



CHARLOTTE™

2015 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT



Firethorne

Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at CPCC Main Campus

Firethorne

2015 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, February 7th 2015, members of the Firethorne community participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at CPCC's Main Campus. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Betty Poteat
- Linda Roth
- Arlene Smith
- Betty Murner
- Linda Dorin
- Mary Carter



The City of Charlotte values citizen leadership and its ability to make an impact in the communities, in which we all live, work, play and shop. With this in mind, the board retreat process was initiated to help neighborhood based organizations develop strategic plans to improve quality of life in their communities.

Purpose

The purpose of the board retreat was to

- Generate meaningful conversations around improving quality of life in our community
- Set clear goals and priorities for the upcoming year(s)
- Develop a vision and strategic priorities for our community

By participating in the retreat, our board earned a \$1,500 Neighborhood Matching Grant credit to help execute one of the projects we identified.

Process

Our board retreat was conducted by trained facilitators tasked to keep our conversations on-task, productive, and focused on achievable objectives. The process was designed to help capture the best of the past, the best of the present, and how we can add to our strengths to build a better future. The focus was:

- Developing a vision to guide our decision making and activities
- Developing strategic priorities that aligned with our vision
- Developing project ideas

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?
<p>Best:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday parties • Friendly community • Peaceful area; serene; great scenery: deer • Close to Uptown and old Eastland Mall • Independence was flourishing <p>Worst:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalized cars • Graffiti • Eastland Mall closing • Problem renters • High number of vacancies • High number of renters 	<p>Why would they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location (easily accessible to all areas of the city) • Access to our HOA board (good communication) • Clean community • Great tree canopy <p>Why they wouldn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less amenities (retail, restaurants, grocery stores) • Blight around existing businesses • Crime • Low property values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification project • Deter crime • Solve creek/bridge concern • More homeowners • Annual festival • Redevelopment of Eastland Mall

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:

Firethorne is: a peaceful oasis, an attractive neighborhood, conveniently located, where neighbors care.

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:

- Beautification
 - Adopt or keep an eye on streets around the community
 - “Green up” the lawns
 - Landscaping: weed removal
 - Entrance: new pavers, timbers, flowers
 - Plant flowers at entrance
- Maintenance
 - Resolve storm water problems
 - Special assessment: to repair buildings
 - Buildings, siding, rood: repairs
 - Paint buildings
- Community development
 - Report violations to keep the community clean, attractive and peaceful
 - Try to have more community activities to keep neighbors involved
 - Reach out to neighbors who feel distanced from the community
 - Create quarterly newsletters
 - Report criminal activity to the police
- Legal administration
 - Amend the governing documents
 - Revise cost sharing agreement(s)
- Marketing
 - Partner with CMPD and area business to promote Firethorne as a safe and thriving 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.
Beautification

2.
Maintenance

3.
Community
Development

Action Items for 2015-2016

The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2015-2016 are:



2015 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Firethorne

OUR VISION:

Firethorne is: a peaceful oasis, an attractive neighborhood, conveniently located, where neighbors care.

TO HELP US REACH OUR VISION; WE WILL FOCUS ON THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

1.
Beautification

2.
Maintenance

3.
Community
Development

IN 2014-2015, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:

Entrance beautification

Building repairs: roof, siding

Increase neighborhood
participation

Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
Project #1 Entrance Beautification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & apply for environmental cleanup grants 	<p style="text-align: center;">Neighborhood Matching Grants: http://charmec.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Charlotte Beautiful has grants and volunteers for cleanups: www.keepcharlottebeautiful.org</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance area around sign by planting trees or flowers • Borrow tools for planting 	<p style="text-align: center;">Tips for Organizing a Community Cleanup: http://lancaster.unl.edu/community/articles/organized_cleanup.shtml</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ideas on what flowers to plant and grow: www.pinterest.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tool Bank: http://charlotte.toolbank.org/</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise funds for sign • Contact the Charlotte Department of Transportation to ensure proper location for sign 	<p style="text-align: center;">Neighborhood fundraiser ideas: http://www.useful-community-development.org/how-to-fundraise.html</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Charlotte Department of Transportation: http://charmec.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx</p>
Project #2 Building Repairs: Roof, Siding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquire about past NMG projects under this category • Talk to your neighbors about design and aesthetics that they want • Apply for grants 	<p style="text-align: center;">Neighborhood Matching Grants: http://charmec.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Home Depot provides grants to communities: http://www.homedepotfoundation.org/page/grants</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lowes has small grants available for neighborhoods: http://www.lowes.com/cd_charitable+and+educational+foundation_936258779</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for grants • Borrow tools for repairs • DIY Lessons 	<p style="text-align: center;">Community ToolBank is a great place to borrow tools for projects: http://charlotte.toolbank.org/</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How-to lessons at Lowes: http://www.lowes.com/cd_How+To+Library_615580068</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Home Depot Workshops: http://workshops.homedepot.com/workshops/home?cm_mmc=SEM THD G BT2 Resources&gclid=CJi3x9XeuMACFQ1p4AodDx0</p>

Project #3 Increase Neighborhood Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find fun ways to engage residents and recruit board members 	<p align="center">Recruiting potential board members: http://www.hoaleader.com/public/351.cfm</p> <p align="center">Increase neighborhood participation: http://atlantahoamanagement.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/how-to-increase-attendance-or-participation-inhomeowner-committees/</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giveaways for new members 	<p align="center">Four Rules for Social Media Contests/Giveaways: http://mashable.com/2011/11/29/social-media-contestsweepstakes/</p>

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