

2012 BOARD RETREAT

WILMORE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



Hosted by the City of Charlotte at
Foundation For The Carolinas
7/14/2012

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Background

On Saturday, July 14, 2012, the board members of the Wilmore 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:

- Curtis Watkins
- Preston Armstrong
- Justin Lane
- Erik Mulzet



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:

- Realistic goals
- Action-oriented plan
- S.M.A.R.T. goals – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely

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"> - Improving relationship with the church - Wilmore has become a historic district - steady growth <p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Misperception of race issues with church - Distrust amongst older residents | <p style="text-align: center;">Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong sense of community - Businesses want to be close to uptown; great location - Fast growth - Invested residents - Good schools - More partnerships <p style="text-align: center;">Why Not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commercial encroachment - Negative perception of area - Loitering | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistent neighborhood vision - More defined neighborhood boundaries vs. business district - Be confident in strengths of neighborhood - City place P.O.A. on dilapidated properties - More beautification – more trees - Strategy to deal with negative elements - Makeover with historic guidelines - Viewed as more prominent community |

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

- Invested residents
- Strong partnerships with businesses
- Collaboration with the church
- Beautification efforts:
 - Eliminating or renovating dilapidated properties
 - Planting more trees
 - More defined neighborhood boundaries



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:

THE WILMORE NEIGHBORHOOD IS A VIBRANT AND PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY, NESTLED IN THE HEART OF CHARLOTTE. IT OFFERS A RARE AND UNIQUE BLEND OF CITY LIFE AND HISTORIC BUNGALOW LIVING

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:

Beautification:

- Trees
- Noise reduction (I-77 noise barrier)
- Decorative street lights
- Organized trash clean-up

Community Engagement

- Pancake Breakfast
- Food truck outing
- Block party
- Yard of the Month

Neighborhood Identity

- Neighborhood branding
- Bumper stickers
- Community garden identification

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:

Community Engagement

- Neighborhood Block Party
- Pancake Breakfast
- * Food Truck Outing
- * Yard of the Month

Branding

- Community Garden Identification
- Heart of Wilmore – West & Mint Build Out
- Signage
- * Virtual Presence
- * Bumper Stickers

Neighborhood Beautification

- Plant additional trees
- Noise reduction wall
- Organized trash cleanup
- Street lights

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



IN 2012-2014, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

