



Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

700 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

T (704) 336-2543 • F (704) 336-6118

www.mecksheriff.com

Garry L. McFadden
Sheriff

Rodney M. Collins
Chief Deputy Sheriff

Telisa E. White
Chief of Detention

Jason R. Beebe
Chief Deputy Sheriff

MEDIA ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2020

CONTACT: Rodney M. Collins

Chief Deputy Sheriff

rodney.collins@mecknc.gov

980-314-5851 (office)

704-622-4009 (mobile)

Sheriff's Office Will Not Allow Fourth Street Encampment to Return

(CHARLOTTE, NC) – Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry L. McFadden announced this morning that a group of more than two dozen individuals attempting to re-establish an encampment on Fourth Street at the corner of the entrance to the County Courthouse Plaza and across the street from the Magistrate and Arrest Processing entrance to Detention Center-Central, were again moved from the location. Twenty five individuals who refused to disperse upon being asked to do so were arrested – the majority being charged with misdemeanor criminal trespass.

Ten days ago, Sheriff's Deputies removed individuals from the same site that had become a center of criminal behavior and conduct that jeopardized public access to government buildings and services. Throughout the next week-and-a-half, as individuals and small groups returned with supplies and stated intentions to provide support to individuals being released from the Detention Center, Sheriff's Deputies informed them that due to the conduct of those who had held themselves out as "Jail Support" but instead engaged in conduct that seriously challenged public safety, public health, and the ability of citizens to access public buildings and resources, the encampment that had operated under the guise of "Jail Support" would not be allowed to reestablish. Instead, Sheriff's Office personnel encouraged those individuals claiming to want to offer support to persons being released from the Detention Center to contact the Sheriff's Office Community Engagement Team to discuss sharing resources and provisions from a safe location

inside the Detention Center. To date, no one has contacted the Community Engagement Team in furtherance of such a discussion.

Sheriff McFadden this morning reiterated his position that he has articulated repeatedly over the summer, as individuals claiming to provide “Jail Support” appeared less inclined to do so and more inclined toward criminal conduct and interference with public access. “If there are citizens, community leaders, faith-based or grass roots organizations who want to join in the effort to provide meaningful support for our neighbors rejoining society upon release from detention, I welcome their help and their efforts. I will give them a space within the facility to do so, in a way that does not undermine public safety or create an environment on the street that deters others from access to government buildings and services. To be clear, refusing to allow the encampment on Fourth Street to reestablish is not about quieting protests for criminal justice reform, Black Lives Matter, changes in law enforcement practices, or any of the myriad efforts along those lines that – like the concept of Jail Support – I support enthusiastically as much as I do the right to protest about them. But an encampment that repeatedly challenges public safety, public health, and public access, is very different from a peaceful protest and as such will not be tolerated.”

#####