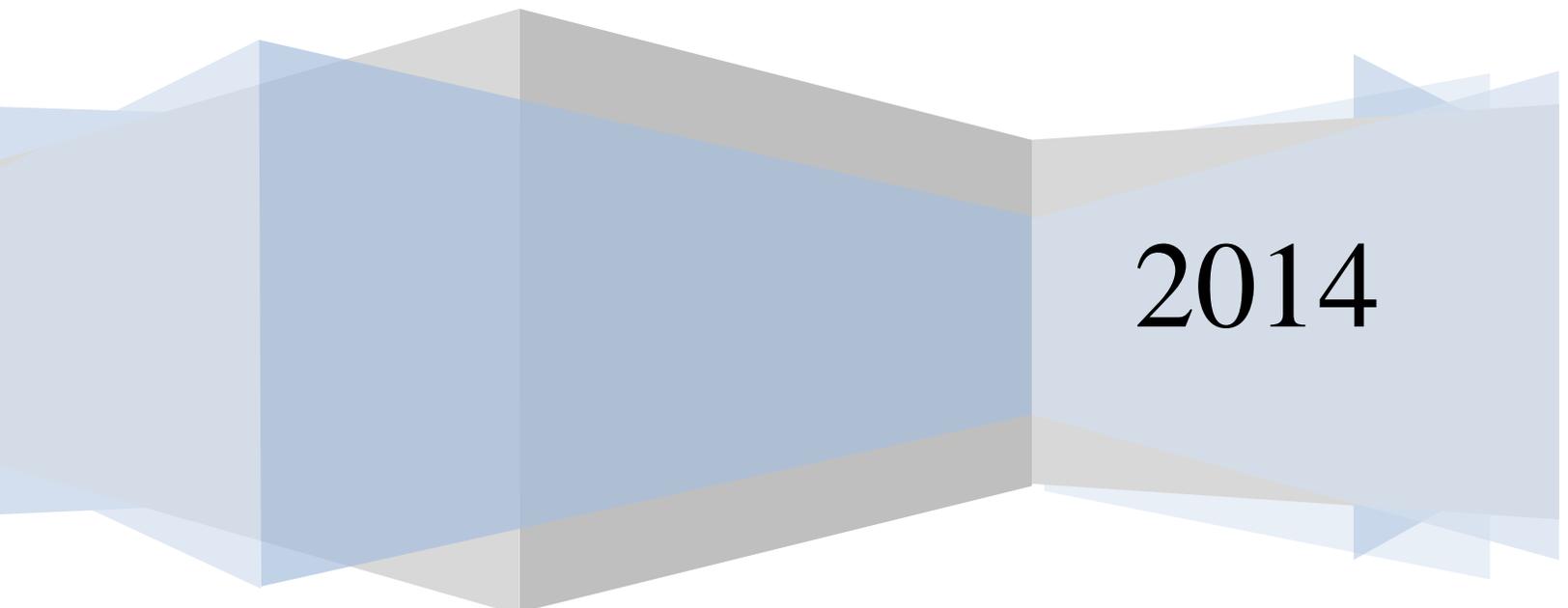


**Thomasboro Neighborhood
2014 Board Retreat**

Thomasboro Neighborhood Association

Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus



2014

Background

On Saturday, July 19th 2014, the board members of the Belmont Community Association (BCA) participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNCC Uptown Campus.. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- VeeVeca Torrence
- Syreeta Bingham
- Eunice Payne
- Tarik Kiley
- Kenyatta Carter
- Jackie Davis
- Janice Taylor
- Lawrence Peake



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. The credit will be applied to our neighborhood's required match and must be accompanied by a completed Vision to Action Idea Development Book alongside a NMG application. NMG credits expire one-year from the date of retreat attendance.

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 to 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/why not would 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> <p>Had a recreation center; youth programs; opportunities for cultural sharing.</p> <p>Worst –</p> <p>Weak neighborhood association; leadership turf wars; crime; bad news reports in the media.</p>	<p>Why –</p> <p>Affordable land/buildings to start a business; available youth labor; strong core neighborhood leadership; organizing & changing perception.</p> <p>Why Not –</p> <p>Low median income (low buying power); crime; negative perceptions; loitering; unpleasant community aesthetic (low curb appeal).</p>	<p>Have a recreation center; clean streets, more curb appeal; community involvement; training programs for the youth; food pantry; more financial assistance; name brand and marketing.</p>

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:

Thomasboro Neighborhood is a diverse community, unified in its efforts to enhance the quality of life for all people who live, work and visit Thomasboro 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:

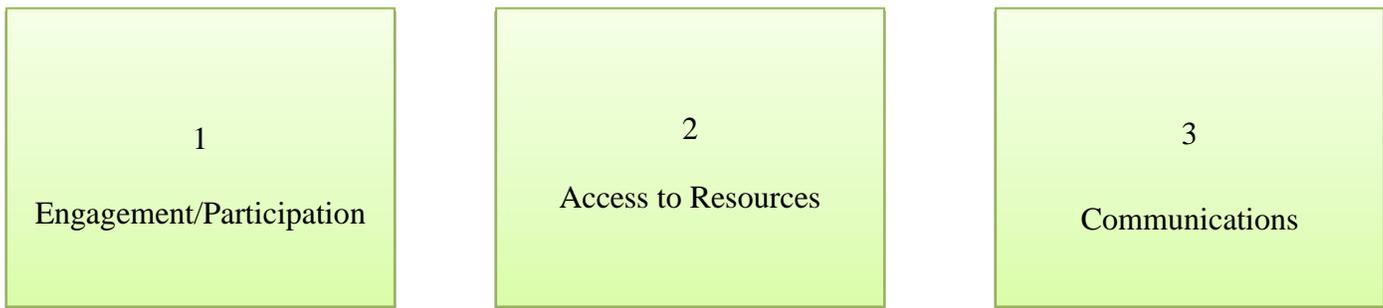
- Grab some sticky notes from the table.
Keeping the vision statement in mind, write down as many of the following as you can think of, one per sticky note:
- Current action items getting you closer to our vision.
- Possible priorities/actions items to get us closer to our vision.
- Place the sticky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

<u>Communications</u>	<u>Engagement/Participation</u>	<u>Sustainability</u>	<u>Access</u>
Website forum	Community meetings	Going Green	Fundraisers
Facebook	Community activism	Community Garden	More Resources
T-Shirts	Award ceremonies		
	Building Partnerships		
	Spiritual learning center		
	to enhance people		
	Youth Development		
	Community participation		

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:



Action Items for 2014-2015

The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2014-2015 are:



2014 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Thomasboro Neighborhood Association

OUR VISION:

Thomasboro Neighborhood is a diverse community, unified in its efforts to enhance the quality of life for all people who live, work and visit Thomasboro Neighborhood.

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

1

Neighborhood
Engagement/Participation

2

Access to Resources

3

Communications

IN 2014-2015, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

1

Re-establish
mentoring program
in partnership w/
Thomasboro
Academy

2

Host a multicultural
festival for the
Thomasboro
residents

3

Re-establish the
Thomasboro Youth
Network to engage
and develop our
youth

Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
<p>Project #1</p> <p>Re-establish mentoring program in partnership w/ Thomasboro Academy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find additional mentoring resources 	<p>Mayor's Mentoring Alliance offers training for new mentors:</p> <p>http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/mayor/mentoringalliance/Pages/default.aspx</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research mentoring program best practices 	<p>National Mentoring Partnership</p> <p>http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/elements_and_toolkits</p>
<p>Project # 2</p> <p>Host a multicultural festival for the Thomasboro residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan a great event 	<p>Promote neighborhood diversity:</p> <p>http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411955promotingneighborhooddiversity.pdf</p> <p>Planning guide for international festivals:</p> <p>http://www-tc.pbs.org/wgbh/rxforsurvival/campaign/givetime/pdf/Rx_Int_Festival_PlanGuide.pdf</p> <p>Planning worksheets:</p> <p>http://www.festivalandeventplanning.com/downloads/festivalsetupmanagement_workbook.pdf</p>
<p>Project #3</p> <p>Re-establish the Thomasboro Youth Network to engage and develop our youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what type of engagement residents should have with youth in the community 	<p>Fun ways for your neighborhood to get involved with youth:</p> <p>http://www.educationworld.com/admin/archives/partners.shtml</p> <p>Neighborhood-School Partnership Initiative</p> <p>http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/NeighborhoodSchoolPartnershipGrants.aspx</p>

