



**CHARLOTTE™**

# **2015 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT**



**First Ward Neighborhood Association**

Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at UNC Charlotte Center City

# First Ward Neighborhood Association

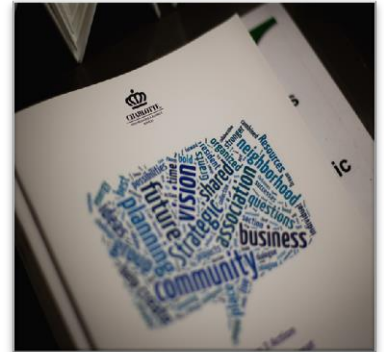
## 2015 Board Retreat

### Background

On Saturday July 18, 2015, the board members of the First Ward Neighborhood Association participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at UNC Charlotte Center City. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Glenn Dahlen
- Alice Hicks
- Tamara Jack-Davis
- Jessica Manzo
- Johnny Wakefield
- Meghan Liddle Gude (Charlotte Center City Partners)

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 our completed Vision to Action Idea Development Plan Workbook with our NMG request. This credit will expire following the July 15, 2016 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.

<b>Where We Were:</b> Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	<b>Where We Are:</b> Why would or wouldn't 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>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Community pride</li> <li>• Ice cream socials</li> <li>• Safe</li> <li>• High energy</li> </ul> <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative comments by media and on Facebook</li> <li>• Things were moving, and then they stalled, they starting to get moving again.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great location, proximity to city but feels residential</li> <li>• Strong potential for businesses</li> <li>• Density</li> <li>• Diversity</li> </ul> <p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing displacement (Earle Village)</li> <li>• In need of beautification</li> <li>• Unsafe areas for pedestrians</li> <li>• Far from retail and grocery</li> <li>• Expensive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased sense of community</li> <li>• Embraces diversity</li> <li>• No road construction</li> <li>• Regular community events; connect First Ward &amp; Garden Park</li> <li>• Walkable retail</li> <li>• Trade St. closed to cars, people and Streetcar only</li> <li>• Community Garden</li> <li>• Neighborhood identity and branding</li> <li>• More gathering places: retail and restaurants</li> <li>• More family friendly opportunities</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:

**We are First ward: a welcoming, inclusive neighborhood with tree lined streets and skyline views; shops, work and play are a short walk away.**

## 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:

Marketing and branding	Neighborly connections	Organization	Placemaking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bumper Stickers</li> <li>• First Ward flags, t-shirts</li> <li>• Logo &amp; brand that celebrates vision</li> <li>• Signs with vision statement for windows or doors</li> <li>• ‘Welcome to First Ward’ signs</li> <li>• Distinct branding and identity</li> <li>• Welcome packets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree lighting, carolers, cocoa social</li> <li>• Holiday/Christmas toy drive</li> <li>• Diversity represented potlucks</li> <li>• Halloween block party</li> <li>• Food truck rodeo</li> <li>• Dinner with strangers</li> <li>• Walking tour</li> <li>• Group events</li> <li>• Block parties</li> <li>• Continue photo contests</li> <li>• First Wednesday’s beer event</li> <li>• Spring ice cream social</li> <li>• Signature community event</li> <li>• Neighborhood gathering spots</li> <li>• Flower/porch tour contest</li> <li>• Meet your neighbors at Linear Park</li> <li>• ‘Speed neighboring’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with board members of different backgrounds</li> <li>• Use newsletter to promote: countries represented, age and cultural diversity</li> <li>• HOA involvement</li> <li>• Community Watch advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Community center</li> <li>• Community garden</li> <li>• Underground parking structure with surface level green space</li> <li>• Clean-up efforts</li> <li>• Business recruitment</li> <li>• Walkable, photo-friendly attractions</li> <li>• Bike Lanes/grid</li> <li>• School safety efforts (kids &amp; parents)</li> </ul>

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:

1

Neighborhood marketing and identity

2

Facilitate neighborly connections

3

Board organization

**Action Items for 2015-2016** The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2015-2016 are:

Create neighborhood welcome packet

Realtors, CCCP neighborhood, Micro Grants, Board, Apt. Offices

Host Halloween Block Party

Board, Homeowners, Volunteers, Advertising, Sponsors, Schools, CMPD, Apartments

Engage board members

Board meeting structure, Apt. Complexes, Board members (walking tour)

2015 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

**First Ward Neighborhood Association**

**OUR VISION:**

**We are First ward: a welcoming, inclusive neighborhood with tree lined streets and skyline views; shops, work and play are a short walk away.**

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

1

**Neighborhood marketing  
and identity**

2

**Facilitate neighborly  
connections**

3

**Board organization**

**IN 2015-2016, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:**

Create neighborhood  
welcome packet

Host Halloween Block  
Party

Engage board members

## Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
<b>Project #1</b>  Create neighborhood welcome packet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop newsletter content</li> <li>Create a weekly e-mail blast</li> </ul>	<b>Mail Chimp: Free online newsletter creator:</b> <a href="http://www.mailchimp.com">www.mailchimp.com</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out what businesses are in your area.</li> <li>Help connect the business owners to resources that can improve their business</li> </ul>	<b>CPCC's Small Business Center:</b> <a href="http://www.cpcc.edu/sbc">www.cpcc.edu/sbc</a> <b>Charlotte Business Resources Portal:</b> <a href="http://charlottebusinessresources.com/befcor-top-10-reasons-to-use-504-loans-to-finance-businessexpansions/">http://charlottebusinessresources.com/befcor-top-10-reasons-to-use-504-loans-to-finance-businessexpansions/</a> <b>Why businesses should partner with surrounding neighborhoods:</b> <a href="https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/article/174358">https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/article/174358</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a committee</li> </ul>	<b>How to organize a committee:</b> <a href="http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startingacommittee/tabid/244/Default.aspx">http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startingacommittee/tabid/244/Default.aspx</a> <b>Board development online resources:</b> Board Source - <a href="https://boardsource.org/eweb/">https://boardsource.org/eweb/</a>
<b>Project #2</b>  Host Halloween block party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider applying for a Neighborhood Matching Grant to purchase or improve street lights</li> <li>Free Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) from Duke Energy</li> </ul>	<b>Neighborhood Matching Grants provides funding to improve lighting and community safety:</b> Contact Atalie Zimmerman at <a href="mailto:azimmerman@charlottenc.gov">azimmerman@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-4594 or go to the Neighborhood Matching Grant website for more information <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/pages/default.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/pages/default.aspx</a> <b>Request free CFL's from Duke Energy:</b> <a href="http://www.duke-energy.com/freecfls/">http://www.duke-energy.com/freecfls/</a> or 1-800-943-7585.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate information about ideas, events, and meetings in a variety of ways</li> </ul>	<b>Mail Chimp: Free online newsletter creator:</b> <a href="http://www.mailchimp.com">www.mailchimp.com</a> <b>Set up a conference call option for meetings:</b> <a href="http://www.freeconferencecall.com">www.freeconferencecall.com</a> <b>Nextdoor: Create a private social network for your neighborhood:</b> <a href="https://nextdoor.com/about_us/">https://nextdoor.com/about_us/</a> <b>Make signs to announce meetings with FastSigns® Reusable Yard Signs:</b> <a href="http://www.fastsigns.com/sg-yard-signs/Yard-Signs">http://www.fastsigns.com/sg-yard-signs/Yard-Signs</a>
<b>Project #3</b>  Engage more board members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey residents about what type of communication platform they would prefer to use (newsletters, website, meetings, flyers, social media)</li> </ul>	<b>Online survey tool:</b> <a href="http://www.surveymonkey.com">www.surveymonkey.com</a> <b>Sample neighborhood survey:</b> <a href="http://www.santacruzneighbors.com/files/form_sample_neighborhoodsurvey.pdf">http://www.santacruzneighbors.com/files/form_sample_neighborhoodsurvey.pdf</a> <b>Types of neighborhood communication:</b> <a href="http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_HOA_Communication">http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_HOA_Communication</a> <b>Additional examples of communication:</b> <a href="http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/governance/participation/comtechniques.asp">http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/governance/participation/comtechniques.asp</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with existing volunteer groups to recruit additional volunteers</li> <li>Participate in a workshop about volunteer recruitment</li> </ul>	<b>Hands On Charlotte matches volunteers with projects:</b> <a href="http://www.handsoncharlotte.org">www.handsoncharlotte.org</a> <b>Volunteer Match will post volunteer opportunities online:</b> <a href="http://www.volunteermatch.org/">http://www.volunteermatch.org/</a> <b>Habitat for Humanity Group Volunteers:</b> <a href="http://www.habitatcharlotte.org/getinvolved/volunteer/groups">http://www.habitatcharlotte.org/getinvolved/volunteer/groups</a> <b>MAVA- Metrolina Area Volunteer Administrators offers workshops on volunteer recruitment:</b> <a href="http://mavanc.org/">http://mavanc.org/</a>

## Parking Lot Items for follow-up

**For sidewalk repair options- contact Scott Curry at CDOT**

Scott Curry, Pedestrian Program Manager, CDOT [spcurry@ci.charlotte.nc.us](mailto:spcurry@ci.charlotte.nc.us) or 704-432-4638

**For information about foreclosed property in your community,**

Contact a local realtor [www.realtor.org](http://www.realtor.org), Learn the status of a property that may be foreclosed on Virtual Charlotte <http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/about/Pages/MappingApplication.aspx>

Learn about housing rehab programs <http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/housing/Pages/HomeownershipRehab.aspx>

**Your community is located within Charlotte's Northeast Service Area, your staff contact for following up and community assistance is:**

Charlenea Duncan, Community Engagement Specialist <a href="mailto:cduncan@charlottenc.gov">cduncan@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-2173	John Short, Community Engagement Lead <a href="mailto:jshort@charlottenc.gov">jshort@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-3862
---	---

