CITY OF CHARLOTTE

NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT

August 23, 2021

Neighbors of Cherry

Hosted online by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services

Background

On Monday, August 23, 2021, members of the Neighbors of Cherry organization participated in the virtual Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte online. The following board members and/or community members participated in the retreat:

- Aletha Green Burgess
- Stephani DeWitt
- Matthew Hassey
- David Jacobs
- Rosalyn Allison Jacobs

- Jean Stuart
- Richard Weschler
- Nichel Dunlap Thompson

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 a copy of the Developing Your Ideas worksheet with our NMG request. This credit will expire following the March 1, 2023 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
- SWOT Analysis
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- Idea Development – Time for participants for develop an action plan for goal achievement

SWOT Analysis

We began our day with group discussion using the SWOT Analysis framework. 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

Our discussion helped us to find commonalities in our conversations.

Strengths (Of the neighborhood & organization)	Weaknesses
- New Voice (in community) - Inclusivity/openness/open mindedness - History - Friendliness (of residents) - Sense of community - Willingness to reach out to other organizations (Ability to) leverage varied skill sets - Proximity (to all of center Charlotte) - Diversity	Divisiveness in community - Unofficial status of Neighbors of Cherry/no political capitol "New"/ not well known - Lack of organization – no formal leadership structure of Neighbors of Cherry - Inability to apply of Neighborhood Matching Grants (until formally organized) - Inability to assert Neighbors of Cherry in City's official recognition of neighborhoods
Opportunities	**Threats**
- Continue to communicate & be open to new ideas - Mitigate impacts of negative growth in and around Cherry - Advocate for affordable housing in & around Cherry Strong organizational *ability* to represent the preservation of Cherry as residential vs. business community "New Kid ion Block" *status* provides potential to build on vision to attract new resident participation *in neighborhood* - Use/support of existing Cherry commercial center - Forge stronger organization - Potential for Cherry to become a model in how to unify in midst of possible gentrification	- Lack of participation by longtime residents - Legacy groups not wanting to include newcomers/weakens neighborhood fabric - View of newcomers as threat; fear of gentrification (economic and cultural) - Outcome/result of continued exclusion & rejection of new residents - Low participation by residents/apathy Uncontrolled neighborhood growth & gentrification - Lack of unified organization(s)

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. This activity led us to the following priorities/action items being identified as important within our community:

- Leverage varied skill sets of Neighbors of Cherry (NoC) members to positively impact future of Cherry
- Establish ways to mitigate divisiveness in community
- Strengthen neighborhood inclusivity and openness
- Establish NoC strong organizational *ability* to represent the preservation of Cherry as residential vs. business community
- Maintain and value neighborhood diversity
- Initiate ways to control neighborhood growth & gentrification
- Mitigate negative impacts of growth in and around Cherry
- Continue to work on improving neighborhood communication and openness to new ideas
- Work to decrease resident apathy
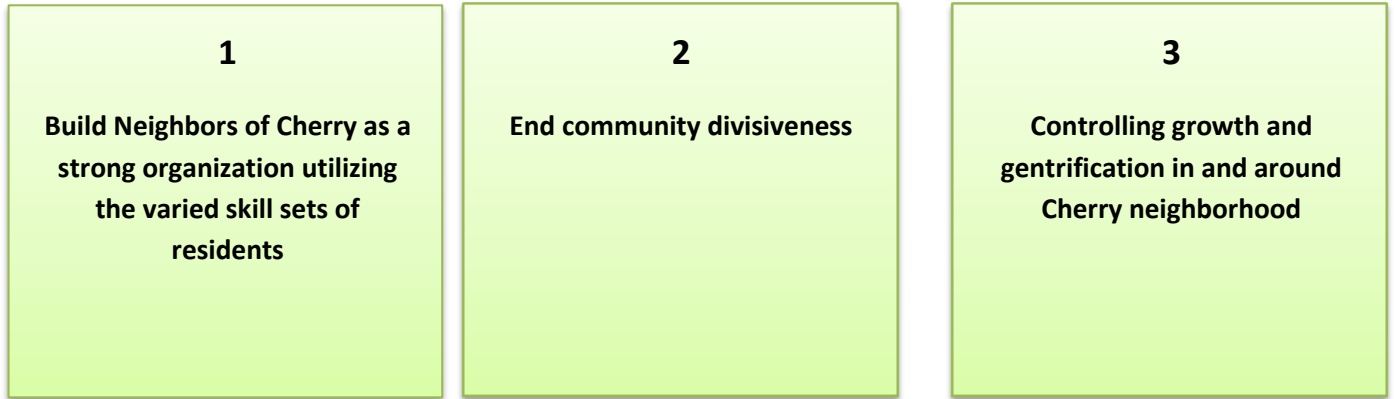- Help Chery become the model of how to unify a neighborhood during gentrification

The three priorities 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.

2021 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Neighbors of Cherry

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

1	2	3
Build Neighbors of Cherry as a strong organization utilizing the varied skill sets of residents	**End community divisiveness**	**Controlling growth and gentrification in and around Cherry neighborhood**

IN 2021-2022, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:

Establish Neighbors of Cherry as a formal organization by January 1, 2022

Organize and initiate a facilitated dialogue among all Cherry neighborhood organizations by December 31, 2021

Create registry of Cherry residents by March 31, 2022

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
Establish Neighbors of Cherry 's organizational recognition by City of Charlotte by January 1, 2022 - **Neighborhood Lead(s): Aletha Green Burgess & Matt Hassey**	Board Development Training on Demand: How to Start a Neighborhood Organization
Organize and initiate a facilitated dialogue among all Cherry neighborhood organizations by December 31, 2021 - **Neighborhood Lead(s): Rosalyn Jacobs & Richard Wechsler**	Community Engagement Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations
Create registry of Cherry residents by March 31, 2022 - **Neighborhood Lead(s): Don Jacobs & Nichel Dunlap Thompson**	Communication/Community Engagement

Your community is located within Charlotte's Southeast Service Area. Your staff contact for following up and community assistance is:

Faith Estrada, Southeast Service area Community Engagement Liaison	Kim Barnes, Southeast Service Area Community Engagement Manager
Faith.Estrada@Charlottenc.gov and phone number (704) 353-1879	Kim.Barnes@charlottenc.gov and phone number (704) 336-8408