

For Immediate Release: 8/13/2020

Triad Abolition Project and Occupy the Block Day 30

Day 30 (one month!)

August 12th marks Day 30 of Occupy the Block #OccupyWSNC. For a month, hundreds of local community supporters have visited the occupation, and hundreds more have shared support via donations. All occupiers and supporters seek justice for John Neville, especially in the push for transformative change in the policy demands:

- Ban the use of the prone restraint (hogtie) on ANY civilian.
- Notify the public of any death involving an officer or deputy.

City Council Public Safety Committee Meeting 8/10

On Monday, August 8th, City Council's [Public Safety Committee](#) met to discuss items such as expanding the Drug Task Force to a collaboration across WSPD, FCSO, and Kernersville; a movement towards spending over \$2 million on new WSPD vehicles; and using the Justice Assistance Grant Program Award for surveillance equipment in "high crime" locations. Triad Abolition Project attempted to request time for public comments in this meeting, as was permitted in the Public Safety Committee meeting on June 8th. However, organizers and supporters were met with various responses from the City of WS, all of which were dismissive towards public interest in participating by sharing community voices in City Council meetings. All were given the advice of using the public comment period time during Monday, August 17th's, monthly City Council meeting.

The *Winston-Salem Journal* [reported](#) on the Public Safety Committee meeting, emphasizing that Council member Annette Scippio (East Ward) called upon city leaders to give more support to WSPD. No mention was made of the 55 arrests made by WSPD on peaceful protesters within 21 days. No mention was made of Occupy the Block, which was at Day 27 at the time of the meeting. Council members spoke extensively about the uptick in local gun violence, but failed to connect this to the [national uptick](#) in gun violence that the *New York Times* has connected to the pandemic crisis on social programs, rather than the Civil Rights movement currently taking place in response to police brutality. Our City Council's response to this surge in gun violence in Winston-Salem is increased policing, which is statistically a harmful approach. We continue to advocate for refunding our community instead of increased funding for policing in order to address the root causes of this surge of violence in our city and around our country. At one point during the Public Safety Committee meeting, East Ward Council Member Annette Scippio was reported to have said "This is not a racial issue" and "This is not a social programs issue." Scippio's tone-deaf comments draws some concern for TAP over her failure to see why and how African-American communities are disproportionately affected by economic destitution and deprivation which can only be solved by the implementation of social programs that improve the health and financial well-being of the community members that she serves in the East Ward, for whom she pledged to be an [advocate and servant](#). An advocate and servant to the East Ward, which Scippio purports to be, would and should not support any additional policing that would lead to the further incarceration of countless Black men and women.

Scippio

is pushing to allow our police department to do the work we pay them to do ... "to maintain safety and security and peace in our neighborhoods." The Triad Abolition Project calls on Scippio to do the work many of the East Ward and Winston Salem have entrusted to her-- adopt programs that will ensure, not hinder, the welfare of all citizens.

Triad Abolition Project and supporters of Occupy the Block will continue to share calls to action based on facts beyond the biases and powers of city leaders. We firmly believe in refunding our community, especially in this time of the pandemic crisis. Winston-Salem City Council's consensus on increasing financial support of the WSPD is ignorant of voices of the community and ignorant of the statistical effects of increased policing in our city.

Breaking Down Systems of Inequality in Winston-Salem 8/14

On Friday, 8/14/20 Occupy The Block will wrap up its 31st day of Occupying Winston-Salem by hosting its second "Breaking Down Systems of Inequality in Winston-Salem" event at Bailey Park. This event brings together local organizations fighting for fundamental and lasting changes in The Triad and beyond. We invite you to attend, have dinner with us at 6pm (food provided by local eatery Delicious by Shereen). Local activist organizations will present the ways in which they are influencing change in The Triad and will include Siembra (Immigration Rights), Hate Out Of Winston (Judicial System), Action For Equity (Education System), Drum Majors Alliance (Public Health and Safety), U.S.O.R. (Art and Activism), and SHARE Co-Op (Food Insecurity).

For further information, please see @TriadAbolitionProject on Instagram. All press release documents can be found at www.triadabolitionproject.org.

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