

February 24, 2018

**Grier Heights Community
Improvement Organization**

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services at

Goodwill Opportunity Campus

Grier Heights Community Improvement Organization

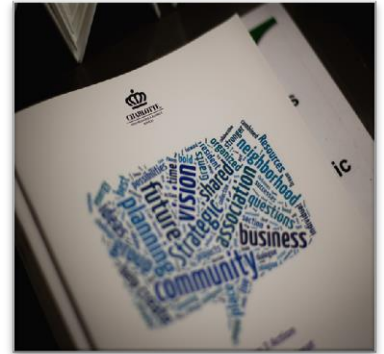
2018 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, February 24, 2018, the board members of the Grier Heights neighborhood 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:

Tijua Robinson
Stacey Brown

Jania Massey
Holly Lawton, CMPD



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. More information on the grant program can be found online at <http://charlottenc.gov/nmg>.

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 June 1, 2019 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.

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?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy • Business/Action Center • History – Community Center • Center for Afro-American Politics • Community Engagements successes • Family Oriented Community • Self-persevered • Transition of Power • Crime perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Help for Adults • Crime down • Disconnected within Neighborhood • Financial Education • Housing stock changing hands • Distrust • Gentrification/renewal • Owners vs. renters • Insiders vs. outsiders • Help patents and youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create system to support & help residents • Empowerment of people • Partnership for Development • Youth Development Collaboration • Leadership development • Process and measures for continued development of the community • Business Development in the community • Respect of all people • Future development of leaders – build a bench



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:

*Grier Heights Neighborhood Improvement
Organization -*

*Continuing to make history by empowering
people to give back, to educate, & live with a
purpose.*

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:

- Category 1 – Community Engagement (7 votes)
 - Bringing neighbors together
 - Empower Homeowners to get involved (e.g. Association meetings, committee meetings, social medias) by taking on leadership roles (2 votes)
 - Bring together renters and owners from Grier Heights, Elizabeth Heights, and Marvin Road to be involved in planning meetings & events (Labor Day, community Meetings, etc.) (2 votes)
 - Neighborhood Clean up to help take ownership of the community (1 vote)
 - Growing the “Kick Back” SBU program/ community volunteers
 - In addition to Jania’s walk, add an annual 5K fundraiser. Fun Run to build community, leadership development (1 vote)
 - Community Garden (1 vote)
- Category 3 Strategic Planning and Development (3 votes)
 - Focus entire year on 4 goals (Leadership Development, Business Development, Build a Support System, Empowerment of People) and create quarterly impact numbers and metrics (2 votes – originally put under engagement and moved here)
 - Take away programs that are beneficial BUT the community doesn’t recognize (1 vote)
 - Set goals on 4 simple pillars need for community
 - Finance, Empowerment, Education, Support
 - Attend a meeting with community Partners who have done business development “well.”
- Category 2 – Youth Programs (2 votes)
 - Collegiate Exposure (2 votes)
 - Vision Boards with the kids

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. 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.



2018 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Grier Heights Community Improvement Organization

OUR VISION:

Continuing to make history by empowering people to give back, to educate, & live with a purpose.

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

1

Community Engagement

2

Strategic Planning and
Development

3

Youth Programs

IN 2018-2019, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

Include people from all facets of the neighborhood in meetings, events, and planning

1. Amend by-laws to create a fully inclusive board which represents different parts of the neighborhood
2. Set-up committees where others can be involved in the process building future leadership
3. Recruit people from all parts of the neighborhood for the board and committees

Create Common, measureable goals to share success with neighborhood

1. Categorize the information from listening sessions & select 10 common goals
2. Hold community feedback session to present the ten goals and let the neighbors vote on 3 to 4 to accomplish, give advice on the goals, and gain buy-in
3. Publish & Market the goals and be transparent about tracking

Create Collegiate Exposure Fair

1. Create a college fair at the community center by inviting area schools and others to have tables
2. Create a campus tour series for neighborhood youth

Possible resources for the projects above

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator• Lawyer• Library• Kim Barnes (City of Charlotte, Community Engagement)• NC Center for Non-Profits www.ncnonprofits.org• Neighborhood experts/ knowledge holders• Community Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers on a committee• Community Center• Tech Soup• Alexis Gordon – share feedback session advice• David Jessup – digital divide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CPCC• Queens• UNCC• JCSU• Other schools• SBU• The kick back• Anaya/scholarships• Carolina youth prep• Business owners/professionals• MYEP• Career day• Ross Foundation
--	--	--



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
Include people from all facets of the neighborhood in meetings, events, and planning	Communication; Welcoming & Engaging Neighbors
Create Common, measureable goals to share success with neighborhood	Board Development
Create Collegiate Exposure Fair	Partnerships

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

Kim Barnes, Southeast Community Engagement Manager
kbarnes@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-8408