



Date: 26th of July, 2020
To: The City Of Charleston

All Leadership entities with in the City of Charleston,

We come to you today to discuss our views and demands, as we stand here in protest of the Confederate battle flag exhibition. An exhibition that happens every Sunday, at the Confederate Defenders of Charleston Monument. We would like to clarify that we protest the display of the Confederate Battle flag on city grounds and property and not necessarily the statue itself. This exhibition has been both divisive to the community of Charleston, as well as a legality hardship waiting to erupt. The most recent events to support that claim, fall into the events that took place on July 5th at the base of the monument. This is where one member of the confederate flaggers struck a young man several times with his flag pole, prior to being forcefully stopped by a counter protester who stood his ground. Then we as a community face events such as what occurred on the 12th of July in 2020. Events where a willing and self identified Militia stood at the foot of this monument in a show of intimidation and force. This was done at request of the confederate flaggers. Again, on July 19, 2020 yet another attack on a demonstrator occurred. This was from a supporter of the confederate flaggers identified as 'Flags Across the South', and their supporting group identified as 'We the People'.

Throughout these demonstrations we have felt an inequality of treatment, brought forward by city rules and policy interpretations from Charleston Police Department. Most recent were after the events that took place on the 5th of July. The police department decided to change the processes of enforcement after that day. Processes of enforcements for protest, seemingly at this one protest location, were quickly changed on July 12th without full explanation. The police department had decided to limit freedoms of travel and movement in public spaces. Limiting protesters to the space around the statue and counter protesters across the street on the battery. The Police department said they were holding "all" at risk of arrest if non-compliant. While public safety was cited after the fact in this decision, it was not held firmly for both sides. On the 19th of July, protestors who gathered in opposition to the display of the Confederate flag, came early enough to take the statue first and demanded that the same safety procedures be upheld. Several times, as caught on live FB and other social media outlets, the police allowed Confederate Flag supporters to intrude on the protest location. The final time leading to a physical assault on one of our protestors. That incident marks the second assault against a protestor in opposition of the confederate flag. This was the second assault in just 3 weeks time.

The policy interpretations by Charleston Police Department do not stop at on scene decisions made. We also would like to bring to the City's attention to the rules and regulations of permitting. While the Department of Recreations is not currently issuing permits, the police department is issuing permits for police activity. As explained to our collective groups, these permits are upheld at the same discretion as Department of Recreations issued permits. The catch is that these permits are at the discretion of the Chief of Police's designee and only one signature is needed to issue the permit. This one person has been identified as Lt. Jason Bruder of Charleston Police Department. The issues taken are ones of facts in writing and of conversation. The Stand as One associate VP issued four individual permit requests on July 13th, all four were consecutive Sundays. All four were also denied without full explanation as to why. Yet on the 19th of July the confederate supporters showed up at 10 am with a permit that was handwritten and only shown to us by Charleston PD via cell phone (no hard copy of this permit was available). As stated by Capitan Jenkins, on scene PD senior Command, the permit was issued and signed on the 16th of July. Not only does the nature of the permit warrant frustration with the department, but the date issued and signed was after the date that we had already submitted and been denied. When asked for an explanation of why our permits were denied, the associate VP of Stand as One was told by Lt. Bruder over the phone "They have been there for 5 years, I'm not going to issue one to you before them". All of these aspects play into an obvious show of bias within the police department. Bias for a group that displays a symbol of oppression and hatred every Sunday in our public parks. Bias against a group of antiracist citizens that take offense to that display.

There are key points of interest that came to the table of conversation amongst our communities. These key points of interest are not one sided. In Fact, they represent a good synopsis of what the communities of Charleston demand the city take action upon. They are as follows:



- Remove and deny any exhibition displaying the Confederate battle flag on city property. Follow in the direction of the Department of Defense. It is already recognized that this flag is non-patriotic and treasonous to our Nation as it stands. It is also a sign of hatred and offensive to many in the community of Charleston.
- Make Changes to the Picketing Ordinance; remove the use of oversized flags (greater than 3x6) as well as the use of flag poles in all events and displays. Both permitted or not.
- We call for the City Council and Mayor to stop spending money in "over policing" and focus on ensuring the police are properly policing. We have brought several issues to the table from the past few weeks alone that are key to need for proper policing. Somehow, failing to mention the amount of police activity that has been used during these, from our part, peaceful protest. Now we, the communities of Charleston, are funding heightened SWAT and SLED activity for regular patrol across our city and county.
- Ensure the permitting Codes are followed even when functions are removed from the city offices and placed in the hands of the Law Enforcement Department. There are several reasons why Flags Across The South and We The People should never be issued a permit in the city of Charleston again. We can start with the public disruptions caused by their displays. Then, there is the amount of law enforcement resources needed to handle this protest week after week. The refusal of the groups to wear face coverings to stop the covid spread, or the number of violent incidents from members and supporters of their groups. Violent incidents that lead to arrest and legal actions.
- Finally, we demand that this display in particular stops out of respect to the community and community cornerstones. This flag was tied to a young man that ravaged a cornerstone of the black community right here in Charleston. The City came together for this tragedy, expressed condolences and said never again will this happen in our city. The Confederate Battle Flag, seen glorified as a sign of white supremacy by Dylann Roof and many others, now on display in parade or exhibition. This is happening just blocks away from the Mother Emanuel AME Church. That is not Charleston Strong and that does not represent our City or culture.

We do thank our supporters and we hope that our presence here will not be needed for long. We ask our elected officials to do the right thing for the city. We are available for conversations at any time and welcome them.

Regards,

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