



February 08, 2020

First Ward Neighborhood Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services at

Goodwill Opportunity Campus

First Ward Neighborhood Association

2020 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, February 08, 2020, the board members of the First Ward 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:

• Richard Rutsky	• Diatra Fullwood
• Joe Hoff	• Laura Peres

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

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"> • Sense of community • Rentals were lower • Organized • Community fund was engaged • Engagement-active, community based • Diverse • Different identity <p>Worst</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime in certain areas • Uncertainty 	<p>Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse • Existing housing structure • Valued stability • Well positioned/location <p>Why not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not involved in the community fund-lack of collaboration • Identity crisis • Siloed (individual neighborhoods) • Self-sufficient, not as involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of community centers-availability, fees • Clear identity-embrace • Representation from all HOAs and COAs, apartments • Inclusive • Involvement • Impactful neighborhood association

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: *We are First Ward: A welcoming, diverse community with walkable tree-lined streets and skyline views. We celebrate our cultural opportunities and accessibility to all of Charlotte.*

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
 - Improve cleanliness on major streets
 - Work with House of Prayer to improve the mini mall on N. Davidson so it is used and we can walk to shops
 - Beautify the tree lined streets
 - Placemaking-in the Garden District/First Ward signage
 - Improve visible identity of the community/neighborhood
- Safety
 - Improve street lighting
- Communication
 - Website, add to Facebook page, Next Door, flyers, meeting signs
 - T-shirts or items w/ map of Charlotte/location
 - Determine resources available to help promote vision
 - Promote vision statement via social media
 - Promote vision statement to First Ward residents
 - Email distribution list
 - Engage all neighbors by sending information regarding meetings, activities, etc.
- Events
 - Community outing at one of the cultural opportunities
 - Holiday lights/balls on the trees
 - Think of ways to celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood

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

First Ward Neighborhood Association

OUR VISION: *We are First Ward: A welcoming, diverse community with walkable tree-lined streets and skyline views. We celebrate our cultural opportunities and accessibility to all of Charlotte.*

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

1
Events

2
Communication

3
Beautification

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

Organize a community outing at one of the cultural opportunities:
First Ward Park-concert series- summer of 2021.
Rose Garden: walk to lights-fall/winter 2020

Is this goal SMART? Yes

Develop a communication plan to promote meetings and events using social media, signs, and flyers by September 2020.

Is this goal SMART? Yes

Beautify the tree lined streets. Plant bulbs along 2 corridors-fall 2021.
Neighborhood cleanups-major corridors, spring 2020.

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
Organize a community outing at one of the cultural opportunities (i.e. First Ward Park-concert series-summer of 2021, Rose Garden: walk to lights-fall/winter 2020)	Community Engagement
Develop a communication plan to promote meetings and events using social media, signs, and flyers by September 2020	Communication
Beautify the tree lined streets by planting bulbs along 2 corridors by fall 2021	Beautification
Organize a neighborhood cleanup along major corridors by spring 2020	Beautification

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

Charlenea Duncan, Northeast Community Engagement Manager
csduncan@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-2173

