2016 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT

Hampshire Hills

Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at Johnson C Smith University
Background

On Saturday March 19, 2016 the board members of the Hampshire Hills participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at Johnson C. Smith University. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Herman Thomas – Vice President
- Julia Thomas – Assistant Secretary
- Bill Pickens
- Connie Lewis – Financial Secretary
- Lena Pickens

Desired Outcomes from the group: Ideas to improve community, improved participation, QOL, Action plans

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 June 1, 2017 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why Not:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All homeowners, no renters</td>
<td>• Diverse neighborhood – cultures</td>
<td>• “Active Neighboring” – continue to work together w/neighbors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homes beautifully designed</td>
<td>• Quality homes/wide streets</td>
<td>• Code enforcement – improve relationship between renters and homeowners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Garden club</td>
<td>• Great engaged organization</td>
<td>• More activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Properties well-maintained</td>
<td>• Light rail coming</td>
<td>• Safe &amp; beautiful neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to services (i.e. bank)</td>
<td>• Still great neighborhood</td>
<td>• Less group homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Great schools</td>
<td>• Neighborhood park/tennis courts</td>
<td>• More amenities: shopping, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vibrant/ more neighborhood involvement</td>
<td>• PACE Health facility nearby</td>
<td>• Improved schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pool/swim club/meets</td>
<td><strong>Why Not:</strong></td>
<td>• More homeowners, less renters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very clean</td>
<td>• Negative connotation of East Charlotte by association</td>
<td>• More cultural activities to engage neighbors (Hispanics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planned activities, trips, etc.</td>
<td>• Perceptions by business – residents economic state</td>
<td>• More participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## OUR VISION:

Hampshire Hills is an established diverse community of beautiful, spacious and well built homes where neighbors work together to provide a great quality of life

### Common Themes: Housing, Upkeep/Beautification, Activities, Quality of Life, Leadership, Perceptions

### 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.

### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Great leadership</th>
<th>QOL doesn’t represent us well</th>
<th>Better maintenance of homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration w/ other neighborhoods</td>
<td></td>
<td>More substantial businesses (Anchor stores)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street lights/ sidewalks</td>
<td></td>
<td>A Bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Worst:**
- No stop light at entrance
- Everyone not involved

What other stakeholders can add value to our vision? Community, HOA, City, CMPD, Homeowners, Businesses, CMS
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:

**All Potential Projects**

The board then began to brainstorm on possible projects or activities that aligned with their strategic priorities: *(based on our tree activity)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Priority</th>
<th>Potential Projects</th>
<th>Sources that could give life to success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Trunk</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Fruit</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Roots</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Enhance Community Involvement/Activities | • Quarterly dinners  
• Fun Night in the Park  
• Increase Clean-up day to 2 times a year  
• Block Party  
• Bus trips  
• Small neighborhood cluster gatherings among 4 or 5 neighbors  
• Continue participation in Nat’l Night Out  
• Fellowship  
• ‘Back to School’ party +for kids | • Neighbors  
• Sanitation  
• Keep CLT Beautiful  
• Local businesses | |
| 2. Enhance Community Improvements | • Enhance Neighborhood street signs  
• Secure more stringent enforcement of codes on properties in violation  
  • Establish board contact to be “neighborhood code watcher” or assign to block captains  
  • Establish feedback mechanism with City code enforcement (monthly) | • City Code enforcements  
• Knock & Talks  
• Community engagement | |
| 3. Focus Board’s Strategic plans on diversity | • Expand committee mtgs./ more participation  
• Hold a ‘Our Community Leaders Day’ – question/answer session with our civic/commissioners  
• Create and communicate activities to embrace diversity  
• Enhance diversity (communication & participation) with our Hispanic neighbors  
  • Hold mini “International Day” in conjunction with Fellowship dinners or in the park  
  • Translate and distribute newsletters in Spanish | • Latin American Coalition  
• Latin Chamber  
• International House  
• City – International Relations  
• Queen’s University – Communication workshop | |
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. Enhance Community Involvement/Activities
2. Enhance Community Improvements
3. Focus Board’s Strategic plans on enhancing diversity

**Action Items for 2016-2017** The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2016-2017 are:

- Increase clean-up day to 2 times a year
- Secure more stringent enforcement of codes on properties in violation
  - “neighborhood code watcher”
  - Monthly feedback loop with City code enforcement
- Enhance diversity with our Hispanic neighbors
  - Hold mini “International Day” in conjunction with Fellowship dinners or in the park
  - Translate and distribute newsletters in Spanish

**Please list any parking lot issues or items here:**

- QOL Report:
  - Why can’t QOL data more closely match our neighborhood?
  - The NPA we are a part of is too large. We are included with neighborhoods and commercial areas that do not match our demographics therefore data is skewed and not useful.
  - It also exudes a negative perception about us to the public that we do feel is inaccurate and can be harmful
  - Feedback: the Quality of Life data is built upon US Census block level data. This same data is what determines NPAs. This is the smallest group of meaningful data we can produce.
OUR VISION:
Hampshire Hills is an established diverse community of beautiful, spacious and well built homes where neighbors work together to provide a great quality of life.

What other stakeholders can add value to our vision?
Community, HOA, City, CMPD, Homeowners, Businesses, CMS

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

1. Enhance Community Involvement/Activities
2. Enhance Community Improvements
3. Focus Board’s Strategic plans on enhancing diversity

IN 2016-2017, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

- Increase clean-up day to 2 times a year
- Secure more stringent enforcement of codes on properties in violation
  - “neighborhood code watcher”
  - Monthly feedback loop with City code enforcement
- Enhance diversity with our Hispanic neighbors
  - Hold mini “International Day” in conjunction with Fellowship dinners or in the park
  - Translate and distribute newsletters in Spanish
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Getting Started</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Project #1** | Increase clean-up day to 2 times per year **Enhance community involvement/activities**  
*Activities help with communication to facilitate more regular participation* | **Develop newsletter content**  
**Create a weekly e-mail blast**  
**Create a committee**  
**Communicate information about ideas, events, and meetings in a variety of ways**  
**Survey residents about what type of communication platform they would prefer to use (newsletters, website, meetings, flyers, social media)** | **Mail Chimp: Free online newsletter creator:** [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)  
**How to organize a committee:** [http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startingacommittee/tabid/244/Default.aspx](http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startingacommittee/tabid/244/Default.aspx)  
**Board development online resources:** Board Source - [https://boardsource.org/eweb/](https://boardsource.org/eweb/)  
**Set up a conference call option for meetings:** [www.freeconferencecall.com](http://www.freeconferencecall.com)  
**Nextdoor:** Create a private social network for your neighborhood: [https://nextdoor.com/about_us/](https://nextdoor.com/about_us/)  
**Make signs to announce meetings with FastSigns ® Reusable Yard Signs:** [http://www.fastsigns.com/sg-yard-signs/Yard-Signs](http://www.fastsigns.com/sg-yard-signs/Yard-Signs)  
**Keep Charlotte Beautiful has clean up supplies, grants and volunteers for cleanups:** [www.keepcharlottebeautiful.org](http://www.keepcharlottebeautiful.org)  
**Online survey tool:** [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)  
**Types of neighborhood communication:** [http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_HOA_Communication](http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_HOA_Communication)  
| **Project #2** | Secure more stringent enforcement of codes on properties in violation  
**“neighborhood code watcher”**  
**Monthly feedback loop with** | **Consider applying for a Neighborhood Matching Grant to purchase or improve street lights**  
**Communicate information about ideas, events, and meetings in a variety of ways (see above resources)**  
**Make contact with Service Area staff**  
**Survey residents about what** | **Neighborhood Matching Grants (NMG) provides funding to improve lighting and community safety:** Charlotte’s NMG Program can provide grants to eligible neighborhood organizations for community improvement projects. To determine eligibility or to review program details please visit charlottenc.gov/nmg or call 704-336-3380.  
**Request free CFL’s from Duke Energy:** [http://www.duke-energy.com/freecfls/](http://www.duke-energy.com/freecfls/) or 1-800-943-7585  
**Tips for Organizing a Community Cleanup** [http://lancaster.unl.edu/community/articles/organizecleanup.shtml](http://lancaster.unl.edu/community/articles/organizecleanup.shtml)  
**Keep Charlotte Beautiful has clean up supplies, grants and volunteers for cleanups** [www.keepcharlottebeautiful.org](http://www.keepcharlottebeautiful.org)  
**Service area staff:** Contact service area staff listed below to begin dialogue with Code Enforcement issues | **Online survey tool:** [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
| City code enforcement | type of communication platform they would prefer to use ( newsletters, website, meetings, flyers, social media) | www.surveymonkey.com  
Types of neighborhood communication:  
http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_HOA_Communication  
|---|---|---|
| **Project #3**  
Enhance diversity with our Hispanic neighbors  
Focus Board’s strategic plans on diversity | • Hold mini “International Day” in conjunction with Fellowship dinners  
• Translate and distribute newsletters in Spanish | Recruiting potential board members  
Increase neighborhood participation:  
Board development online resources:  
BoardSource https://boardsource.org/eweb/  
How to organize a committee:  
http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Startingacommitee/tabid/244/Def ault.aspx  
Meetings tips for neighborhoods  
http://nacok.org/association-tools/effective-meetings/  
http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Effective_Meeting_Agenda  
How to promote diversity on boards:  
https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources  
https://www.facebook.com/MAVA-Metrolina-Association-for-Volunteer-Administrators-212961772174019/ |

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

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