

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL
July 10, 2021
Emergency/Special Meeting
Virtual/electronic meeting via Zoom

12:00 PM EMERGENCY/SPECIAL MEETING

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3707, by order of Mayor Nikuyah Walker, an Emergency Meeting of the Council of the City of Charlottesville was called for 12:00 p.m. on July 10, 2021. Notice was simultaneously delivered electronically to members of Council and to the public.

The Charlottesville City Council met electronically on in accordance with a local ordinance amended and re-enacted on April 19, 2021, to ensure continuity of government and prevent the spread of disease during the coronavirus State of Emergency.

Mayor Walker called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas called the roll, noting all members present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Sena Magill, and Councilors Heather Hill, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook.

On motion by Councilor Snook, seconded by Councilor Hill, Council by the following unanimous vote consented to meeting upon less than five-hour notice: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker. Noes: none).

Mayor Walker turned the meeting over to City Manager Chip Boyles, who explained that the meeting was being held to address an urgent need that was not planned for but created an unforeseen opportunity for the city. The approved relocation of the bronze statues of Generals Lee and Jackson were completed in record time, allowing time to finalize an interest that was approved by City Council on November 15, 2019, and funded by Council on July 7, 2021. He advised that Council has been clear in its intention to relocate the statue of Sacajawea, Lewis and Clark from West Main Street to another location either owned or co-owned by the City. He shared that with the moving contractors already in town, the statue could be removed at no additional cost to the City.

Alexandria Searls of the Lewis & Clark Exploratory Center shared that if the Center were chosen for ownership of the statue, she would want to agree on provisions about the type of interpretation for the statue. She advised that being in agreement with the Native Americans of Virginia and with the Shoshone would be important now and in the future. She also shared concerns of one of the Shoshone visitors hosted in 2019, that indigenous women have gone missing at alarming rates and they would want to bring awareness to the issue. She shared that the Native American student alliance at the University of Virginia would also be consulted.

Mayor Walker advised that she contacted Rose Abrahamson, familial descendant of Sacajawea, and Ms. Abrahamson was listening to the meeting. Because of technical difficulties, she was unable to speak until later in the meeting.

Councilor Hill asked about steps that could be taken to efficiently convey the statue to the Lewis & Clark Exploratory Center. City Manager Boyles stated that the action at today’s meeting would be only to move and store the statue, and that an action item would have to come before City Council in order to change ownership. He shared that he contacted Albemarle County administration, and their Board of Supervisors expressed support of moving the statue to the co-owned location when final disposition is contemplated.

Ms. Searls advised that Albemarle Supervisor Ann Mallek alerted the Board and was willing to meet in the Darden Towe Park parking lot.

Councilor Payne expressed that he would want to ensure that recontextualization of the statue was driven by and included indigenous residents and the indigenous community.

Mayor Walker asked about the inclusion of indigenous people in the process and Ms. Searls advised that along with community members who helped with grant writing, Shoshone input was included and the intention would be to keep appropriate contextualization for the foreseeable future.

Councilor Snook added that the City Council should be careful not to judge whether the recontextualization is adequate in order to avoid encroaching on First Amendment territory. He suggested that Council acknowledge a basic trust in the Lewis & Clark Exploratory Center management to handle the process.

Vice Mayor Magill expressed the same sentiments as Councilor Payne.

On motion by Vice Mayor Magill, seconded by Councilor Hill, Council by the following vote APPROVED the resolution: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker. Noes: none).

**RESOLUTION
TO REMOVE A STATUE/ SCULPTURE DEPICTING SACAJAWEA,
MERIWETHER LEWIS AND WILLIAM CLARK, FOR STORAGE**

WHEREAS, the Charlottesville City Council has publicly expressed its desire, and has stated its intention, to remove and relocate a statue/ sculpture depicting Sacajawea, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark currently located on West Main Street in the City (the “Statue”), such desires and intentions having previously been expressed by Resolution adopted by City Council on November 15, 2019; and

WHEREAS, City staff has presented a plan for removal of the Statue, and for transportation of the Statue to a storage location owned, or co-owned, by the City, such actions to be completed within the funding previously appropriated by Council on July 7, 2021;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE THAT the Statue shall be removed from its current location on West

Main Street and transported to a storage location owned, or co-owned by the City, and the City Manager is hereby authorized to carry out this relocation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rose Abrahamson shared sentiments on behalf of familial descendants of Sacajawea, and shared concerns that she heard from indigenous people and members of the Charlottesville Community about the impact of symbolism. She expressed an interest in having the statue serve an educational purpose to address the plight of Native American women who go missing at an alarming rate.

Mayor Walker opened the floor for other comments from the public. Communications Director Brian Wheeler mentioned that among public participants were members of the media. No speakers came forward.

Mayor Walker adjourned the meeting at 12:22 p.m.

BY Order of Mayor Nikuyah Walker

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council