



CHARLOTTE.

2016 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT



College Downs Community Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at Johnson C Smith University

The agenda for the day was as follows:

- Introductions
- Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?: Arrow Activity
- Where We Want to Be: Vision Statement Exercise
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- Working Lunch – The Year Ahead
- Idea Development – Time for participants for develop an action plan for goal achievement.

Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?

We began our day with paired interviews, using the “Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?” activity. The activity was intended to help us reflect on:

- What we value
- What are the best things about our community and the people who live here
- What are our past successes
- Where are the potentials and possibilities

After interviewing our partners we shared our discussion with the group, finding commonalities in our conversations.

Where We Were: Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	Where We Are: Why would or wouldn't a person/business want to move into our community?	Where We Want to Be: If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family-centered special events (Christmas caroling, 4th of July, parades, picnic, costume contest) • Lots of children grew up in neighborhood (were very connected, most have moved away) • Founder of UNCC lived in neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly/open • Convenient location • Connection to the University • Very few children; schools are not great • Longevity of people in the neighborhood • Studentification (homes being bought by investors for student rentals) • Code violations by absentee owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light Rail will change for the better • Alumni association • Bike access • Greenway access • Increase activity with University • Partner with schools (elementary and middle) • Create a joint neighborhood committee with surrounding neighborhoods, community connections • Event planning • Increase participation and involvement • Friendly neighborhood organization that will make a pleasant place to live

Our Vision

Our vision is the unifying statement for our community that will guide our decision making and reminds us of what we are trying to reach. It is based on our shared values and preferences for our community's future. It combines the best of what was, what is, and what could be.

Our Vision:

- *To encourage neighborhood upkeep, safety, and livability*
- *To help our student neighbors understand and embrace neighborhood values of consideration for their neighbors, care for the property they rent, and safety of the community*
- *To be a welcoming and caring place for all who live here*
- *To provide a forum for discussion of issues and concerns relevant to the neighborhood*

Strategic Priorities

After committing to a shared vision, the board began to brainstorm on strategic priorities. This is where we began to define what is most important to us in order to achieve our vision. Strategic priorities are initiatives that will help us move closer to our vision of our community. The idea is to focus on a few things and do them very well as opposed to many things and missing the mark.

We started out thinking big and then narrowed down our focus using the Affinity Mapping Process, detailed below:

- Grab some sticky notes from the table. Keeping the vision statement in mind, write down as many of the following as you can think of, one per sticky note:
 - Current action items getting you closer to our vision.
 - Possible priorities/actions items to get us closer to our vision.
- Place the sticky notes on the wall.



- Organize the ideas by natural categories, once everyone agrees on the groups, give each one a name.

This activity led us to the following categories and action items being identified as important within our community:

- **Student/University Outreach**
 - Outreach to students/renters to get more involved
 - UNCC Student Affairs and student neighbors
 - CDCA has lots of student residents; moving in/out very frequently
- **Infrastructure Projects**
 - Develop strategy to improve walkway to Town Center Place
 - Develop a project to replace Old Concord sign
 - Develop strategy to improve entrance to College Downs from Old Concord that prevents cars from driving on grass
- **Community Reaching Out**
 - Establish link to Faires Farms Association; maybe Association picnic at Reedy Creek
 - Investigate neighborhood coalition concept
 - Contact middle school and ask about needs; connect with C.D.C.A. to help
 - Community Connections
 - University City Partners
 - UNC Charlotte
 - Students
 - Faires Farms
 - Newell School
- **Community Reaching In**
 - Stronger sense of community within
 - Ex: Resident activities, volunteering inside/outside C.D., book club, walking club, cleanups along creek
 - Increase association membership
 - Engage neighbors through direct contact, door-to-door, hand delivery
 - Activities including: retreats, cookouts, planting trees, hiking
 - Grow common vision
 - Re institute a neighborhood expectation for regular community events, possibly around holidays
 - Increase number of families in the community

Each participant was provided three (3) stickers to be used for voting. Stickers could be placed all on one or two items or shared amongst all of the ideas identified. The three categories receiving the most votes are the strategic priorities that are most important for us to begin working on to achieve our vision, these are:

1
Community Reaching In

2
Community Reaching Out

3
Infrastructure Projects

Action Items for 2016-2017 The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2016-2017 are:

Increase association membership by 25% by January 2017

Contact Faires Farms, Autumnwood, Back Creek to create a neighborhood coalition by September 2016

Refresh entrance to College Downs from Old Concord by end of June 2017

2016 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

College Downs Community Association

Our Vision:

- *To encourage neighborhood upkeep, safety, and livability*
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TO HELP US REACH OUR VISION; WE WILL FOCUS ON THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

1
Community Reaching In

2
Community Reaching Out

3
Infrastructure Projects

IN 2016-2017, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:

Increase association membership by 25% by January 2017

Contact Faires Farms, Autumnwood, Back Creek to create a neighborhood coalition by September 2016

Refresh entrance to College Downs from Old Concord by end of June 2017

Resources to Get Started- You've rolled up your sleeves and established your vision. The following resources may assist your organization in achieving your goals. Links and contact information are provided for information only and are subject to change.

Project	Getting Started	Resources
Project #1 Increase association membership by 25% by January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop newsletter content 	<p>Mail Chimp: Free online newsletter creator: www.mailchimp.com</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey residents about what type of communication platform they would prefer 	<p>Online survey tool: www.surveymonkey.com</p> <p>Types of neighborhood communication: http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_HOA_Communication</p> <p>Additional examples of communication: http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Governance/Citizen-Participation-and-Engagement/Communication-and-Citizen-Participation-Techniques.aspx</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a committee 	<p>How to organize a committee: http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startingacommittee/tabid/244/Default.aspx</p> <p>Board development online resources: Board Source - https://boardsource.org/eweb/</p>
Project #2 Contact Faires Farms, Autumnwood, and Back Creek to create a n'hood coalition by September 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with existing volunteer groups to recruit volunteers Participate in a workshop about volunteer recruitment 	<p>Hands On Charlotte matches volunteers with projects: www.handsoncharlotte.org</p> <p>Volunteer Match will post volunteer opportunities online: http://www.volunteermatch.org/</p> <p>Habitat for Humanity Group Volunteers: http://www.habitat.org/getinv</p> <p>MAVA- Metrolina Area Volunteer Administrators offers workshops on volunteer recruitment: https://www.facebook.com/MAVA-Metrolina-Association-for-Volunteer-Administrators-212961772174019/</p> <p>Set up a conference call option for meetings: www.freeconferencecall.com</p> <p>Nextdoor: Create a private social network for your neighborhood: https://nextdoor.com/about_us/</p> <p>Make signs to announce meetings with FastSigns® Reusable Yard Signs: http://www.fastsigns.com/sg-yard-signs/Yard-Signs</p>
Project #3 Refresh entrance to College Downs from Old Concord by		<p>Neighborhood Matching Grants (NMG) Program- Charlotte's NMG Program can provide grants to eligible neighborhood organizations for community improvement projects. To determine eligibility or learn program details please visit charlottenc.gov/nmg or call 704-336-3380</p> <p>Charlotte Community ToolBank is a great place to borrow tools for projects http://charlotte.toolbank.org/</p> <p>The Foundation for the Carolinas provides Front Porch Grants to build a sense of community in</p>

end of June 2017		<p style="text-align: center;">neighborhoods http://www.fftc.org/page.aspx?pid=663 CDOT Street Lighting offers lighting upgrades http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx Home Depot provides grants to communities https://corporate.homedepot.com/community</p>
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Parking Lot Items for follow-up:

More specific information (QofL) regarding education, average HH income, school test proficiency (neighborhood schools): See <http://mcmap.org/qol/?m=m41&n=>

Contact for Winterfield Neighborhood Association (Diane Langevin) to discuss past projects with school: Contact swood@charlottenc.gov and we will connect you

Tree resources: Contact TreesCharlotte: <http://treescharlotte.org/>

Your community is located within Charlotte’s Northeast Service Area. Your staff contacts for following up and community assistance are:

Charlenea Duncan, Community Engagement Specialist	John Short, Community Engagement Lead
csduncan@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-2173	jshort@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-3862



