July 13, 2019

Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services at
Goodwill Opportunity Campus
Background

On Saturday, July 13, 2019, board members of the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Association 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:

- Thelma Byers-Bailey
- Betty Dewalt
- Trilby Meeks
- Joyce Leake Allison
- Lucille Batts
- Peggy Lumas
- Yasmin Benton

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, your 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, 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 allowed for participants to 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>
| • Partnerships with diverse groups  
• Great community garden  
• Family Dollar store (bad)  
• Great meeting space now  
• Great festivals yearly  
• Friendly/supportive neighbors  
• Increase neighborhood participation | • Great central location  
• Historical community  
• Close to uptown  
• Access to interstate highways  
• High crime (bad)  
• No retail (bad)  
• Community Appearance (bad) | • Resident involvement within the corridor  
• Capacity building to increase economic mobility for the community  
• More placemaking  
• More affordable housing  
• Better relationships with immigrant community |
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:

Lincoln Heights is a historic gateway community to the heart of Charlotte offering a diverse, safe and clean environment to live, work and play.

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:

- **Community Appearance-Increase Curb Appeal**
  - Contact the ‘311’ system to report litter, trash and unkept of public areas
  - Apply for NMG to install Street Toppers/Blades
  - Apply for NMG to install new neighborhood sign

- **Board Involvement**
  - Board members attend leadership development training
  - Realign current board structure
  - Develop succession plan for current board members

- **Affordable Housing Training**
  - Increase knowledge and capacity building opportunities for residents to learn about future housing shifts concerning affordable housing and gentrification issues

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**

**Lincoln Heights**

**OUR VISION:**

*Lincoln Heights is a historic gateway community to the heart of Charlotte offering a diverse, safe and clean environment to live, work and play.*

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

1. Community Appearance
2. Board Involvement
3. Affordable Housing Training

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

- By September 2020, apply for a Neighborhood Matching Grant for sign toppers.
- Board members attend leadership training by summer 2020.
- By August 2020, residents and board members attend training classes on affordable housing to reduce gentrification.
Please list any parking lot items or additional activities beyond the initial 3 here.

- Involve Youth population more
  - Explore the City of Charlotte’s Youth Programs here: [https://charlottenc.gov/HNS/CE/Youth/Pages/default.aspx](https://charlottenc.gov/HNS/CE/Youth/Pages/default.aspx)

- Understand the 2040 Plan that the Planning, Design and Developing department is leading
  - Learn more about the 2040 Comprehensive Plan here: [https://charlottenc.gov/charlottefuture/2040Plan/Pages/default.aspx](https://charlottenc.gov/charlottefuture/2040Plan/Pages/default.aspx)

- Code enforcement of the community needs refocusing
  - Lincoln Heights is in the Central Code Enforcement Service Area Office: 704-398-6769

- Trash and litter are an issue
  - Call 311 to report

- Test score are lower in the community. How do we increase?

- Panhandling is an issue

- Family Dollar store enables increased crime in the corridor

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](https://charlottenc.gov/HNS/CE/Youth/Pages/default.aspx). 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>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By September 2020, apply for a Neighborhood Matching Grant for sign toppers.</td>
<td>Beautification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members attend leadership training by summer 2020.</td>
<td>Board Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By August 2020, residents and board members attend training classes on affordable housing to reduce gentrification</td>
<td>Board Development; Partnerships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cherie Grant, Northwest Community Engagement Liaison</th>
<th>Randy Harris, Northwest Community Engagement Manager</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Cherie.Grant@charlottenc.gov">Cherie.Grant@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-3322</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rharris@charlottenc.gov">rharris@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-432-2433</td>
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