

Pride Magazine - Urgent Action Requested: Help CMH Secure City Funding Today!



From Pride Magazine <pridemagazine-pridecommunications.net@shared1.ccsend.com>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <pridemagazine@pridecommunications.net>
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Dee Dixon - Let's Preserve Charlotte's History!



CHARLOTTE MUSEUM OF HISTORY

URGENT ADVOCACY ALERT

Terri L. White | President & CEO | Charlotte Museum of History
Dear Members, Neighbors, and Friends,

I am reaching out today with an urgent request. On Monday the Charlotte City Council voted once again not to add the Charlotte Museum of History to the list of arts organizations that receive annual support from the city. Did you know we are the only major arts organization in the city that receives no operating support from the city or county? Today we need your help to reverse this decision and ask the City of Charlotte to equitably fund CMH and ensure that the history of the Queen City is saved, preserved, and exhibited for generations to come.

We are asking to be added to the City's list of annual arts organizations supported by city funds. Financially, we are asking for \$650,000 for FY25. This is on par with what our peer museums receive and will enable us to continue providing diverse history programming and community outreach while completing urgent facilities and technological upgrades so that we can continue to serve the community.

In recent years, our board and staff have listened carefully to what the community wants from its history museum and we have taken that feedback to heart, making major cultural and programmatic shifts in how we operate. Specifically, we have become more fiscally sound and we have become a more inclusive museum, sharing stories beyond that of local founding father Hezekiah Alexander. Our income is increasing and diversified, we consistently keep expenses under budget, and our award-winning programs have become beloved by Charlotteans of all backgrounds and walks of life.

We also support smaller non-profits by allowing them to host their events for free in our spaces, and we have focused on collaboration with other organizations in the region including the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, Opera Carolina, the Carolinas Asian American Chamber of Commerce, the Catawba Nation, Fiestas Patrias and many more.

In addition to our innovative history programs and outreach, we are the stewards of essential and irreplaceable pieces of Charlotte's history in the form of five historic buildings on our 8-acre campus in east Charlotte that we preserve, protect and interpret for the public. These include the 1774 Alexander Rock House and the much-loved Siloam School, which is set to re-open in mere weeks. Without consistent and sustainable sources of funding, we have delayed major repairs and upgrades to our facilities, including these historic spaces that are on the National Register of Historic Places.

We have done all of this through private support from sponsors, members and grants and without any municipal funding in over a decade. We are extremely proud of this work that we've done for and with our community, but this financial model cannot sustain the kind of robust history museum that the city of Charlotte deserves.

Many people say Charlotte doesn't have history because it tears everything down; that we don't save anything. Of course we at the museum don't agree with that sentiment (our history is quite literally why we exist!), but it did seem ironic that our City Council rejected funding for the Charlotte Museum of History on Meck Dec Day—arguably the most significant date in North Carolina history. The museum is the only site in the county with direct ties to the Meck Dec and the ideals of freedom and liberty that it represents. No arts organization in our city is better poised to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Meck Dec next year or America's semi-quincentennial in 2026 than Charlotte Museum of History.

Do you believe that sharing and preserving Charlotte's history matters? Do you think the Queen City should have a history museum to be proud of? If you do, please send a message to City Council TODAY that your Charlotte Museum of History deserves equitable funding!

Our fight for equitable funding is not new. My first day as president of the history museum was July 4, 2022. Since that day, I have been open and transparent about our need for municipal support, both in private conversations with city leaders and in the talks that I give around the city and at CMH special events.

We will continue to fight for our survival so that we can be the history museum the city deserves, and we hope you will join us by contacting City Council and demanding they include us in the FY25 budget before their next meeting on May 30th. You can copy and paste the letter below in your email to them (we have provided their email addresses below). If you want to know who your specific representative is, you can find out **HERE**.

If you don't live in Charlotte, that's okay too! Let's show the Council just how

far CMH's reach and influence extends.

Thank you so much for your support and advocacy! We genuinely cannot do the work we do without your support.

Best regards,

Terri L. White | President & CEO
Charlotte Museum of History

Dear [INSERT REPRESENTATIVE NAME],

I'm contacting you to urge you to support equitable funding for the Charlotte Museum of History for the FY25 city budget. I am also asking you to add them to the list of arts organizations that have access to annual funding so that they will not be prevented from getting funding from other sources who use that list to determine their giving designations.

CMH is the oldest history museum in the city, they take care of the oldest home in the county, and they are the only museum actively advocating for historic preservation in the Queen City. They are also the museum that saved the historic Siloam School, which will reopen on June 15th, relocating it to their 8-acre campus in East Charlotte, a Corridor of Opportunity for the city. I support the museum's engaging and diverse programs and creative exhibits and do not want to see them overlooked in the city's arts funding. It is a mistake that such a major organization should have been left off the list in the first place, and I sincerely ask you to make this right. The museum has not received municipal funds for operating expenses in almost 20 years, and it did not receive municipal funds to help it survive through the COVID-19 pandemic that hurt all arts organizations. That they survived through all that shows they are a strong organization worthy of city support that they are currently being denied.

Please do the right and equitable thing and provide the Charlotte Museum of History with \$650,000 for FY25 and add them to your list of favored arts organizations moving forward.

Respectfully,

[INSERT YOUR NAME]

Mayor Vi Lyles: mayor@charlottenc.gov

Dimple Ajmera, At Large: Dimple.Ajmera@charlottenc.gov

LaWana Mayfield, At Large: LaWana.Mayfield@charlottenc.gov

James Mitchell, At Large: James.Mitchell@charlottenc.gov

Victoria Watlington, At Large: Victoria.Watlington@charlottenc.gov

Dante Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem and District 1: Dante.Anderson@charlottenc.gov

Malcolm Graham, District 2: Malcolm.Graham@ci.charlotte.nc.us

Tiawana Brown, District 3: tiawana.brown@charlottenc.gov

Renee Johnson, District 4: Renee.Johnson@charlottenc.gov

Marjorie Molina, District 5: Marjorie.Molina@charlottenc.gov

Tariq Bokhari, District 6: Tariq.Bokhari@charlottenc.gov

Ed Driggs, District 7: Ed.driggs@charlottenc.gov

Marcus Jones, City Manager: Marcus.Jones@charlottenc.gov

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