



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

# **NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT**



**July 15, 2017**

**Oakhurst Community Neighborhood  
Association**

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services at

Central Piedmont Community College

# Oakhurst Community Neighborhood Association

## 2017 Board Retreat

### Background

On Saturday, July 15, 2017, the board members of the Oakhurst Community Neighborhood Association participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at CPCC. The following board members participated in the retreat:

Ana Karim  
Kristy Giballa Machusko  
Liz Millsaps Haigler



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 September 1, 2018 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.

| <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?   |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic working class neighborhood</li> <li>• Many longtime residents remember the Woonsocket Mill</li> <li>• Community has fluctuated over the years</li> <li>• Former retail corridor</li> <li>• There have been personality differences between residents over the years</li> <li>• Organization fatigue when leadership and responsibilities rested with a one person or a handful of residents</li> <li>• Once was an edge of town suburban neighborhood, but still has a suburban feel</li> <li>• Parts of the community have existed for over 100 years</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing diversity: apartments, single family, townhomes, owner-occupied, and rental</li> <li>• Proximity and good access to Uptown Charlotte</li> <li>• Independence Blvd is a plus and minus. <b>Plus:</b> great access to Uptown and interstates. <b>Minus:</b> Declining retail, retail that exists is not neighborhood-serving</li> <li>• New businesses are moving in such as Clayworks and Common Market</li> <li>• Extensive tree canopy</li> <li>• There is a lack of neighborhood identity</li> <li>• Increasing real estate values are increasing creating a transitioning effect</li> <li>• Lack of aesthetic on Monroe</li> <li>• Lack of pedestrian/bike infrastructure</li> <li>• Existing zoning should be re-evaluated</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain demographic diversity and affordability of housing</li> <li>• Improve the aesthetic of Monroe Rd. by improving the streetscape that includes pedestrian/bike infrastructure, public art, and beatification such as street trees</li> <li>• Develop an action plan that maintains/expands green, encourage more ped/bike activities and active spaces like a “green loop” through the neighborhood, and conduct more business outreach</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:**  
*Oakhurst is a diverse, century old community that embraces connections to nature, to each other, and to the City.*

## 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:

- Connectivity Through Spaces, Organization, and Partnerships
  - Create a “green loop” walk/run path through the neighborhood
  - Create a welcome letter for new residents
  - New website
  - Canvas the business community
  - Develop a leadership network outside of the board that would include block captains and neighborhood ambassadors
  - Partner with the school for art and nature projects
  - Organize and promote social gatherings at local businesses
  
- Connectivity Through Beautification
  - Coordinate a fall tree planting
  - Hold a park cleanup day
  - Clean up trails through woods between neighborhood and Coliseum Shopping Center
  - Hold a garden cleanup day
  - Identify and seek improvements for Oakhurst Park
  
- Connectivity Through Public Art
  - Create a resource list of public artist that live in the neighborhood
  - Develop relationship and seek partnerships with Clayworks
  - Inform the City the desire to have public art included with the Community Investment Projects such as the Monroe Rd. Streetscape.
  - Find a location for a public art installation

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**

*Oakhurst Community Neighborhood Association*

**OUR VISION:**

*Oakhurst is a diverse century old community that embraces connections to nature, to each other, and to the City.*

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

1

Connectivity Through  
Communication  
Strategy

2

Connectivity Through  
Public Art

3

Connectivity Through  
Beautification

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

Develop a strategy to improve our communication with our residents and the business community. Seek a Neighborhood matching grant for improved online and brand identity.

Develop a resource list of artists that live in the neighborhood and seek a Neighborhood Matching Grant for a public art installation

Coordinate a park cleanup and seek resources and donations for a fall tree planting.

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

- How can we be more engaged with the redevelopment of the Coliseum Center Shopping Center?
  - The developer plans to have public engagement about this redevelopment project. More information will be provided as it is available.
- We would like more information on the placemaking hub and learn how to implement some of those programs.
  - Please visit the Placemaking Hub [here](#). Staff contact information is provided on the Hub website for further assistance.
- The neighborhood needs a better understanding about the zoning and ordinances along Monroe Rd. and what role they have in attracting or creating barriers to neighborhood-serving business locating here.
  - The [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department](#) is a great first step to research this topic: 704-336-2205
- How can the segment of privately- owned Crater Street be taken over by the City for maintenance?
  - Please contact [CDOT](#) for more information on this topic: 704-336-4119
- Will the city plant trees in the planting strips in the Moderna development or is that the responsibility of the developer?
  - A request has been submitted to Erin Oliverio (Tree Canopy Program Manager) to explore this inquiry. Details will be forwarded to Oakhurst when they are received.
- Continue our engagement and input with the City on all Community Investment Projects, especially on the proposed Pierson Dr. project.

**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>Develop a strategy to improve our communication with our residents and the business community. Seek a Neighborhood matching grant for improved online and brand identity.</b> | Communication; Neighborhood Identity      |
| <b>Develop a resource list of artists that live in the neighborhood and seek a Neighborhood Matching Grant for a public art installation</b>                                     | Beautification; Partnerships              |
| <b>Coordinate a park cleanup and seek resources and donations for a fall tree planting</b>   | Beautification                            |

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

|  |
|--|
| Kim Barnes, Southeast Community Engagement Manager                                   |
| <a href="mailto:kbarnes@charlottenc.gov">kbarnes@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-8408 |

