July 14, 2018

Grove Park Neighborhood Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services at

Central Piedmont Community College
Background

On Saturday, July 14, 2018, the board members of the Grove Park Neighborhood Association participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at Central Piedmont Community College. The following board members and/or community members participated in the retreat:

- Lindsey Wolfe
- Nick McJetters
- Chris Sotardi
- Laura Oneill
- Maureen Gilewski
- Mike McLaurin
- Mimi Davis
- Brandy Bryant
- Liz Claes

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](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 September 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where We Were: Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?</th>
<th>Where We Are: Why would or wouldn’t a person/business want to move into our community?</th>
<th>Where We Want to Be: If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| • Neighborhood Association organized 13 years ago.  
  • Majority of neighborhood housing stock is circa 1950’s, midcentury  
  • There was some opposition to a Mecklenburg County Park.  
  • Around 2011 housing values were around $60,000  
  • Solid neighborhood organization base | • Real Estate values have increased dramatically to $250,000-$350,000+  
  • More families are moving into the neighborhood  
  • Opposition to the park was turned into a positive engagement opportunity. Park is now embraced by the neighborhood.  
  • There is still a negative crime and location perception.  
  • Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools in the area still need to be improved.  
  • There is a great opportunity to work with the new East Town Market ownership.  
  • Strong need from residents to calm traffic through the neighborhood | • Enhance the natural beauty of the neighborhood by protecting and expanding tree canopy  
  • Improve neighborhood organization: improve branding, create newcomer onboarding process/materials, create supported vendor list, install a neighborhood suggestion box (similar to a little library), improved interaction with CMS, and increase outreach to senior residents.  
  • Develop events to bring the neighborhood together like a progressive dinner and “sip & stroll” |
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:

By bringing all neighbors together we will ensure that Grove Park continues to be a great place to live.

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:

- **Outreach & Communication-Neighborhood**
  - Develop an Adopt a Neighbor program such as would include senior citizens or new parent.
  - Identify senior citizens and their needs in order to improve outreach. Through this effort develop a contact list so that neighbor can check in on them.
  - Develop outreach that encourages multigenerational friendships such as pairing senior citizens with younger generations.
  - Develop an Adopt a street and stream programs and use them to increase outreach. For example go through Keep Charlotte Beautiful and the NCDOT for Harris Blvd.
  - Create a forum for sensitive issues with the purposes of finding common ground
  - Create a Grove Park Instagram account and improve overall social media presence.
  - Incorporate video on social media styled as a puppet TV show.
  - Create a one stop shop online for suggestions, garden ideas, etc
  - Create an online bulletin board for upcoming events
  - Develop an on-boarding program for new residents that include introduction to the following: police community resource officers, board members, garden & book clubs, and schools
  - Create a communication plan that create more transparency for board decisions and strives to hear all voices in the community.
  - Develop a Hispanic Women’s Group

- **Outreach & Communication-Stakeholders and Organizations**
  - Improve outreach and coordination with the CMS by developing a volunteer list of reading/math tutors, kindergarten aides and event assistance.
  - Improve relationship with neighborhood schools.
  - Develop a strategy to improve relationships with area neighborhoods
  - Develop a relationship and engage with the East Town Market ownership
  - Strengthen relationship with Charlotte East

- **Improve Safety**
  - Request sidewalk on Linda Lake Dr from Harris Blvd to Robinson Church Rd and on Robinson Church from Harris Blvd to Plott Rd
  - Reach out to CDOT for potential traffic calming solutions.
  - Improve neighborhood education about crime prevention measures for their property and person.
  - Educate the neighborhood about the importance of pedestrian safety through neighborhood events
  - Develop a strategy to support City and State infrastructure programs the support connectivity and pedestrian safety

- **Neighborhood Events**
  - Hold a Halloween party and parade
  - Create a neighborhood 5k event
  - More neighborhood events at the park
  - Have more social events like a progressive dinner and sip & stroll
  - Ensure that events attract a broad audience and are multigenerational

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

Grove Park

OUR VISION:
By bringing all neighbors together we will ensure that Grove Park continues to be a great place to live.

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

1. Outreach & Communication
2. Improve Safety
3. Hold a major event in the Fall 2018 and/or Spring 2019

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

- Improve Senior Outreach by developing a list of residents and their needs.
- Submit Paint the Pavement Application and request sidewalks by August 2019
- Hold a Halloween event and create a neighborhood 5K by August 2019
Please list any parking lot items or additional activities beyond the initial 3 here.

There was a lot of discussion about traffic calming and sidewalk requests during the workshop. So much so that an activity to educate the neighborhood about traffic calming measures such as speed humps is included in the safety priority. In particular you asked about sidewalks along Linda Lake Dr and Robinson Church Rd. To help with this effort below are links for traffic calming and sidewalk requests:

Traffic Calming

https://servicerequest.charlottenc.gov/service/TRAFCALM

Sidewalk request form

https://servicerequest.charlottenc.gov/service/SIDEWALK

- Scott Curry with CDOT has reached out to Lindsey about sidewalk requests.

There was also some discussion on the Charlotte code of ordinances. Dennis Lewis supplied the below link for those questions:

https://library.municode.com/nc/charlotte/codes/code_of_ordinances

Lastly there was some discussion about Paint the Pavement and other placemaking projects. Luckily there is hub for all things placemaking for the City of Charlotte. Here you can not only find information about Paint the Pavement, but also Adopt a Stream/Street and other fun project requests.

http://charlottenc.gov/civicinnovation/placemaking/Pages/default.aspx
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Potential Resource Categories of Interest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve Senior Outreach by developing a list of residents and their needs.</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Paint the Pavement Application and request sidewalks by August 2019</td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold a Halloween event and create a neighborhood 5K by August 2019</td>
<td>Welcoming &amp; Engaging Neighbors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 Liaison

[csduncan@charlottenc.gov](mailto:csduncan@charlottenc.gov) or 704-336-2173

John Short, Northeast Community Engagement Manager

[jshort@charlottenc.gov](mailto:jshort@charlottenc.gov) or 704-336-3862