I don't agree with everything that was in the BID. I decided to vote for it because it's the start, it's the framework. That's what we're asking from each of you tonight. I wouldn't say the funny thing, but the most disturbing thing this week is that I've seen people spend money and time to derail this Commission with ads, text messages. We have so many issues in our City to focus on, and you are spending resources and time to derail the formation of a Commission. We're not voting on any one specific recommendation tonight, it's the formation of a Commission to have a discussion. I guess I need to ask folks that spoke tonight, I need to ask folks that are against it, if no specific recommendations are being voted on this evening, what exactly is making you uncomfortable about allowing this Commission to do its work? I'm going to finish my statement, and you can follow up. If I was to guess, it's not about my specific recommendations. It's the fact that we are meeting to discuss the issues that make you feel uncomfortable. I'm going to be very clear. Everyone that has come to speak and opposed to this, I've heard over and over, there are folks outside screaming and yelling, 'I can't take the anger, it's divisive.' This work isn't there to make you feel comfortable.

CRT is not being taught in our schools. I have to just get to this point because I work for the school district, so I think I'm a bit of an expert on what CRT is. It's an academic framework. It was developed in law schools for the record, because there is a lot of misinformation, the theory says that racism is part of everyday life. So, people, White, non-White who don't intend to be racist can nevertheless make choices that feel racist, and let me be perfectly honest, I'm not sure I agree with that theory 100%, but I'm also not trying to squash any attempt to have a conversation about its merits. CRT is not being taught in our schools, nor this body, and Councilmember Waring has said that. We don't have the authority to do that. So, I just would ask, if you are out there pushing the idea that CRT is part of this report, and we're pushing it we don't have the governing body, we can't do that. I say the real issue at hand is this. It's that there are some people that don't want White kids to learn even the most basic truths about American history, and this is emotional politics at its worst, and some of my colleagues on Council know this. Here is a legitimate question to all of those who think we shouldn't expose our children to the unvarnished history of this great Country. Some White people in U.S. History were slave owners, and others were abolitionists. People thinking American History of racism shames White kids should reflect on why they think White kids will associate more with the slave owner guilt rather than the abolitionist pride. Think about that. There were White abolitionists that fought. Why is it that, teaching history, we automatically go to this place where it's White guilt? Some have commented that the Special Commission, and even this meeting, is going to create more division. We've heard some say that, 'We all get along, and there's no need to have these discussions.' To them, we

say this. This Commission's work is not about getting along, nor is it about making you feel comfortable. Let me be crystal clear about this, and it's not about punishing White people or making White people feel guilty. I don't know how many times I've heard that from folks, 'This is going to cause great division in our community, that Whites and Blacks are not going to get along.' The notion that we can't have a discussion about race, while at the same time honoring our history and our great Country while putting things in historical context, is a false narrative. We are better than that.

The intent of the Commission is to recognize that not every Charlestonian, and this is important, and I think this is important to recognize, not every Charlestonian has that equal access to resources, to power, and the lack of access is economic, educational, and cultural obstacles for our Black citizens. That's not history, that's today. You don't have to look in the history books to validate these claims. Again, I work for the school district, been a public servant for over 15 years, look at our education and criminal justice system today, and if you don't tell me that there are disparities in our system, that we don't need to be having these discussions, you're not paying attention to what's really happening. Last couple of things, this work is about increasing the success for all groups, which means having a real discussion about power. Again, juxtapose our conversation around the BID and this conversation, and you will see that this is what the Commission is trying to do. The power dynamic, it's here, it's in front of us tonight, you're seeing it play out. Why did we not call for a deferral for the BID? And that's a rhetorical question, we can have a conversation at some other point. The final report, and the overwhelming majority of the recommendations are about common sense changes. Just read the report. I'm not going to go through all of this because I know time is of the essence, but I'm going to follow up with just a couple of things.

The recommendations in this report have all been recommended and all been articulated by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Federal Housing Administration, National Medical Association, and the National Education Association. I want to be clear about what's in the report, as well. Here are some of the recommendations: reimaging police services with a goal of building trust in the community, improving access to working capital for Black-owned businesses, prioritizing flood mitigation strategies that address racial, equity, and environmental justice, providing support for owners of heirs property to help families build generational wealth, creating a community land bank, establishing a living wage and system of compensation so City employees who wish to live in City limits can do so, and examining how the role of public education funding and the act of consolidation have impacted the lives of Black and Brown students. May I ask any Councilmember that's opposed to this and those that are listening, do any of those recommendations sound extreme? I would urge you all not to vote for a deferral. The game has been played too long. We owe it to the Commission members, we owe it to our community, and we owe it to the staff. They need direction on this. We've been going back and forth with this since August, and I want to thank the Councilmembers that did engage. A 'yes' vote tonight to get this passed gets the Commission established. That's all it does, and for the record, again, it does not pass any ordinance for or against what you believe. We're not here to pass ordinances on those recommendations. We're here to just simply create a permanent Commission so we can get to work. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid.

Councilmember Shahid said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I won't forget that Council meeting on Daniel Island as long as I live. It was the worst show of humanity that I have experienced. I was embarrassed for my community. I was embarrassed how people acted, how they tried to portray their thoughts, and they did it in front of their children, which made it a hundred times worse than it really needed to be, but I voted against the Commission that night because of all the reasons that have been articulated already by my fellow Councilmembers. It just didn't sit well with me on the issues dealing with defunding the police, slave reparations, CRT, and some other matters on there. I could have walked away that night, and that would have been the end of it, and we would not be having this discussion tonight, but I engaged with Councilmember Sakran, Councilmember Gregorie, Councilmember Brady, and Councilmember Appel because I felt I had a moral obligation to my community. The easy road right now, ladies and gentlemen who are sitting at this table, the easy road right now is to vote against this Commission. That's the easy road, and you have the opportunity to do that. Right now, you have the opportunity to say 'let's just put this aside, it's too divisive, it's too much of a problem, people are misunderstanding,' all of the arguments we've heard this evening, that's the easy road. I like to think that I am a better human being, hopefully a better representative of my community, because I had the opportunity to interact with Councilmember Waring, Councilmember Gregorie, Councilmember Mitchell, and your predecessor, Councilmember Lewis. I hope that I have become a person more understanding because of my interaction.

In the legal profession, we call ourselves practicing attorneys. Someone said, 'What do you mean? You're still practicing after 40 years?' I go, 'Well, yes,' because once I realized or think I know everything, I need to hang up my shingle, and that's true in life. If we think that we are 'know-all,' and we have the answer to everything, we really have cheated ourselves. Unfortunately, and this is just really unfortunate, the communication on this Commission has been poor. It really has been poor. There's a lot of blame to go around for why it's been poor, and I've heard the complaints about this, and some of it has a level of legitimacy to it. One is that we started this and brought it up in December right before Christmas and maybe people's attentions weren't there, maybe that's part of it. I don't know, but I do know this, there has been an intentional program, an intentional effort, to disseminate misinformation. The folks who are crying that this Commission is going to be divisive are the people who are creating the division. Let us sit down for a second and think about that for a moment. The reason it's divisive is because people out there are creating misinformation to create the division. I've asked this question to myself a hundred times. I've asked it among several of you folks. What are people afraid of? A person who I've known for the past 20, 25 years his children, and my children went to Charleston Catholic School together, he lives in my district, called me. I thought it was a call from Washington, D.C. and someone was going to give me some money or something. I don't know, but I took the call and we engaged in this conversation and I asked him, 'What are you afraid of?' and there was pause, and we had a very spirited and very good conversation. I said to him, 'You know what? I'm going to put you on the Commission,' and he paused, and he said, 'I accept the challenge.' I've got at least one person that I want to nominate for that.

I agree with Councilmember Brady's idea. Let's just give this second reading. We don't need to delay anymore beyond that because there's an empty seat over there. We passed a budget, and we didn't delay passing the budget because there's an empty seat. We didn't delay passing the budget because new Councilmembers were coming on this Council. That's not a legitimate reason to do that. But, I do understand this, and I am listening to my constituents, and

I want one more opportunity, I just want one more opportunity to talk to my constituents. So, I would ask all of you to give this just second reading, just go one more time.

I want to share one thing with you all. I may have kind of spoken about this in circles. There was a case decided on June 24th, 1913, ex parte Shahid, Federal Court. It was about my great grandfather. My great grandfather and my grandfather came to Charleston in 1899. My grandfather was ten years old. They were fleeing because of the suppression with the Ottoman Empire. They were being conscripted into the Turkish Army. They were poor. My grandfather sold, excuse me, Madam Clerk, horse s--- as fuel to make a living. They put together some money, got their boys together, and came here. My grandfather became a naturalized citizen, and I called Councilmember Gregorie when I looked at my grandfather's naturalization papers. He lived next door to the one hotel on Spring Street that was the only hotel, I think, in the City of Charleston, at the time, that allowed, back in those days they called them 'Negroes,' to socialize, to have parties, to have conventions, and things like that. I was astonished. I never knew that story. Then, fast forward to 1913, this case was my great grandfather's petition to be a naturalized citizen, and he was denied because he wasn't a free White man. This is what the judge said in the case as he was deliberating whether or not to grant my great grandfather's naturalization papers, 'In color, he is about that of a walnut.' Can you imagine describing somebody like that? 'In color, he is about that of a walnut or somewhat darker than is the usual mulatto of one-half mixed blood between the White and the Negro races.' Now, my family, no one talked about this in my family, someone mentioned this to me a while back, and I dug it up myself. My family has been the subject of discrimination.

Councilmember Waring and I are Catholics. The level of discrimination in this City against Catholics, so I had to sort of a double-whammy of that. I was fortunate enough to go to Porter Gaud School, a private school. My parents and my sisters keep on fussing at me about this and yell at me about this. They went to Bishop England, and I went to Porter Gaud. I experienced discrimination while I was in school where the person and I talked about that. I loved that school and had a great education out of it, but I remember the things that I had experienced out of that, and this is me. I'm a Lebanese person with olive skin who's experienced those levels of discrimination about that. I can't imagine what Councilmember Waring, Gregorie, Lewis, and Mitchell have experienced. I don't know, but I think it goes back to what I said earlier. I hope that I'm the better person because of my interactions with the four of you all. I hope I am. Now, the people sitting at this Council Chamber, I have prayed and hoped, and I was naïve enough to think that we would have unanimity on this Commission, and we're not, and that's sad. That really is sad, and I'm disappointed. We need to come together as a community, we need to speak in one voice and show our community that we are here to unite.

I read an article right around Christmas time, and the author had this question that he posed. He said, 'Why did Jesus talk in parables, or ask rhetorical questions?' It was a very interesting article about that and the author said that, 'Jesus was wise enough to understand that he could not change people's minds.' I had to let that sit with me for a while and think, wait a minute, this is divinity. He couldn't change people's minds, but what he could do, perhaps, is change people's hearts. I'm asking my fellow colleagues to change your hearts. We have 11 people, plus the Mayor. We have an opportunity tonight, right now, to show the world, to show our community that we're united. Let's give it second reading. We can tweak what we need to tweak, we can change some language if we need to change some language. We can ask for more

definitions between now and two weeks. If you want some changes on this thing, here is your opportunity to do it. Thank you.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you. Councilmember Parker, it is the custom to go all the way around for everybody who wants to speak, and then I’ll come back to both Councilmember Gregorie and yourself. I want to check in, Councilmember Shealy, you’re good?”

Councilmember Shealy confirmed.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “So, that normally shows you the length of time we can spend on a topic when most of our Councilmembers use their allotted time, which we have been doing this evening and I would like to make some comments on where we are. Of course, the motion is still to defer or not. I will vote not to defer, and I’ll support the Commission, and I’d like to explain why. It’s in three main spirits, if you will, in the spirit of, I believe, our common faith in God and what that means to all of us. In the spirit of the heritage of what has happened here in this City over the last 351 years and in the spirit of where we want to take our City in the spirit of the future. Before I cover those three things, and I’m going to repeat some of the things that have been so well-said here tonight, there’s been a lot of misrepresentations about what we’re voting on here tonight, and you could say we should have done a better job, but Councilmember Shahid, I think you aptly pointed out that there was intentional misinformation about what we were voting on tonight, and I want to quickly address that. What we are voting on tonight is to form a Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission, and maybe as a footnote, I want to share it wasn’t some last minute subterfuge.

The use of the name ‘Human Affairs’ was to honor the fact that our State of South Carolina has had a Human Affairs Commission, I think, since the late 1960s or early 1970s. I know the Honorable Jim Clyburn was an early Commissioner of that Human Affairs Commission appointed by Governor John West, I believe. So, we’re forming a Commission, as has been stated. We’re not voting on any particular recommendation that was made by anybody. I know in a way it continues the work that’s been done for the last year-and-a-half, but in a way it’s a new start, as well. There is no guarantee to the fine people who have served on the Special Commission that they’re going to be on this new Commission. I’m hearing a sigh of relief over here maybe from Mr. Harris, but it’s a fresh start. It’s a fresh start. There’s no policy or recommendation that would be approved tonight whatsoever, and this has been pointed out before, but it really irks me that such an effort, a deliberate effort, was made with the petition. I’ve got to admit, if I had read this petition and knew nothing about what the reality was and what we’re really voting on, I probably would have signed the petition because I’m not in favor of defunding the police, and as has been noted so well already this evening, in the six years since I’ve been Mayor, we’ve increased funding for the police department substantially well above inflation. Then, that effect over the six-year period is our annual budget for the police department of Charleston is \$9.5 million more per year than it was six years ago. If I may add for our fire department and our great firefighters, that budget is \$12.7 million more per year this year than it was six years ago. It’s a real commitment of this Mayor and this City Council to support public safety and our police and fire department, and for someone to try to convey that this vote tonight was about defunding the police is hogwash.

The other point that’s already been made a couple of times about CRT, critical race theory, is it’s clear we don’t dictate policy to the school board. It’s just a fallacy of this petition and this onerous effort to derail this Commission effort. Regarding reparations, Councilmember Waring

mentioned 'who came to our Budget Ad Hoc Committee and recommended that we include payments in our budget for reparations? Did anyone? No one did.' Those are the three main points that had been made about defunding the police, about putting CRT in the schools, and about having reparation payments which is all a bunch of baloney, and it's been an intentional attempt to derail a very fine effort of our City.

I think I'd like to now go back and talk about those three spirits, and can I bear my soul a little bit, too, to you all? We've all done that a bit tonight, or most of us. This did come up at the meeting before Christmas, and once again, it wasn't some intentional subterfuge. It was merely based on the fact that Councilmember Gregorie called me and said, 'Mayor, we're ready to go back to Council.' I didn't expect it to be honest with you, Councilmember. I thought it would have been in January or February, but I had told Councilmember Sakran and Gregorie when you all were ready and had come to a compromise and agreement about the formation of the Commission, let me know, and we would bring it back to Council. That's what we did. Yes, it was the week before Christmas, we do business then. That's when we approved our annual budget. We work all year long, but what I was thinking of on that night three weeks ago and days before Christmas, and I have to say, Councilmember Appel, I have the highest respect for all faith traditions, the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, all faith traditions. I'm a Christian. I believe all of our major faith traditions in the world have a commonality of an expression of love for one another and for God. At the end of the day, my savior Jesus Christ said the best commandment, the most important thing, is to love your God and to love your neighbor. Thinking back on Jesus's birth, what a humble entry into the world, and soon afterwards being kind of run out of dodge in fear that Jesus would be killed, they became refugees, and what did he do when he entered his ministry? Who did he minister to? He ministered to the poor, he ministered to the downtrodden, he ministered to the criminals, to the sinners, he ministered to the marginalized and, in effect, he was the marginalized one when he was executed. Of course, our Christian faith tells us that three days later he rose from the dead in glory and fulfillment of that message of love for our brothers and sisters. He fulfilled that message by his death. We believe that, but I believe that connects with all of the major faith traditions of the world.

So, now I think about the history of this City founded in 1670 that we tried to celebrate our 350th birthday recently, and during that history from the time this colony started in 1670, where slavery was ordained and allowed until 1865 when the Civil War ended, slavery was the economic construct of the society here. Then, after the war there was a brief period of reconstruction where the hope, the thought, was equity and fairness would apply to all males at least in the society, not women yet, but in short order, and some people might argue about the year, but I'm saying about 1875 until the end of the Civil Rights Movement or at least the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1965, Jim Crow was the rule of the day. So, think about this from 1670 to the present, 285 years out of our 351 years that either slavery or discrimination against African Americans was the law of the land. It was legal 285 out of 351 years. Now, I mention this not to, as Councilmember Sakran mentioned, it's not to play a blame game or a 'gotcha' or anything like that. It's to have some understanding about where we are. Even if some of the folks who came here the last meeting and this meeting really believe that such a thing as racism doesn't even exist, when you look at the disparities that are in reality, they do exist, and the one that really hits me more than any is this map here.

This little map shows in some areas of our metro area, not just in the City of Charleston, like the Upper Neck, upper part of the Charleston Peninsula and lower part of North Charleston

is mostly lower income, mostly African American. I don't know if they can lift it up on the map, but basically going from Rosemont up to Acabee, the life expectancy is 66 years, life expectancy. You go right across the river in Northbridge, in other words, mostly upper income, mostly White folks, and the life expectancy is 81 years. So, right across the river there you've got a difference of life expectancy of about 15 years. You go over off Savannah Highway, again an area in Councilmember Waring's district, it's mostly lower income and African American, 71 years compared to Councilmember Appel's district right down the street, a 10-year differential. That's a real disparity and, yes, there are a lot of social deterrents, I got that, but income and race are there every time. You look at income disparities in Charleston County. The income for White families is 2.2 times than for an African American family. If you look nationally, we're much worse off. It's only a differential of 1.63 to 1 on a national basis. In Charleston, it's 2.22 to 1. That's based on 2015 income figures. So, no matter where they come from, in health, in life expectancy, in policing, in income and wealth, in educational attainment, there are these disparities. What are we going to do about them?

So, I ran for election in 2015, and some of you have heard me say this before, and it was a daunting race was it not Councilmember Gregorie? When I started, the question was 'what are we going to do after Joe Riley?' I mean he was so great for so long, nobody could ever come along and equal Joe Riley. 'What are we going to do after he's gone?', was kind of the community question, and in June of that year, the tragedy, and it's terrible that it takes a tragedy for some realizations to occur, but that was what occurred at Mother Emanuel Church. In my own analysis and heart, the question changed for me from 'what are we going to do after Joe Riley?' to 'what are we going to do after Mother Emanuel?,' and that led us as a group to our apology. I know even at that time, Councilmember Waring, there were questions about, 'well, it's one thing just to say you're sorry. What are you going to do about it? What are you going to do about it?,' a legitimate question. Well, you all, looking forward into the future, what are we going to do about it and the framework to give us something to do, to have that discussion, to move this ball forward, to treat people with respect and fairness, and to have that underlying spirit, God given, calling to love our neighbor and to love our brothers and sisters, this is what this Commission is all about. This is what we're forming here tonight, and two weeks from now when we finalize it is a framework for this community to deal with this heritage that we've had, but to turn the tables and look at it as an opportunity for the future and the opportunity where, in fact, by looking at the disparities that exist in our City and our society from the things I mentioned, that we could make Charleston a better place. We can make Charleston a better place. We can reduce these disparities. We can think of the actions that we can take that make Charleston a more fair and just place. We have the moniker of being a Holy City. I believe if we pass tonight second reading for this Commission in the spirit of the faith in God that we all share to love our Creator and to our brothers and sisters in the spirit of our heritage, knowing where we've come from as a City and most importantly in the spirit of the future of where we're going and where we want to see Charleston, what kind of City we want to be. We want it to be a City of opportunities for all of our citizens, and I believe that's what we're voting on tonight. So, I will go back now to Councilmember Gregorie and Parker, two minutes, please, only. We've all had our long say."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Parker.

Councilmember Parker said, "I'll be quick. Councilmember Gregorie, do you think this is how I wanted to start my time on Council? It's not, and that's why I hoped and prayed that this would, I asked, I didn't understand why it was brought to Council on 12/21. You asked if maybe

it's a political move on my part. I felt the same way. Maybe there was some other political move why it was brought on 12/21 knowing that this was going to be my swearing-in and how I start Council. Here we are. Any one of us, any one of you could have made a motion to defer the BID. Am I correct? Yes, anyone could have made that motion. I've read the report and the definitions in full, multiple times. So, the implication that I am not informed is a bit offensive. I've read the report. No one from the Commission has reached out to me. No, I have not participated in Commission meetings. I've watched them, but I have read the report. The apology for slavery was right and just, okay. I think it's a beautiful thing that the City of Charleston did. Who said 'defund the police' because it feels like a lot of you all are looking at me? I never said 'defund the police,' ever. I don't even know where that, reallocate, sure, I read that in the report. My main question at deferring tonight was the name change. I don't understand, as well as the public doesn't understand. The name change still carries the same report. I keep hearing, 'well, we've changed this, we're starting from scratch.' I think everyone, we just want clarification. Everyone just needs clarification.

I understand where you're coming from. It's been two years. I get it. I came here tonight, as well as Councilmember Bowden, having done my homework and knowing that this was going to be on the table, but the change in name, this just happened. When did the name change? Again, that's what my constituents asked, name change, what does this change in the report, this, that, and the other. A group, Black Lives Matter, created a post after the agenda came out, and on that post it said, 'We demand reparations.' Those types of things are misleading. So, are these items that people on the Commission want and are going to be pushing for? They quoted Black Lives Matter in the report. I think it's a fair question that people are asking. Again, CRT in schools, I understand. People don't understand that we don't have the power, that we don't control the school board. I understand that. These things were listed in the Special Commission's Report, they were, but I know that when folks, myself as well, see a post like that from a group that was quoted in the Special Commission Report saying, 'We're going down to City Council and demanding reparations,' folks have questions, folks have concerns, taxpaying citizens have concerns. That's what we were elected to do, listen to them. Lastly, critical race theory, I've also done my homework. I know exactly where it began and it started, so I do understand, and it's not just a 1980s law school. The critical theory aspect started in the '30s, but that's, again, not for tonight. I do apologize. I forget what your question was kind of which was directed at me. I forgot."

Councilmember Sakran said, "It was a rhetorical question."

Councilmember Parker said, "Okay. What is it? Would you still like me to answer it?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I'll allow you to respond, and then we'll move on to Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Okay, thanks. My response is it wasn't directed to you. It was a rhetorical question. However, you've been vocal, you campaigned, you're here tonight, and it's a different thing than campaigning. I want to make sure that if you have questions, you can come to me and ask me those questions, but what I prefer not to happen is see you say one thing on your campaign and to come here tonight and say a different thing. So, when you talk about optics, that's optics to me. So, you campaigned on CRT, defunding the police, this is all in your campaign message."

Councilmember Parker said, "Not 'defund.' Never once."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Okay, and then just for the record, there is no 'defund the police' in the report."

Councilmember Parker said, "Okay."

Councilmember Sakran said, "It says reallocation, but it's easy to tweak words and mince words to make sure that it fits the political narrative."

Councilmember Parker said, "It's in the report."

Councilmember Sakran said, "It does not say 'defund the police.'"

Councilmember Parker said, "It says reallocate police funds."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Right. Reimagine and reallocate is completely different."

Councilmember Parker said, "That's what my campaign was--"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Alright. Order. I've got to call Order. So, I've got to remind everybody here that we're not voting on the report, we're voting to establish a Commission. We're not voting on a report or any of its recommendations."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Gregorie.

Councilmember Gregorie said, "I'm also representing James Island, and as a part of my campaign literature, and I'm sure you might have seen it, well, I was very specific in terms of assuring that equity and inclusion be infused into the City of Charleston's programming. I sent that out to thousands, thousands of people on James Island. I have yet to get one single e-mail from my constituents on James Island opposing it. So, what you're getting from the Island is a little different from what I'm getting from the Island, and let me finish, okay. I think when you say that they have spoken, yes, a portion spoke, but there was a large, large number of people that didn't vote for you even though you won, and you were pushing through your campaign literature negative stuff about the Commission, CRT, defunding police. I looked at your stuff."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The matter on the floor is deferral of the motion."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Yes, yes. I'm sorry. I just wanted to make sure, okay. Everyone had an opportunity, and I'm going to take mine, too, to speak, and I just want to make sure that when we talk about the support that our constituents have that we're clear that I also represent James Island, and what I got was a little different from what you got from your constituents, so I guess the two of us need to get together."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The two of you all might need to get together."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Yes, we need to get together and quickly."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "There is no question about that. Alright. Any other follow-up on the motion to defer which is before us?"

No one else asked to speak.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Can we have a roll call, please?"

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Shealy."

Councilmember Shealy said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Sakran."

Councilmember Sakran said, "No."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Mitchell."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Brady."

Councilmember Brady said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Waring."

Councilmember Waring said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Seekings."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Shahid."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Bowden."

Councilmember Bowden said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Appel."

Councilmember Appel said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Parker."

Councilmember Parker said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Mayor Tecklenburg."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "The motion fails."

On a motion of Councilmember Parker, seconded by Councilmember Seekings, City Council voted to consider deferring the following bill:

*An ordinance to repeal and replace Chapter 2 (Administration), Article IV (Boards and Commissions), Division 11 (Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation) of the Code of the City of Charleston and adopt a new Division 11, Sections 2-206 through 2-210, creating a permanent standing "commission on equity, inclusion, and racial conciliation Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission" and describing its purpose, duties, responsibilities, and organization. **(AS AMENDED)***

The motion failed 8 to 4. The vote was not unanimous. Councilmembers Shealy, Seekings, Appel, and Parker voted in favor of the motion.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next is the motion on the floor to give second reading."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Move to give second reading."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "It's already on the floor. Any further discussion or questions?"

No one asked to speak.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "A roll call, please?"

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Shealy."

Councilmember Shealy said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Sakran."

Councilmember Sakran said, "Yes."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Mitchell."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Brady."

Councilmember Brady said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Waring."

Councilmember Waring said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Seekings."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Shahid."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Bowden."

Councilmember Bowden said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Appel."

Councilmember Appel said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Councilmember Parker."

Councilmember Parker said, "Nay."

The Clerk said, "Mayor Tecklenburg."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Aye."

The Clerk said, "The motion carries."

On a motion of Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, City Council voted to give second reading to the following bill:

*An ordinance to repeal and replace Chapter 2 (Administration), Article IV (Boards and Commissions), Division 11 (Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation) of the Code of the City of Charleston and adopt a new Division 11, Sections 2-206 through 2-210, creating a permanent standing "commission on equity, inclusion, and racial conciliation Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission" and describing its purpose, duties, responsibilities, and organization. **(AS AMENDED)***

The motion passed 8 to 4. The vote was not unanimous. Councilmembers Shealy, Seekings, Appel, and Parker voted nay.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The motion carries second reading. A suggestion has been made that we wait until two weeks from now and allow any revisions to come forth as suggested before we take third reading on the matters? Is Council in agreement with that?"

Alright. So, next we go to bills up for first reading. I think 1 and 2 are kind of joined at the hip. I don't know if Madam Clerk or--"

Councilmember Brady said, "A point of order, Mr. Mayor. I was going to offer an amendment on #2, so if we could take them separately, that would be great."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Okay. We'll take Item #1, our Rules of Order are to be distributed, or you got those today. This is only a first reading, so if you have items that you want to bring back to us at the next meeting. Read carefully, by the way, that section on public participation because it does suggest that we set a limit on the number of comments that we'll take to try to keep us within our 30-minute period. Any other discussion about item #1?"

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Just very briefly, Mr. Mayor, because I have read through this. There are a couple of amendments that I'd just like to run by the Council Section 2-69(i)(a). It says, 'Speakers residing in the City of Charleston shall speak first.' I think it should be, 'Speakers residing in the City of Charleston or have a business license in the City of Charleston,' and I think we take up a lot with business, and I think they should get that. The other is in the same section (f). With all due respect, Mr. Mayor, it says, 'Speakers shall not ask questions of individual Councilmembers or a member of the City staff,' this is during public participation, 'without first obtaining permission from the Mayor.' I would like to strike that out. During public participation, we shouldn't be cross-examined, and I think if we're going to put that in our rules, we should keep it that way. So, I'd offer those two amendments for second and third reading, and I'll get with our Legal Counsel to make sure. Thanks. But, I just want to make sure that I'm not out of order. I want to send this into a direction, if you all agree, that that's at least something to think about. I'll get with our Legal Counsel and with Jennifer."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Okay, if we prefer, we decided to separate them, but I need a motion and a second for #1. I don't think--"

Councilmember Seekings said, "So moved."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We've got a motion and anybody second over there?"

Councilmember Shealy said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid.

Councilmember Shahid said, "Just one other addition under the same section that Councilmember Seekings just talked about under 2-69 when you go through (a) through (h), I would add one other condition which is, I think we do this now, you cannot pass your time to somebody else."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Right."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Cannot what?"

Councilmember Seekings said, "Pass your time to somebody else."

Councilmember Shahid said, "You cannot pass your time, and you cannot defer your time to somebody else I think needs to be added in there, and the other thing, I don't this has to be written into the ordinance, but Section 2-69 needs to be posted at every meeting. So, if they sign

up physically outside, these rules need to be made known to them. If we can post it on our website when the agenda goes out or whatever, but I just think that notice needs to be reminded of the general public of these rules at every meeting somehow.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Understood. I think Julia is over there taking notes.”

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Parker.

Councilmember Parker said, “Yes, thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, Section 2-69 Citizens Participation, again this is my first meeting, I don’t like limiting the number of people that are allowed. Are we just wanting to keep it at 30 minutes, or are we limiting the number of people allowed to sign up?”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “I guess the intent was to allow at least everyone to have a minute, one minute.”

Councilmember Parker said, “So, only 30 people, right? That’s sort of the way I read it.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “If you get less than a minute, it gets pretty awkward, so it kind of goes hand-in-hand, 30 minutes, 30 people.”

Councilmember Parker said, “I just don’t like limiting public comment. I understand you all that this is my first night listening to public comment, but I certainly felt that this is why, you know, this is City Council. I mean this is why we’re here to hear from our constituents.”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Just very briefly on that, there is a proviso that allows for expansion of that, and as we do docket management when we have issues tonight, many issues, I think the Mayor or Councilmembers can ask that that time be expanded, and you can always talk to Jennifer, and she’ll let you know what sort of interest there is and what level of sign-up and all of that, and then I think we can manage that. I think it’s a good place to start, and then we can manage it going forward. It’s consistent with what the County does, by the way. It’s exactly the same as what the County does.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Yes, I can’t remember a time in my six years as Mayor that we had business, you know, a hot topic and a lot of people that we didn’t extend the time, but we’ve got to set a limit somewhere and try to manage it, and then as circumstances dictate, we can make that decision, so that’s the way it’s set up.”

Councilmember Parker said, “Sure. Okay.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Alright. Any other discussion on #1?”

The Clerk said, “Mr. Mayor, did Councilmember Seekings and Shealy, do they accept Councilmember Shahid’s amendment regarding not being able to pass the time?”

Councilmember Seekings said, “Yes. We just put that in for the second and third readings.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "It's really going up for the second and third readings, right? Julia, you got those? She does. Alright. Any other discussion or questions?"

On a motion of Councilmember Seekings, seconded by Councilmember Shealy, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend Article II (City Council), Division 2 (Rules of Order) of Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of Charleston (Administration).

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now, #2 was the Administration."

Councilmember Brady said, "Move for approval."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Brady.

Councilmember Brady said, "Yes, thank you, Mr. Mayor. I'd like to offer an amendment on Item #2 in Section 2-23(f) for after the word 'illness' insert the phrase 'and the remaining members attending in person constitute a quorum of the body.'"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Okay. I'm seeing that some folks that think that sounds reasonable. Alright. Any other amendments or comments, but we can still amend it next meeting, as well, as I know this came out late."

The Clerk said, "Well, we actually sent it to the Councilmembers last week."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "You did?"

The Clerk said, "Yes, sir. We just placed hard copies on their desks so they would have it for the meeting."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I see. Alright. Any other questions or comments?"

No one else asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Shahid, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend Article II (City Council), Division 1 (Generally) of Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of Charleston (Administration).

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Item #3 is new sections provided for shared parking. I don't know if Mr. Summerfield is still on the line and wants to share with us what we've got here. We did speak of this in a Committee meeting the other day."

Mr. Summerfield said, "Mr. Mayor. Yes, I'm still here. So, the shared parking standard would be Citywide applicability that would provide an opportunity for the TRC Committee to review

and approve a Traffic Engineers Parking Study commiserate with the ULI or the Urban Land Institute's Shared Parking Study. Essentially, this would allow a traffic engineer to study the unique circumstances of a mixed-use project or a multi-use project, maybe not mixed-use so much, such that, for instance, if you had a church that was using an in-line shopping center and an office use as well as a restaurant, they don't serve customers at the same times, so their parking demand for that particular property is not the same as a traditional shopping center. Right now they would need a variance or something else in order to make that work. This will allow folks to be able to basically prove that they don't need the amount of parking that our Code would otherwise require and should make some redevelopment projects easier, and particularly, re-tenanting of some of our older shopping centers."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "And this will have to go to the Planning Commission and then come back to us, of course, after their deliberation, as well."

Mr. Summerfield said, "Yes, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Any questions about this?"

No one asked to speak.

The Clerk said, "I'm sorry. Who was the motion and the second on that?"

Councilmember Appel said, "So moved."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Who's got the second? You got a second?"

The Clerk said, "Yes. Councilmember Shahid."

On a motion of Councilmember Appel, seconded by Councilmember Shahid, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend Chapter 54 of the Code of the City of Charleston (Zoning Ordinance) by changing Article 3, Part 4 to add two new sections providing for shared parking.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Lastly, our clarification of outdoor activities under home occupations and I believe #4 is mostly to include allowing swim lessons to be given as a home occupation similar to music lessons."

Councilmember Brady said, "Move for approval."

Councilmember Appel said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Any discussion on that? This will also go to the Planning Commission and come back to us."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Appel.

Councilmember Appel said, "Mayor, thank you, and I appreciate everybody's indulgence. I know that it's been a long meeting. I just wanted to sort of explain sort of the genesis of this and give a shout-out to the folks that reach out to me and the public records regarding this issue. This issue emanates from my district on Chadwick. We heard from Ms. Anna Faenza earlier today. She is the proprietor of Holy Mackerel Aquatics. She essentially teaches infant swimming lessons for safety purposes, etc. She could do a much better job of explaining what she does, but the bottom line is there is a lot of people who love what she does. I mean, you've just got to look through our public comments. We often talk about water being a negative thing around here, but it's also why we love this place. I'm a surfer, I'm a fisherman, and all of this stuff. We've got to be safe with our kids around the water. She provides a great service. The issue that came up was that the traffic and the parking demands on this use in a residential neighborhood was creating some conflicts and we have language in this ordinance that's designed to address that. I met with Ms. Faenza over the past weekend. We walked the property. She assured me she is going to work everything out to make sure these impacts are mitigated to the neighbors. Everybody is happy for now, so I just wanted to thank her for this. Thanks for everybody that reached out to me. I think this is a smart change to our ordinance that allows people to use their property in a creative way that has a very good public benefit behind it while also making sure we don't over-commercialize our neighborhoods period, end of talking. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Great. Did we take action on that yet?"

The Clerk said, "No."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Okay. Any other comments or questions?"

No one else asked to speak.

On a motion of Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Appel, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend Article 2 (Land Use Regulations), Part 4 (Accessory Uses) of Chapter 54 of the Code of the City of Charleston (Zoning Ordinance) to clarify certain allowed outdoor activities under home occupations.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Councilmembers Bowden and Parker, welcome aboard. We planned this special initiation for you by having an extra-long meeting tonight, and you passed the audition."

Councilmember Shahid said, "Mr. Mayor, before we adjourn, we need to give Jennifer a shout-out, and she has done a terrific job. I know this was a very stressful meeting for her tonight, and she kept it together, and we talk about our City employees in the Clerk's Office. God bless you, all. Thank you, all. So, the tradition with new Councilmembers is to take us out to dinner tonight."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Alright. Next meeting in two weeks January 25th. We'll see you all there if not sooner. God bless you."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Jennifer B. Cook
Clerk of Council