

## **Statement from City Manager Maurice Jones**

12-01-17

From the very beginning of this process the City was committed to having a thorough, independent review of the events of this past summer. We suffered a traumatic series of attacks that resulted in great tragedy in our community. Our residents deserve to know what occurred on May 13<sup>th</sup>, July 8<sup>th</sup> and August 12<sup>th</sup> and more importantly what we can do to help enhance our response to these types of events in the future. This report delivers on our promise of transparency and offers us a roadmap for improvement.

I would like to thank Mr. Heaphy and his team for their work on the review and this final report. They spent a significant amount of time and resources interviewing over 150 people, reviewing hundreds of hours of video footage and examining thousands of documents in a relatively short period of time.

Although we do not agree with every aspect of the report's findings we do appreciate the efforts of the reviewers to talk to people from all walks of life about their experiences from this summer. In addition to government and law enforcement officials, dozens of area residents were given the opportunity to tell their stories and have their voices heard. Their contributions proved to be invaluable.

We faced an unprecedented series of protests and demonstrations this summer, culminating with the Unite the Right Rally on August 12<sup>th</sup>. On a number of fronts, as the report acknowledges, we succeeded in protecting our City to the best of our abilities. But in other areas we, and our law enforcement partner in the Virginia State Police, undoubtedly fell short of expectations, and for that we are profoundly sorry. This report is one critical step in helping this community heal and move forward after suffering through this summer of hate.

We are developing an action plan that will be unveiled during Monday night's City Council meeting, which will outline what we have been working on the last couple of months, what policies are still to be addressed and a timeline for implementing those policies.

We look forward to Monday night's formal presentation to the City Council on the details of the report and the recommendations for moving forward. As we digest this report and its recommendations, I think it's important to note that although mistakes may have been made, there is no indication of malicious intent on the part of the people who were charged with preparing for these unprecedented events and providing safety for our community. Chief Al Thomas and the men and women in his department are dedicated to protecting our City every day and we thank them for their service. This police department and this City government pledge to learn from these experiences and strengthen our ability to offer the safety that our residents, visitors and business owners deserve.

Charlottesville is a strong, resilient City that values and celebrates our diversity. This community is committed to taking on the great challenges of our time like affordable housing, economic and social inequity and the national rise in the vile rhetoric and actions of white supremacists. We are confident that working together we can continue to send a strong message that Charlottesville stands against discrimination, against intolerance and against hate.