CHARLOTTE

2015 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT

Plaza Shamrock

Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at CPCC Main Campus

Plaza Shamrock Neighborhood

2015 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, February 7th 2015, the board members of the **Plaza Shamrock Neighborhood** participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at CPCC's Main Campus. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Simone Smith
- Ervileen Pridgen
- Carol Saunders
- Diane Buys
- Carmela Jarvi

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.

Where We Were: Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	Where We Are: Why would or wouldn't a person/business want to move into our community?	Where We Want to Be: If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
Best: • National Night Out has been successful for the last two years • Convenient location with good access to uptown and local businesses • Relationships with CMPD and Code Enforcement are strong • Strong neighborhood leadership • Neighbor relationships were strong • Diverse neighborhood **Worst:** • Concerns – both real and perceived - about crime & safety • Appearance of front yards and home is harming image	**Why?** • Good accessibility • Large lots • Schools (both Shamrock Gardens and Garinger are trending up) • Amenities: parks, schools, churches, entertainment, local businesses • New home buyers are beginning to notice. • Diversity of neighborhood • Opportunity for growth **Why Not?** • Appearance of homes and yards (part of which is due to rental property and Section 8 housing) • General perception that prospective residents are unable to see the possibilities.	**Wishes:** • Increased resident engagement • Increased home ownership • Reduction in crime • Better property maintenance and neighborhood beautification • Schools success for both Shamrock Gardens and Garinger • See more art in the 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:
>
> ## Plaza Shamrock is a diverse, vibrant, engaged community with a strong sense of civic pride and neighbors who care for one another.

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:

| Crime & Safety | Resident Engagement | | | Beautification | Education/ School Support |
	General	Events	Communications		
• Create crime watch • Create Block Captain structure • Educate neighbors about 311/911	• Increase meeting attendance • Increase paid memberships • Increase number of volunteers to help with neighborhood projects	• 2015 National Night Out event	• Create newsletter • Update and better utilize website • Establish media relations for positive media coverage	• Community clean-up / beautification events & projects • Resident education: Call 311 for nuisance issues (bulky items on sidewalk, etc.) • Increase sense of ownership • Garden	• Increase neighborhood involvement with schools • Support student education through homework assistance • Include fun projects for youth

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:

1	2	3
Resident Engagement - Events -	Resident Engagement - General -	Crime & Safety

Action Items for 2015-2016

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

Begin planning 2015 National Night Out

Increase Volunteers, Meeting Attendance and Paid Memberships

Create Neighborhood Crime Watch including Block Captain Structure

Resources: Consider including Voter Registration table & Code Enforcement education at event. Solicit gifts for drawing to increase attendance & fund raising (e.g. ask local artists, businesses for dontations; residents with paid dues eligible to participate)

Resources: Apply for Organization Grant for newsletter design, mailing expenses, t-shirts, car-decals, etc.

Resources: Work with CMPD to develop crime watch. Consider devloping block captain job description that includes other duties such as newsletter delivery, etc. Host peridic block captain appreciation cook-outs.

PLAZA SHAMROCK

OUR VISION:

Plaza Shamrock is a diverse, vibrant, engaged community with a strong sense of civic pride and neighbors who care for one another.

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

1	2	3
Resident Engagement - Events -	Resident Engagement - General -	Crime & Safety

IN 2015-2016, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

Begin planning 2015 National Night Out

Increase Volunteers, Meeting Attendance and Paid Memberships

Create Neighborhood Crime Watch including Block Captain Structure

Resources: Consider including Voter Registration table & Code Enforcement education at event. Solicit gifts for drawing to increase attendance & fund raising (e.g. ask local artists, businesses for dontations; residents with paid dues eligible to participate)

Resources: Apply for Organization Grant for newsletter design, mailing expenses, t-shirts, car-decals, etc.

Resources: Work with CMPD to develop crime watch. Consider devloping block captain job description that includes other duties such as newsletter delivery, etc. Host peridic block captain appreciation cook-outs.

Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
Goal #1 Begin planning National Night Out	• Learn more about National Night Out and register your event	More information on National Night Out https://natw.org/
	• Start planning your event	**Neighborhood Event Planning Toolkit** http://www.sdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Block-Party-Kit.pdf **Charlotte Department of Transportation for information on street closure procedures and approval** http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for sound permits** http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CMPD/Pages/default.aspx
	• Invite CMPD and your City Council representative to participate in your event	**Find your community police officer:** http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CMPD/response-areas/Pages/default.aspx **City Council Members:** http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CityCouncil/MeettheCouncil/Pages/home.aspx
Goal #2 Increase volunteers, meeting attendance and paid memberships	• Increase volunteer participation in your community	**Increase neighborhood participation:** http://atlantahoamanagement.wordpress.com/2011/09/27/how-to-increase-attendance-or-participation-in-homeowner-committees/ **Increase Neighborhood Volunteers** http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/Attracting_Volunteers
	• Always show your volunteers your appreciation	Volunteer appreciation ideas: http://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/2012/04/05/7-ways-to-appreciate-your-volunteers/
	• Incentivize members to pay dues	• Offer prize for first household to pay dues • Offer discount to those who pay early • Allow members to pay in installments • Be transparent with association budget and inform members exactly what their dues pay for each year.
Goal #3 Create neighborhood crime watch, including	• Request a CPTED report from CMPD to find out what areas of concern exist in	**Request a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design study through CMPD to find out where trouble areas may be in your neighborhood** crimepreventionunit@cmpd.org Visit Charmeck.org and enter "CPTED" in search box

block captain structure	your community	
	• Organize block captains • Get more information about how to organize a crime watch in your neighborhood	CMPD: Neighborhood Watch Program http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/cmpd/safety/neighborhoodwatch/Pages/default.aspx Tips from the National Crime Prevention Council http://www.ncpc.org/topics/home-and-neighborhood-safety/neighborhood-watch

Parking Lot

Need a Speaker contact information:
Choose what topic you want to address and invite a speaker:
Contact: Andrew Bowen, abowen@charlottenc.gov
Website: http://charmeck.org/speakersbureau/Pages/default.aspx

Quality of Life questions:
Contact: Rebecca Hefner, rehefner@charlottenc.gov
http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/goldashboard/

Adopt-a-Street
Contact: Nicole Storey, nrstorey@charlottenc.gov
http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/kcb/Pages/AdoptaCityStreetProgram.aspx

City of Charlotte Northeast Service Area Contacts:

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