

# McDowell Farms

## Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus



2014

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## 2014 Board Retreat

### Background

On Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 2014, the board members of the McDowell Farms participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Joey Cortez
- Thomas Harrison
- Jay Lindstrom
- Vanita Pottsdaer
- Shari Volgenau



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 Neighborhood Matching Grant credit to help execute one of the projects we identified.

### 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.

<b>Where We Were:</b> Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	<b>Where We Are:</b> Why/why not would a person/business want to move into our community?	<b>Where We Want to Be:</b> If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
<p>Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After a major flood the community came together</li> <li>• Had community cookouts/gathering often/ lots of community involvement</li> <li>• The community was a lot more stable</li> <li>• Had better Street signs</li> </ul> <p>Bad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing speed bumps has led to speeding issues on the other side of the community</li> <li>• Abandoned property and foreclosure</li> </ul>	<p>Good: would like to move into the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed greenway in the community</li> <li>• Landscape around the community</li> <li>• Great location and friendly</li> <li>• New outlet mall</li> <li>• Nextdoor.com</li> <li>• New developments and employment opportunities</li> <li>• Property value stabilizing</li> </ul> <p>Bad: would not want to move into the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less stable- more rentals and overcrowded homes</li> <li>• Over saturation of apartments</li> <li>• A lot of traffic</li> <li>• Littering issue along Tryon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More involvement from the community with nextdoor.com</li> <li>• More interest in the community</li> <li>• Partner with neighbors that owns a visual able hill to assist with landscaping</li> <li>• Partner with district school</li> <li>• Community that is engaged; has pride; embrace newcomers</li> <li>• Premier Neighborhood</li> </ul> <p>3 Wishes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree Project</li> <li>• Partner with neighboring schools</li> <li>• More involved association</li> </ul>

## 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:

A premier community that welcomes diversity promotes safety and quality of life for all, WE ARE MCDOWELL FARMS!

## 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:

**Safety**

Code and Zone Enforcement

**Community Involvement/Communication**

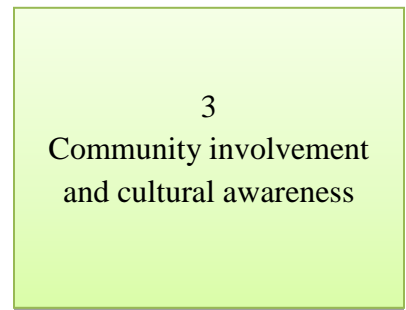
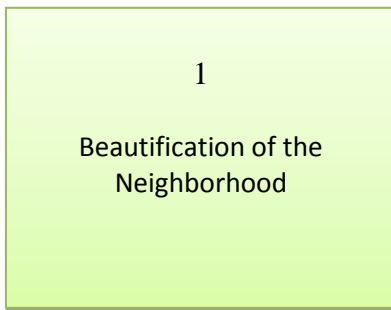
More involvement on Nextdoor.com from neighbors

**Beautification of the Neighborhood**

**Partnership**

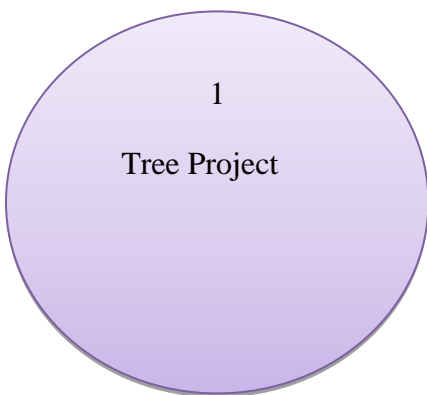
**Cultural Awareness**

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:



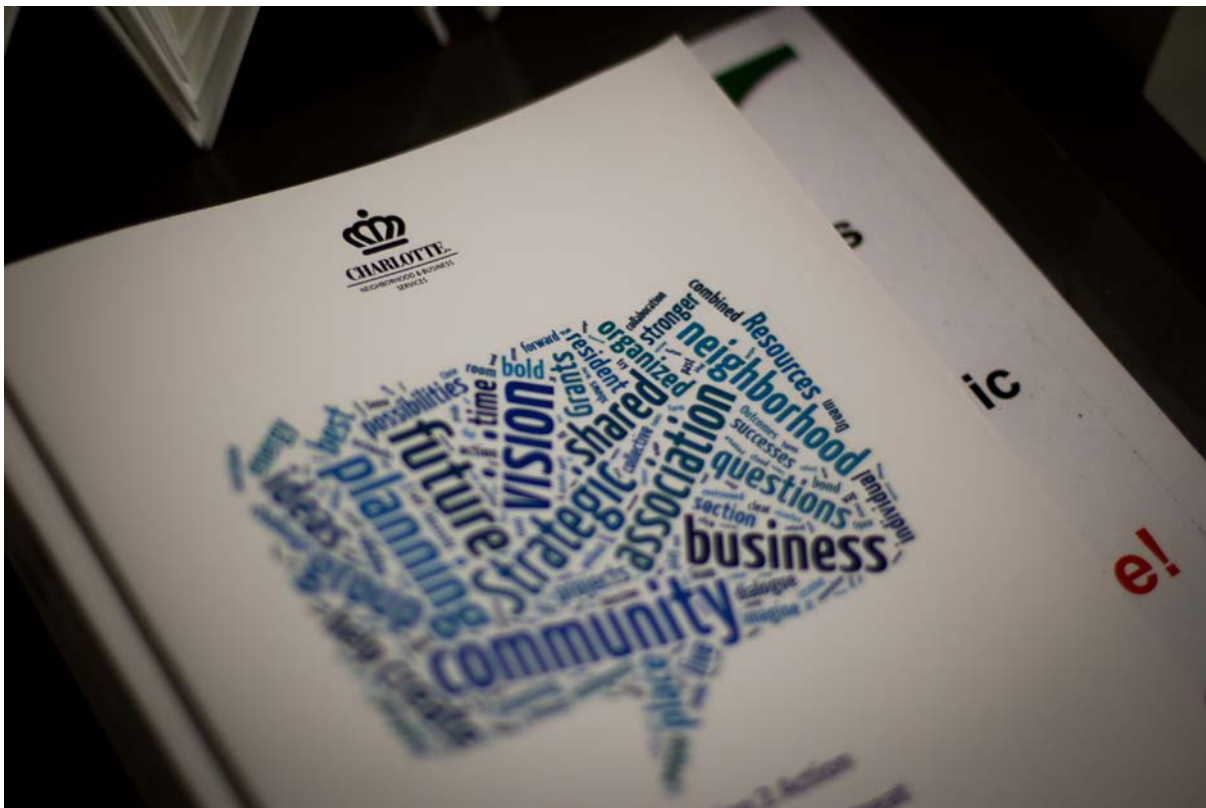
**Action Items for 2014-2015**

The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2014-2015 are:



## Stakeholders that can add value

- Latin American Association
- South East Asian Association
- International House
- Absent homeowners/management companies
- Code enforcement
- CDOT
- CMPD
- Asian American Association
- Banks/Mortgage Info
- N&BS
- Neighborhood School
- Place of Worship
- Local Business Owners
- Self-Help



**2014 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary**

**McDowell Farms**

**OUR VISION:**  
A premier community that welcomes diversity promotes safety and quality of life for all, WE ARE MCDOWELL FARMS!

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

1  
Beautification of the Neighborhood

2  
Safety

3  
Community involvement and cultural awareness

**IN 2014-2015, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:**

1  
Tree Project

2  
Reassess Traffic Flow and Safety

3  
Increasing multicultural engagement

## Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
<b>Project #1</b> Tree project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find some resources to plant more trees in your community</li> </ul>	TreesCharlotte provides trees to Charlotte neighborhoods: <a href="http://treescharlotte.org/">http://treescharlotte.org/</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borrow tools for planting</li> </ul>	Tool Bank: <a href="http://charlotte.toolbank.org/">http://charlotte.toolbank.org/</a>
<b>Project #2</b> Reassess Traffic Flow and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform a study of the traffic patterns in your community</li> </ul>	Request a traffic study by Charlotte Department of Transportation: <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply for a Neighborhood Matching Grant to address safety/traffic issues in your community</li> </ul>	Neighborhood Matching Grants <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx</a>  Contact Atalie Zimmerman at <a href="mailto:azimmerman@charlottenc.gov">azimmerman@charlottenc.gov</a> or  704-336-4594
<b>Project #3</b>  Increasing multicultural engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote neighborhood diversity in your community</li> <li>Host a multicultural event for community members</li> </ul>	Promoting neighborhood diversity: <a href="http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411955promotingneighborhooddiversity.pdf">http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411955promotingneighborhooddiversity.pdf</a>  Learn more about the demographics of your neighborhood population at the Quality of Life Study: <a href="http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/goldashboard/">http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/goldashboard/</a>  Importance of multicultural collaboration: <a href="http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/multicultural-collaboration/main">http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/multicultural-collaboration/main</a>





