

# Coventry Woods Neighborhood Association

Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus



2014

# Coventry Woods Neighborhood Association

## 2014 Board Retreat

### Background

On Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 2014, the board members of the Coventry Woods Neighborhood Association participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNCC Uptown Campus. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Therese Bohn
- Bill Cooper
- Andrea Smith
- Rebecca Autry
- Jim Faulkner
- Todd Jennings



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 professional facilitators trained 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.

<b>Where We Were:</b> Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	<b>Where We Are:</b> Why/why not would a person/business want to move into our community?	<b>Where We Want to Be:</b> If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independence Woods</li> <li>• Close proximity to apartment complexes</li> <li>• High Crime</li> </ul> <p>Stregths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulled together to solve problems</li> <li>• Candidates forum (hosted surrounding neighborhoods and invited candidates)</li> <li>• Cedarwood Park</li> <li>• Great location</li> <li>• Installed speed humps to slow traffic</li> </ul>	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special events: spaghetti dinners, “Hot Dog Days”</li> <li>• Flag Day (4<sup>th</sup> of July)</li> <li>• Strong neighborhood association</li> <li>• Facebook page; newsletter; NextDoor</li> <li>• Strong board</li> <li>• Recruiting volunteers</li> <li>• Pine straw sale fundraiser</li> <li>• Great location</li> <li>• Peaceful, nature</li> <li>• Friendly neighbors</li> <li>• Nice homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More inclusive</li> <li>• Cultural festival</li> <li>• More diverse board members</li> <li>• More recognition for our neighborhood</li> <li>• 300 involved neighbors</li> <li>• New entrance signs</li> <li>• More respect for East Charlotte</li> <li>• Increased real estate values</li> <li>• Protect trees</li> <li>• Signs toppers</li> </ul>

## 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 protect, preserve and promote Coventry Woods.

## 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. Branding:

- Find out how best to monitor Independence Woods tract
- Re-branding the Eastside through positive recognition of our neighborhood communities

2. Beautification:

- Other than tree banding, how else can we protect trees?
- What is involved in the plant-a-tree program?
- Tree band annuals
- Adopt-a-Street; have street cleanup events like the slow-down sticks on garbage cans
- Adopt-a-Street or two
- Yard improvements
- Tree banding

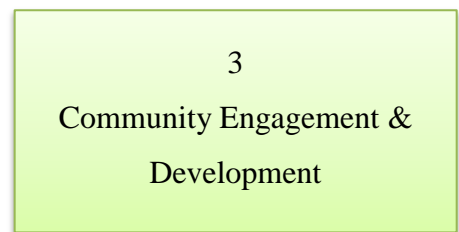
3. Special Events:

- Cultural street festival
- Family-type event
- Cultural event, maybe carnival of food event where different ethnic foods are brought
- More or larger neighborhood/family gatherings/events

4. Community Engagement and Development:

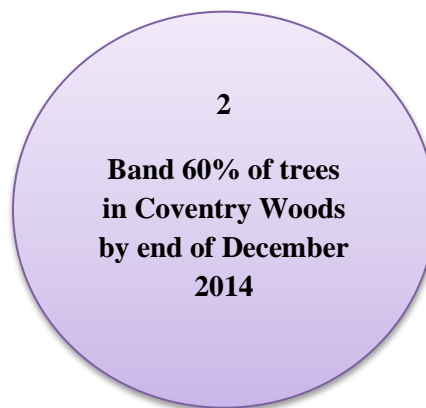
- Reaching out and getting more community involvement
- Going for more grants, matching or otherwise, to improve neighborhood
- Diverse board members
- Volunteers needed
- Increase board – maybe open house for those interested in joining. Be open about looking for board members from diverse backgrounds

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**

**Coventry Woods Neighborhood Association**

**OUR VISION:**

To protect, preserve and promote Coventry Woods.

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

1

Special Events

2

Beautification

3

Community Engagement  
& Development

**IN 2014-2015, WE WILL WORK**

**ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:**

1

Host fall festival in  
2014

2

Band 60% of trees in  
Coventry Woods by  
end of December  
2014

3

Increase board diversity  
& membership by  
hosting a membership  
recruitment meeting  
with cultural them in  
2015

## Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
<p><b>Project #1</b> Host fall festival in 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn about funding opportunities through Neighborhood Matching Grants</li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Matching Grants can help fund a project in your neighborhood up to \$25,000</p> <p>Contact Atalie Zimmerman at <a href="mailto:azimmerman@charlottenc.gov">azimmerman@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-4594</p> <p><a href="http://www.charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx</a></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan a great event</li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Event Planning Toolkit</p> <p><a href="http://www.sdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Block-Party-Kit.pdf">http://www.sdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Block-Party-Kit.pdf</a></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply for the appropriate permits through the City</li> </ul>	<p>Charlotte Department of Transportation for information on street closure procedures and approval</p> <p><a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx</a></p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for sound permits</p> <p><a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CMPD/Pages/default.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CMPD/Pages/default.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>Project # 2</b> Band 60% of trees in Coventry Woods by end of December 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn more about tree banding</li> </ul>	<p>Basic information about tree banding:</p> <p><a href="http://www.charmeck.org/city/charlotte/epm/Services/Landscaping/Pages/fall%20cankerworm.aspx">http://www.charmeck.org/city/charlotte/epm/Services/Landscaping/Pages/fall%20cankerworm.aspx</a></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources for tree banding</li> </ul>	<p>City of Charlotte tree banding grants:</p> <p><a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/pages/treebanding.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/pages/treebanding.aspx</a></p> <p>Tool Bank supplies for neighborhoods:</p> <p><a href="http://charlotte.toolbank.org/">http://charlotte.toolbank.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Project #3</b> Increase board diversity &amp; membership by hosting a membership recruitment meeting with cultural them in 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board development tips</li> </ul>	<p>Board development online resources:</p> <p>BoardSource <a href="https://boardsource.org/eweb/">https://boardsource.org/eweb/</a></p> <p>How to organize a committee:</p> <p><a href="http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startinga-committee/tabid/244/Default.aspx">http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startinga-committee/tabid/244/Default.aspx</a></p> <p>Meetings tips for neighborhoods</p> <p><a href="http://nacok.org/association-tools/effective-meetings/">http://nacok.org/association-tools/effective-meetings/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_Meeting_Agenda">http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_Meeting_Agenda</a></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote diversity</li> </ul>	<p>How to promote diversity on boards:</p> <p><a href="http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/resources-topic/boards-and-governance/diversity-boards">http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/resources-topic/boards-and-governance/diversity-boards</a></p>

