**Partial Contents of a Letter from Four Survivors of the 1979 Greensboro Massacre Currently Residing in Greensboro to the City Council of Greensboro**

Letter sent on October 17, 2017

A. Opening paragraphs of letter

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1. Opening

Dear Mayor and Councilpersons:

As Greensboro residents who survived the deadly assault of November 3, 1979 and remained active in the struggle for racial, social, and economic justice in Greensboro, we applaud the Greensboro City Council for the significant step it took on August 15, 2017, in apologizing for the Greensboro Massacre. Thank you.

We appreciate you for taking an action that no City Council before you saw fit to take. Your near unanimous vote to apologize for the Greensboro Massacre opens a door to healing our city, putting us on a path to become a model city that acknowledges and takes responsibility for the wrongs in its past so as to move forward to a better future for all its residents; Greensboro needs that, and we think you will agree that our nation needs that.

We are writing this letter on behalf of ourselves, non-Greensboro based survivors of that tragic day, the former residents of Morningside Homes, and the justice loving residents of Greensboro.

*We write not merely to take note of your apology and thank you for it, but also to help you in putting that apology in a clearer context. In that spirit, we ask you to read the seven specific apology recommendations listed below. Then please read carefully and slowly the complete document that backs up the apology recommendations*.

B. Recommendations – What we wish the City to apologize for

* **Police and City Foreknowledge of Violence along with Failure to Warn Potential Victims**

Having foreknowledge about a planned confrontation by violence-prone groups from many sources, including from a Klansman who was a paid police informant, but never sharing the known threat in the weeks leading up to the parade with those who stood to be harmed.

* **Egregious Actions in Police Handling of WVO Parade Permit by Violating the Law in Support of Klan and Nazi Plans and against the Demonstrators and the Community**

Issuing a parade permit with the stipulation of a ban on all firearms, concealed or unconcealed--a violation of North Carolina and United States constitutional law--and in disregard of a municipal ordinance that required notifying the permit applicant about the permit within three days; and only granting the permit to the WVO nearly two weeks after application was made; and giving the permit, with its weapons’ ban, to the Klan at virtually the same time that it was delivered to the WVO.

* **Adopting a “Low Profile” Plan that Deployed Officers Away from March Formation**

Adopting a low profile tactical plan that kept uniformed police away from the site of the parade during the time when marchers would be gathering and their armed assailants would be en route to carry out a known, planned confrontation with them.

* **Lack of an Effective Plan to Protect Parade Participants and the Community**

Having no effective plan and taking no effective action to intervene in the known planned attack and the unfolding of violence, injury, and death, for which GPD Officers, Klan and Nazi members were eventually found liable in court for wrongful death.

* **Lack of Pursuit of Fleeing Suspected Perpetrators**

Not pursuing suspected perpetrators of criminal action as they fled the scene.

* **City and Police Promotion of a False Narrative Scapegoating and Demonizing Victims**

For the City and the Police being partners in forging a false narrative that demonized CWP/WVO members, especially those that remained in Greensboro, who have endured enormous suffering and hardship growing from such demonization.

* **City Council’s Racially Biased Vote Opposing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The City Council’s racially biased vote (all whites voting against the TRC and all Blacks voting for it) served to continue the demonization and to continue to block sincere efforts to seek truth, reconciliation, justice, and healing related to the events of November 3, 1979.

C. Closing

In putting forth our views we do not mean to avoid mistakes and errors in our own work. ..

None of the regrets and criticisms cited above in Johnson’s testimony or any place else, can or should be used to justify the conduct of the City of Greensboro or the Police.

The truth is concrete and we strongly urge the City Council to be specific in any apology it makes. Specifics will be most helpful in overcoming the veil of shame and falsehood which continues to impede better race relationship and social justice and equity in our city. A genuine statement of apology with specifics will also be an enormous help in opening new avenues of communication, cooperation, reconciliation, and community building. This we believe will set Greensboro apart as one of the emerging great cities of the nation.

For those who would like to pursue this topic, we would like to recommend what we believe to be some of the best sources: they are from those closest to the events and from people who have done the most research. We list them here in chronological order: “Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir,” Signe Waller, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002; “Through Survivors’ Eyes: From the Sixties to the Greensboro Massacre,” Sally Avery Bermanzohn, Vanderbilt University Press, 2003; “A City of Two Tales,” Survivors’ Understanding about the November 3, 1979 Greensboro Massacre as Presented to the Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Commission, 2005; “Final Report” by the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Presented to the residents of Greensboro, the City, the Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project and other public bodies on May 25, 2006; and “Democracy, Dialogue, and Community Action: Truth and Reconciliation in Greensboro,” Spoma Jovanovic, University of Arkansas Press, 2012.

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We earnestly implore you to join us in “a willing search for the truth:” A sincere apology from the City Council, along the lines we have sketched out here, would admirably show a willingness to admit truth once discovered. Thank you for reading through this letter. Please believe that we are sincere about working with the City and the Police to make our city better, and although we face a bitter past in many respects, the possibilities to use our God-given gifts to come together in truth, friendship and cooperation are always alive and never more needed than now.

Respectfully and sincerely yours,

Willena R. Cannon

Joyce H. Johnson

Nelson N. Johnson

Signe Waller