

College Downs Neighborhood Association

Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at Foundation For The Carolinas



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College Downs Neighborhood Association

2013 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, July 20, 2013, the board members of the College Downs 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:

- Silvia Nance, President
- B.C. Nance
- Brenda Foote
- Dolly Peay



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 \$3,000 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"> - Diversity - Togetherness - Well maintained properties - Like being close to UNCC - "Mayberry like" - Sense of safety - Sense of community - Activities: - 4th of July Parades - Holiday Christmas Decoration - Community History 	<p style="text-align: center;">Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity - Love/Hate relationship with UNCC - Properties selling (land value) - Commercial properties increase - Good relationship with CMPD <p style="text-align: center;">Why Not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Love/hate relationship with UNCC - Too unpredictable: year brings different renters (college students) - Aging community - Landlords not present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety: (cameras, accountability, property value increase) - More community meetings: (planned activities) - Code Compliance

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

- Diversity
- Community and togetherness
- UNCC
- Beautification

Our Vision

Our vision is reclaiming our past, developing our present, and meeting the challenges of our future.



OUR VISION:

College Downs' vision is reclaiming our past, developing our present, and meeting the challenges of our future.

Stakeholders that can add value to our vision: UNCC-specific groups that may have interest in our vision. CMPD.

City of Charlotte Planning committee. Community Churches.

Elementary & Feeder CMS Schools.

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.

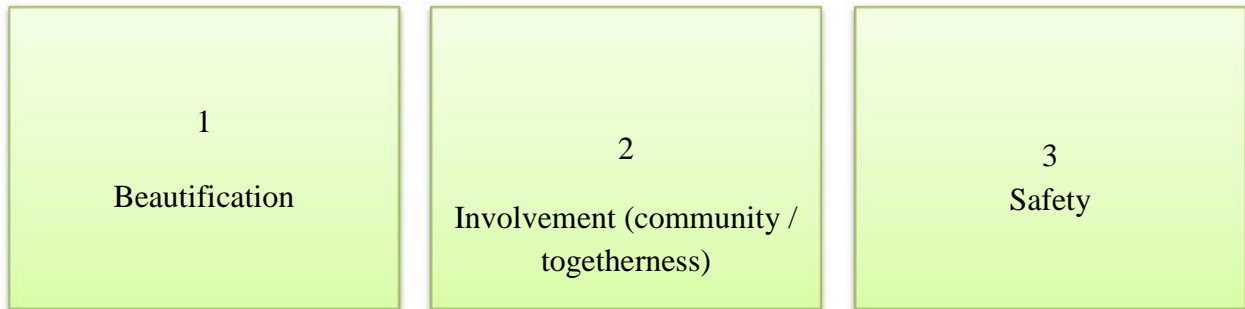
We started out thinking big and then narrowed down our focus. We utilized the Affinity Mapping Process, detailed below:

- 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**
- **Involvement (community / togetherness)**
- **Safety**

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:

Beautification

- Special Clean up event
- Newsletter reminders for cleanup
- Landscaping for the Old Concord Rd Median/Barrier
- Develop a plan to beautify the Old Concord Rd Median(sign & cut through)

Involvement (community/togetherness)

- Senior Safety program
- Senior Community/Exercise project
- Back to School event (community wide)
- Bike rental project
- Church Outreach event

Safety

- Invite CMPD & Code Enforcement to August event and continue to keep them involved
- Education on safety
- Reach out to UNCC's Comm relations office
- Cameras Project

Action Items for 2013-2015

After identifying potential projects, the board voted on one project to pursue for each strategic priority in 2013-2015:



OUR VISION:

Reclaiming our past, developing our present, and meeting the challenges of our future.

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

1
Beautification

2
Involvement/ Community
Engagement

3
Safety

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

1
Develop a plan to
beautify the Old
Concord Rd
Median

2
Senior Community
Exercise Project

3
Cameras Project

