

# OPINION

## THE CHRONICLE

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Celebrating  
41  
Years  
of Community Journalism

## Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

## Liberty Street Market went wrong from beginning

In mid-October of last year, excitement was in the air. Liberty Street Market, 1591 N. Liberty St., opened to the public with a ribbon cutting and remarks from city and community leaders.

A dozen vendors were at the Liberty Street Market on opening day. Vendors offered an array of items, from fresh produce and baked sweets to African art and blue jeans.

Eleven months later, no vendors are there.

What happened to Liberty Street Market? It could be that the business venture was handled all wrong.

Liberty Street Market was among several concerns voiced at a barbershop community meeting that Council Member Derwin Montgomery held in the East Ward.

Several community members pointed to what they saw as the problem with the market. There is a

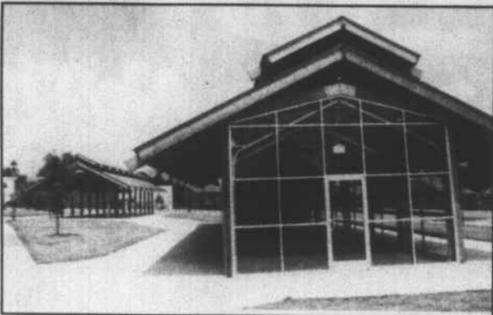


Photo by Todd Luck

### Liberty Market

fence around it. "They want to keep us out," one person said. Others agreed. But wasn't the Liberty Street Market there to help the residents of the area? Maybe not.

In the usual process of opening a business, a site is identified and a market feasibility study is done. The numerous businesses that have been announcing their intentions to open in the South and Southwest wards and in downtown recently no doubt can put their hands on the market feasibility studies for their businesses. The market feasibility study looks at the market for the goods and services the businesses are trying to sell to determine if there are enough people with money in the particular area who would be willing to buy from them. Is there a market feasibility study for the Liberty Street Market?

The Chronicle reported in October that Mayor Pro Tempore Vivian Burke held a copy of the Liberty Street Corridor feasibility study done in 1996 as she made her remarks at the Liberty Street Market ceremony. Burke, the longtime Northeast Ward City Council member, represents one part of Liberty Street; Montgomery represents the other.

1996 is almost 20 years ago. No successful business would open in the 21st century using a 20-year-old market feasibility study.

A current market feasibility study for Liberty Street Market should have told the city of Winston-Salem something about the people who live in the area and their willingness to support the market with their cash. Has anyone asked the residents what they wanted? Did anyone find out whether the community would financially support the market? Residents who spoke with Montgomery earlier this year said no one asked them if they wanted Liberty Street Market in their neighborhood. No one apparently did a current market feasibility study. Is this because mostly black people live in the area, so it doesn't matter what they want; they'll just have to take what the city gives them?

Liberty Street Market sits on a site that was dilapidated. It was an eyesore. It looks nice now, with two large covered shelters and with parking spaces for customers. Except there are no customers. There are no vendors. Only a reminder of what should have been: The city should have asked the residents if they wanted Liberty Street Market. All the savvy businesspeople ask before they build.

So now, the city is at a loss as to what to do with Liberty Street Market. Here's an idea: Ask the residents what they want.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Thanks for being a sponsor of Silent Witnesses

To the Editor:

The Winston-Salem Police Department has enjoyed a great partnership with our business community for many years and we are thankful that you [The Chronicle] have chosen to be an active participant in strengthening our relationship. Your sponsorship of our Silent Witnesses is a testament to your commitment to the Winston-Salem community.

The Silent Witness you have sponsored is property of the Winston-Salem Police Department; however, your name, as the sponsor, will be permanently affixed and on display throughout numerous events in the future.

One hundred percent of the money you gave in sponsorship of a Silent Witness will be donated to Family Services of Forsyth County to help provide resources to victims of domestic violence. I hope that someone finds the help they need, someone no longer has to deal with domestic violence and someone's life is made better because of people like you who are willing to help.

Barry D. Rountree, MPA  
Chief of Police  
Winston-Salem

### Ministers meet with Roy Cooper over officer retrial, but he still says no

To the Editor:

Today a group of clergy from Charlotte and the Greater North Carolina community, in partnership with the N.C. NAACP, delivered the attached letter to Attorney General Roy Cooper [in Raleigh] to express their concerns regarding his decision to not retry Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Officer Randall Kerrick in the wrongful death of Johnathan Ferrell.

However, after a very impassioned conversation, the final decision from the Attorney General remains to not retry this case.

"In light of this decision, we are still committed to pressing for a retrial so that justice is done for the Ferrell family and all citizens of North Carolina" says Dr. Rodney Sadler, associate professor of Bible Union Presbyterian Seminary. This coalition of clergy will reconvene after this meeting to discuss next steps and release further details in the near future.

This is what was presented to Attorney General Roy Cooper:

Friday, September 4, 2015

North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper  
North Carolina Department of Justice

RE: The decision not to retry Officer Randall Kerrick

Dear Attorney General Cooper:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We asked the N.C. NAACP to join us. As members of the Charlotte community, we wanted to meet with you to discuss our concerns in relation to your decision to not retry Officer Randall Kerrick for the wrongful death of Johnathan Ferrell.

We understand that the city of Charlotte settled with the family in this case, but there is no amount of money that can justify the fact that Officer Kerrick used unreasonable force to shoot and kill an unarmed man. Testimony from this case has shown that Kerrick violated police department policies and because of his actions, he was charged with involuntary manslaughter.

We also understand that the jury was hung, by an 8 to 4 vote, that they were unable to pronounce a verdict and as a result, the court was forced to declare a mistrial. However, what we do not understand is why you feel that to retry this case would not yield a different result when our community believes and the law dictates that a retrial is in order. Yes, the jury in the first trial was unable to speak in one voice, but such a hung jury has not spoken for the Charlotte Community or the people of North Carolina. The loss of human life and the heartbreak of a family require a more just and wise response.

In the state of North Carolina where African-Americans have a long history of being wrongfully convicted of murder and other crimes, we now see a case of the same legal system refusing to prop-

erly try an officer of the law for killing an unarmed black college student. We contend that your decision not to retry this case was made much too quickly.

We are concerned that the dash cam video was not put into proper perspective given our long experience with the racial stereotypes that young black men are a lethal danger to a society that is too often justified in taking his life for its own alleged protection. This standard is far too subjective and it results in a call for retrial that has become habitual.

We are also concerned that little to no weight was placed on the fact that the city settled the case with the family based on research that these type actions by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, although reported, were never investigated by external forces.

Finally, we are concerned that your quick decision not to submit the evidence of this case to a new jury sets a dangerous precedent that lends itself to continued issues of inequality in the criminal justice system.

In light of this history and our concerns, we call for you to reconsider and retry this case for the sake of this family and this community, and in the name of justice. We believe the decision not to do so is unconscionable. Too many times, too many mothers and wives have buried their sons and husbands.

Concerned Clergy of Charlotte and the greater North Carolina Community:

- Minister Corine Mack (Charlotte, NC)
- Rev. Rodney Sadler (Charlotte, NC)
- Bishop Dwayne Walker (Charlotte, NC)
- Bishop Tonya Rawls (Charlotte, NC)
- Rev. Donnie R. Garris (Charlotte, NC)
- Rev. John Mendez (Winston Salem, NC)
- Rev. Kojo Nantambu (Charlotte, NC)
- Rev. Mike Broadway (Durham, NC)
- Rev. Gregory K. Moss (Charlotte, NC)
- Paul Msiza (South Africa)
- Rev. Jimmy Hawkins (Durham, NC)
- Rev. Glencje Rhedrick (Charlotte, NC)
- Rev. Earl Johnson (Durham, NC)
- Rev. Dr. William J. Barber (NC NAACP)
- Rev. Michelle Laws (NC NAACP)

## We Welcome Your Feedback

Submit letters and guest columns to [letters@wschronicle.com](mailto:letters@wschronicle.com) before 5 p.m. Friday for the next week's publication date.

Letters intended for publication should be addressed "Letters to the Editor" and include your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep letters to 350 words or less.

If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our website, [www.wschronicle.com](http://www.wschronicle.com).

We reserve the right to edit any item submitted for clarity or brevity and determine when and whether material will be used.

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