



**CHARLOTTE**<sup>SM</sup>

# **NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT**



**February 18, 2017**

**Montclair Neighborhood Association**

**Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at**

**Goodwill Opportunity Campus**

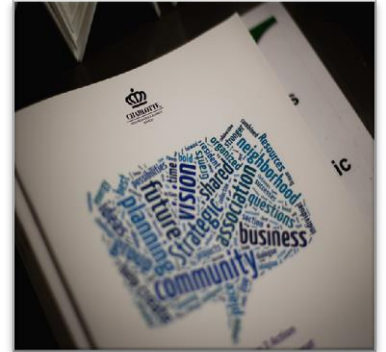
# Montclair Neighborhood Association

## 2017 Board Retreat

### Background

On Saturday, February 18, 2017, the board members of the Montclair Neighborhood Association participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at the Goodwill Opportunity Campus. The following board members participated in the retreat:

Charles Mock	Karyn Staley
Betsy Hill	Alexis Graham
Paula Blomme	Carol Koball
Tiffany Weir	Jack Olin



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

### 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 would or wouldn't 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 style="text-align: center;"><b>BEST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montclair Elementary School clean up</li> <li>• Enthusiasm of signage grant</li> <li>• Opening of greenway</li> <li>• nextdoor.com</li> <li>• Past neighborhood attendance at school</li> <li>• There was a 3 year wait for the pool</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Worst</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of parent engagement at school</li> <li>• Power outages</li> <li>• Nextdoor.com</li> <li>• Construction due to greenway</li> <li>• Board burnout</li> <li>• Limited volunteer follow-up</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHY?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and convenience to transit and retail</li> <li>• Affordability</li> <li>• Parks, green space and trails</li> <li>• Neighborhood is a hidden gem</li> <li>• Neighborhood is established and well-kept</li> <li>• Different house styles</li> <li>• There is pride in home ownership and gardens</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHY NOT?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School assignments</li> <li>• Proximity to South Boulevard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not walkable</li> <li>○ Undesirable businesses</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some homes have shoddy renovations with permitting issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montclair Neighborhood would have identity</li> <li>• Montclair Elementary School as well as middle and high school would be desirable</li> <li>• Neighborhood would have a good infrastructure</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

*Montclair neighborhood is a hidden gem that welcomes all to experience our unique blend of nature and city life with a clear focus on the continued growth of the community.*

## 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:

CATEGORIES				
Communications	Know Your Neighbors	Infrastructure	School	Community Engagement
ACTION ITEMS				
Newsletter	Social Events	Signage	School taskforce	Neighbors helping neighbors
Newsletter in paper	Welcome Committee	Sidewalks	Parent outreach involvement	Board growth
Face-to-face with neighbors	Community projects	Street lights	Stronger parent groups	Events that bring neighbors together
	Social at a South Blvd “walkable” business	Receive capital for infrastructure projects	Neighborhood residents volunteer at school	More engaged neighbors
	Greenway party		Montclair Elementary School support	Speaking to public officials about neighborhood infrastructure
	Greenway walking group		Support for changing school assignments	Support informal networking – coming out of nextdoor.com groups
	Trash clean-up on Archdale & Emorywood		Better schools	Welcome committee
	Greenway bike rides, runs, walks			
	Promote greenway			
	Expose neighbors to wider community			

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.

**2017 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary**

*Montclair Neighborhood Association*

**OUR VISION:**

*Montclair neighborhood is a hidden gem that welcomes all to experience our unique blend of nature and city life with a clear focus on the continued growth of the community.*

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

1

Know your Neighbors

2

Schools

3

Board Infrastructure

Note: this was changed from  
Community Engagement

**IN 2017-2018, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:**

Hold a Greenway  
Opening Celebration  
with a 5K Run/Walk

Lead: Paula

Create tabs on the  
Montclair Neighborhood  
Association website to  
allow neighborhood public  
and private schools to  
promote mission and  
activities

Lead: Alexis

Develop Board by-laws  
which will include job  
descriptions, term limits  
and transition plans

Lead: Karyn

**Please list any parking lot items or additional activities beyond the initial 3 here.**

1. In the Quality of Life Explorer under Engagement on page 6 it says there are 4 neighborhood organizations registered with the Char-Meck Planning Department – they would like to know who the associations are. *Please visit the Neighborhood Organization Contact List [website](#) to identify the organizations within your Neighborhood Profile Area.*
2. They had been told that they are not eligible for a NMG due to neighborhood income – is that true? NMG eligibility is determined by median property value of the Neighborhood Profile Area. *Eligibility is updated based on periodic citywide property revaluation. Tier I NPAs encompass median property values up to \$104,110 and Tier II encompasses values between \$104,000 and \$181,703. For more details, please visit the NMG [website](#). An individual analysis can be performed if you feel that you fall within these tiers even though your overall Neighborhood Profile Area does not. Philip Freeman ([Philip.Freeman@ci.charlotte.nc.us](mailto:Philip.Freeman@ci.charlotte.nc.us); 704-336-4594) can research this for you.*
3. They would like to know if there are templates or guidelines from other associations they could use to help them build out their by-laws. *Millicent Powell can assist with this (see below).*
4. They have questions about invoice processing for their matching grant – Mary G will contact Millicent and Denise directly.

**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.

Project	Potential Resource Categories of Interest
<b>Hold a Greenway Opening Celebration with a 5K Run/Walk</b>	Recreation; Welcoming & Engaging Neighbors
<b>Create tabs on the Montclaire Neighborhood Association website to allow neighborhood public and private schools to promote mission and activities</b>	Partnerships
<b>Develop Board by-laws which will include job descriptions, term limits and transition plans</b>	Board Development

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

Millicent Powell, Southwest Community Engagement Liaison	Eugene Bradley, Southwest Community Engagement Manager
<a href="mailto:mepowell@charlottenc.gov">mepowell@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-432-6814	<a href="mailto:ebradley@charlottenc.gov">ebradley@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-432-1579

