

Belmont Community Association (BCA)

Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus



2014

Belmont Community Association 2014 Board Retreat

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:

- Vicki Jones
- Diane Adams
- Terry Cook
- Michael Argento
- Kristen Barner
- Linda Plummer
- Brenda Erwin
- James & Naomi Freeman
- Tracy Montross



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 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/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?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and Diverse • Unlocked doors okay; when not okay, able to connect with others for assistance • Distrust of new comers - fear of takeover, racial distrust • Drugs and crime • Habitat for Humanity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood Association • Building uptick • See something, say something campaign • Corner stores and crime • Word of mouth/negative stats related to crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased safety – decrease in drug houses, yard maintenance, no more boarded up houses • Increased community integration – socio-economic, race, generation, etc. • Better home/neighborhood schools

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:

To foster a safe, friendly, and diverse community through neighbors working together

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:

1. Communication
 - Recruit neighbors to come to meetings, increased communication between neighbors (community meetings, get-togethers, clean ups, newsletters, Facebook), open house, share contact information, expand "next door" use, more signage, utilize social media
2. Trust
 - Get it know your neighbors and look out for them, connect with neighbors in need, assist with yard projects, reduce code issues, welcome new neighbors, let them know about BCA, spend time with neighbors, talk with neighbors, wave at everyone, knock on doors – personal invite, neighbor engagement/help, be bold in the neighborhood – walk/bike around – be seen,

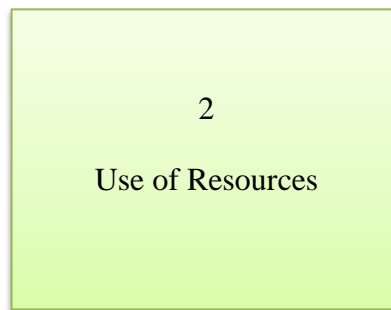
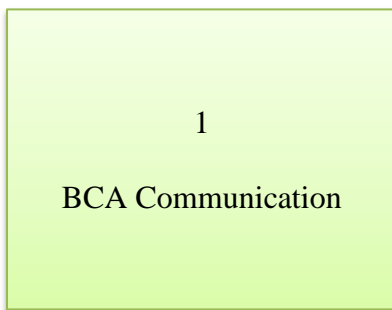
3. Resources

- Report all violations, report housing/nuisance items, call 9-1-1, neighborhood watch block captains, define areas of focus for crime and continuing communication with CMPD, ask for speed enforcement signs, maintenance of trees on high traffic streets, speeding at 18th, 19th and Siegle, invite or incentivize a business to move into vacant corner store, funds/grant for farmer’s market, encourage neighbors to take advantage of city programs

4. Action Items

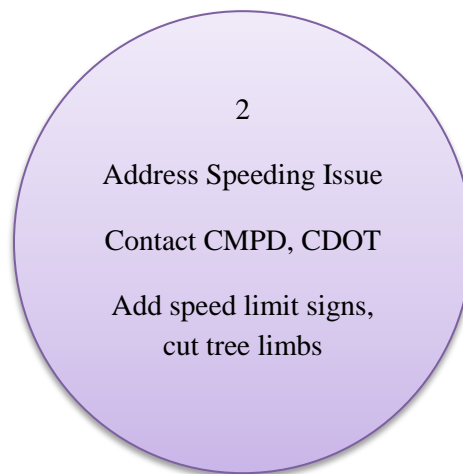
- Institute “yard of the month”, plan community event, be responsible for your own learning, plan the work/work the plan, follow through, monthly neighborhood clean ups, learn about grant writing, holiday decorating, monthly meetings with community, engage faith communities – ask for something specific, prayer, survey neighbors – what do they want?, plant more flowers

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

Belmont Community Association

OUR VISION:

To foster a safe, friendly, and diverse community through neighbors working together

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

1
Communication

2
Resources

3
Trust

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

1
Recruit for BCA
Team recruiting
Obtain neighbor contact information

2
Address Speeding Issue
Contact CMPD, CDOT
Add speed limit signs, cut tree limbs

3
Send BCA Newsletter
Target new residents
Use Habitat and CHA new resident lists

Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
<p>Project #1 Recruit for BCA Team recruiting Obtain neighbor contact information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find creative ways to recruit new members of the association 	<p>Recruiting potential board members http://www.hoaleader.com/public/351.cfm Increase neighborhood participation: http://atlantahoamanagement.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/how-to-increase-attendance-or-participation-in-homeowner-committees/</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tips for planning great neighborhood meetings 	<p>Meetings tips for neighborhoods http://nacok.org/association-tools/effective-meetings/ http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective Meeting Agenda</p>
<p>Project # 2 Address Speeding Issue Contact CMPD, CDOT Add speed limit signs, cut tree limbs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact CDOT to discuss safety improvement options Contact CMPD neighborhood watch to discuss issues related to speeders in community 	<p>Charlotte Department of Transportation http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx CMPD Neighborhood Watch Program http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/cmpd/safety/neighborhoodwatch/Pages/default.aspx</p>
<p>Project #3 Send BCA Newsletter Target new residents Use Habitat and CHA new resident lists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop newsletter content Reach out to neighbors via social media 	<p>Nextdoor: Create a private social network for your neighborhood: https://nextdoor.com/about_us/ Mail Chimp: Free online newsletter creator: www.mailchimp.com</p>

