

2012 BOARD RETREAT

VILLA HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



HOSTED BY
THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE AT
FOUNDATION FOR THE
CAROLINAS

VILLA HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION 2012 BOARD RETREAT

Background

On Saturday, July 14, 2012, the board members of the Villa Heights Neighborhood Association participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at Foundation For The Carolinas. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Mary A. Williams
- Rhonda Mathis
- Richard Kicklightner
- Max Carroll
- Matt Sluder
- Liz Eagle
- Jason Mathis



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

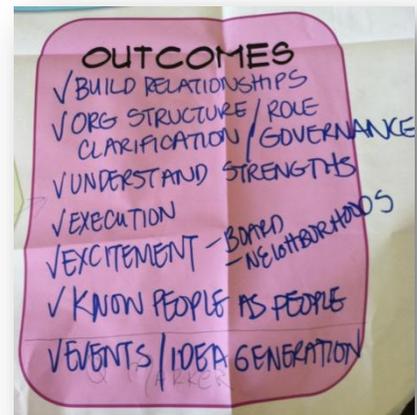
The purpose of the board retreat was to

- 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

Our board identified the following outcomes for the retreat:

- Build relationships
- Clarify board structure and role
- Understand strengths
- Generate ideas for events
- Generate excitement amongst the board and the neighborhood
- Execution plan for ideas
- Know people as people

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 an external facilitator, tasked to keep our conversations on-task, productive, and focused on achievable objectives. The process was designed to help us capture what was the best of the past, what is 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:

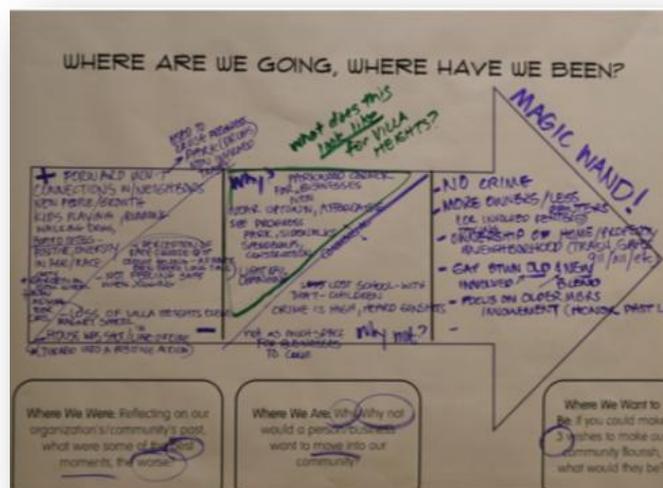
- Introductions
- Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?: Arrow Activity
- Where We Want to Be: Vision Statement Exercise
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- Working Lunch – The Year Ahead
- Where's the Energy – Energygram Exercise
- Project Planning Worksheet Review

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 style="text-align: center;">Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forward moving - Connections with neighbors - New people and growth - Kids playing, running, walking dogs - Board meetings – diversity in age and race - Community garden at the elementary school <p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions or race - Not feeling safe while jogging - Loss of Villa Heights Magnet School 	<p style="text-align: center;">Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Near Uptown, affordable - See progress - Park, sidewalks, speed bumps, new construction - Parkwood Corner - Light Rail changing <p style="text-align: center;">Why Not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lost school/children - Not much retail space - Crime is high, have heard gun shots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No crime - More owners, less renters (or more involved renters) - Neighbors taking ownership of home/property - Closed gap between old and new - Stronger involvement -Honor past leadership

Based on this activity, our group identified shared values that would help us craft the vision for our community:

- Cultural Integrity
 - o Knowing/valuing neighbors
 - o Culture of inclusivity
 - o Respecting diversity/the beauty of individuals
 - o Preserving history
 - o Progressive development doesn't exclude
- Board Leadership that Represents Residents
- Safety
- Friendly Interaction
- Variety of Family Units



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:

VILLA HEIGHTS WILL BE A SAFE PLACE THAT
EMBRACES FAMILY, CULTURE & DIVERSITY WITH
OPEN ARMS THROUGH BUILDING GENUINE
COMMUNITY

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 for 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. We utilized 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.
 - Current realities keeping you from our vision.
 - Possible priorities/actions items to get us closer to our vision.
- Place the sticky notes on the chart paper.
- Organize the ideas by natural categories. Which ideas go together? Feel free to move any post-it note to another place. Move yours, move those of others, and feel free to do this. Do not be offended if someone moves yours to place where you feel it does not belong, just move it where you believe it goes.
- Once everyone agrees on the groups, give each one a name.

This activity led us to the following categories:

Crime Reduction/Safety

- 10% crime reduction
- Safe parks
- Reduce crime
- Safer streets and sidewalks

Neighborhood Beautification

- Protect environmental sustainability
- House watch program for abandoned homes
- Reduction of abandoned homes
- Improve parks and sidewalks
- Less trash/debris from sidewalks and streets
- Working with Code Enforcement to clean-up abandoned/neglected properties

Inclusivity in VHCO

- Involve all members of the community
- Ownership by members
- Affordable access
- Create new board positions to allow for added involvement
- Openness within VHCO
- Elder resident involvement
- Diversity on the board
- Allow community ownership (not “I”, but “we”)

Kids

- Embracing children by organizing activities
- Kids place to play

Community Involvement

- Social activities for community
- Open meeting – community forum style
- Community events’ to involve different groups
- Create/encourage families

Partnerships

- Connect with neighborhood non-profits

Neighborhood Identity

- Neighborhood branding

The board then identified the three priorities that were most important for us to begin working on to achieve our vision:



Potential Projects

The board then began to brainstorm on possible projects or activities that aligned with their strategic priorities:

Inclusivity & Community Involvement

- Rent pool for a day
- BBQ or festival
- Kid specific activities
- Kids day in the park
- Talent show
- Holiday events

- Elderly home repairs
- Elderly activity club

Neighborhood Beautification

- Neighborhood day to walk the streets and pick up trash
- Plant flowers

Crime Reduction & Safety

- Written ordinance for behavior
- 311/Code Enforcement
- Speed bumps
- Block captains
- Community events with Police

- Faces of Villa video
- Kids club

- Clean-up schedule
- Art project
- Community garden
- Park clean-up

- No loitering signs
- Elect crime representative
- 911 action plan
- Education for seeing crime and how to report it and prevent it

- Newsletter

- Abandoned home watch

- Relationship with police officers
- Increased police patrol
- Neighborhood watch
- Communication with police officers

Action Items for 2012-2014

After identifying potential projects, the board voted on one project to pursue for each strategic priority in 2012-2014:



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

1
**INCLUSIVITY
&
COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT**

2
**NEIGHBORHOOD
BEAUTIFICATION**

3
**CRIME REDUCTION
& SAFETY**

IN 2012-2014, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:

1
**MEET OUR
NEIGHBORS
EVENT**

2
**NEIGHBORHOOD
SIGNAGE**

3
**NEIGHBORHOOD
WATCH/BLOCK
CAPTAINS**





