



February 08, 2020

Amity Garden Neighborhood Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services at

Goodwill Opportunity Campus

Amity Gardens Neighborhood Association 2020 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, February 08, 2020, the board members of the Amity Gardens Neighborhood Association participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at the Goodwill Opportunity Campus. The following board members and/or community members participated in the retreat:

• Donna Thomas	• Evan Goetz
• Donna Fisher	• Raven Hundley
• Alan Bottorf	• Luke Carter
• Marty Payne	

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 match credit toward a Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) to help execute one of the projects we identified.

To receive this credit, we'll submit a copy of the Developing Your Ideas worksheets from the Neighborhood Board Retreat Participant Workbook (pages 14 – 17) with our NMG request. This credit will expire following the June 1, 2021 NMG application deadline.

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"> • United for rezoning work with Wal-Mart • Family oriented with more active kids • More trees <p>Worst</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorganized 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community getting younger • Community-based and better connected (social media) • Highly desirable location • High home values • Low crime • Friendly and diverse <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thru traffic • Litter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle to facilitate neighbor-helping-neighbor program • Better use of natural resources (walking and biking trail(s)) • More consistent volunteerism to help with elderly in particular, concerns over insurance • More city contacts

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: *Amity Gardens Neighborhood Association is dedicated to maintaining an established, peaceful, safe, attractive, healthy, and involved community for all residents through partnerships, community projects, and events.*

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:

Fill in the categories (large Post-Its) and associated ideas/action items, adding and deleting bullet points as necessary.

- Beautification
 - Adopt a Street
 - Storm drain marking
 - Old Amity Gardens sign (in storage)

- Volunteers
 - Set up meeting with staff resource
 - Create program to help elderly in neighborhood using IB students

- Community Engagement
 - More neighborhood events
 - Icebreakers

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 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. Within these three categories, there were three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities.

The strategic priorities and activities are summarized on the following page.



2020 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Amity Gardens Neighborhood Association

OUR VISION: *Amity Gardens Neighborhood Association is dedicated to maintaining an established, peaceful, safe, attractive, healthy, and involved community for all residents through partnerships, community projects, and events.*

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

1

Volunteers

2

Beautification

3

Community
Engagement

IN 2020-2021, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:

Set up meeting with Faith Estrada by March 2nd to discuss support resources and volunteer programs already existing in neighborhoods

Is this goal SMART? Yes

Adopt remaining streets in neighborhood by August 1st and conduct two neighborhood cleanups by June 1st

Is this goal SMART? Yes

Host 5 social events (with three of those 5 events having icebreaker activities) by August 1st

Is this goal SMART? Yes

Resources to Get Started- You've rolled up your sleeves and established your vision. We have compiled resources that may assist your organization in achieving your goals on our Neighborhood Training Programs and Resources [website](#). We have identified resource categories that may be applicable to your projects below; please do not hesitate to explore more categories as you undertake your work! Links and contact information are provided for information only and are subject to change.

Project	Potential Resource Categories of Interest
Set up meeting with Faith Estrada by March 2nd to discuss support resources and volunteer programs already existing in neighborhoods	Partnerships
Adopt remaining streets in neighborhood by August 1st	Beautification; Environment
Conduct two neighborhood cleanups by June 1st	Beautification; Environment
Host 5 social events (with three of those 5 events having icebreaker activities) by August 1st	Community Engagement

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

Faith Estrada, Southeast Community Engagement Liaison	Kim Barnes, Southeast Community Engagement Manager
faith.estrada@charlottenc.gov or 704-353-1879	kbarnes@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-8408

