Background

On Saturday, February 23, 2019, the board members of the Howie Acres community 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:

- Roma Durham
- Rogerlean Hayden
- Ms. Isom
- Pamela Faggart

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 March 1, 2020 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>
</table>
| • High homeownership  
• Events (fall event and cultural event)  
• Generally good property maintenance  
• Church was the cornerstone  
• Previous board members resistant to change  
• Absentee owners  
• Drugs, prostitution  
• Homeless population | • Convenience to Uptown  
• Small, personable, caring neighborhood  
• Ease of transportation  
• Board accomplishments-tangible, cohesiveness  
• Air BnBs | • Development/amenities  
• Increased membership  
• Park enhancements  
• Youth engagement  
• Adopt a school  
• Government official engagement  
• Events |
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:**

*Howie Acres is an established, family-oriented jewel centrally located with natural beauty that embraces diversity*

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:

- **Neighborhood Activities**
  - Yard of the month program
  - Clean up every three months
  - Make sure no one is left behind
  - Working/planning session with government officials to see how community goals can be implemented based on government funding
  - Making home visits
  - Beautification day
  - Voter registration/encourage residents study candidates prior to voting
  - Neighborhood potluck
  - Have a cultural arts fair in the community

- **Board Activities**
  - Resident involvement for committees
  - Get newsletter out to all residents about current changes and upcoming changes
  - Business/membership drive
  - Homeowner responsibility letters
  - Resident express day
  - Social media
  - Community survey
  - Post meeting outreach
  - Creating flyers
  - Welcoming committee
  - Get more residents involved so that all committees are functioning

- **School/Youth Outreach**
  - Visit a school
  - Youth event
  - Contact Garinger to see how we can get involved
  - School supply collection event

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.
**2019 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary**

**Howie Acres**

**OUR VISION:**

*Howie Acres is an established, family-oriented jewel centrally located with natural beauty that embraces diversity*

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

1. **Neighborhood Activities**
2. **Board Activities**
3. **School/Youth Outreach**

**IN 2019-2020, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:**

- Create neighborhood welcoming/marketing flyer by the end of 2019.
- By the end of 2019, get newsletter out to all residents about current changes and upcoming changes.
- By March 2020, contact Garinger High School and plan a way to volunteer at the school.
Please list any parking lot items or additional activities beyond the initial 3 here.

-School outreach

School contact information is available at [http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/garingerHS/Pages/ContactUs.aspx](http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/garingerHS/Pages/ContactUs.aspx)

-Cross Charlotte Connector Trail

Information on the Cross Charlotte Trail (XCLT) is available at [https://charlottenc.gov/charlottefuture/CIP/Pages/CrossCharlotteTrail.aspx](https://charlottenc.gov/charlottefuture/CIP/Pages/CrossCharlotteTrail.aspx)

-Need for County Commissioner to attend events/meetings

Locate your elected officials and contact information under the “Voting” tab at [https://mcmmap.org/geoportal/#/voting](https://mcmmap.org/geoportal/#/voting)

-QOL-how is the test proficiency score pulled?

For this variable, data is determined by the number of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) students in grades 9-12 achieving a proficient score (Level III, IV or V) on two or more end of course tests divided by the total number of CMS students in grades 9-12 with valid scores on two or more end of course tests.

The data source for each variable can be found at [https://mcmmap.org/qol/](https://mcmmap.org/qol/)

-Transit Oriented Development (Planning)

Learn more about Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at [https://charlottenc.gov/planning/Rezoning/StakeholderGroups/TextAmendmentStakeholderGroup/Pages/Transit-Oriented-Development.aspx](https://charlottenc.gov/planning/Rezoning/StakeholderGroups/TextAmendmentStakeholderGroup/Pages/Transit-Oriented-Development.aspx).

Invite a speaker to come to a neighborhood meeting to share more: [https://charlottenc.gov/HNS/CE/CommunityInfo/Pages/NeedASpeaker.aspx](https://charlottenc.gov/HNS/CE/CommunityInfo/Pages/NeedASpeaker.aspx)

-Neighborhood Toolkit (Code Enforcement website)

Find the Community Toolkit here: [https://charlottenc.gov/HNS/Code/HealthSanitation/Pages/Toolkits.aspx](https://charlottenc.gov/HNS/Code/HealthSanitation/Pages/Toolkits.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>Create neighborhood welcoming/ marketing flyer by the end of 2019.</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
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<td>Partnerships; Welcoming &amp; Engaging Neighbors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Contact</th>
<th>Email Address/ Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlenea Duncan, Northeast Community Engagement Liaison</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csduncan@charlottenc.gov">csduncan@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-2173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Short, Northeast Community Engagement Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jshort@charlottenc.gov">jshort@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-3862</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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