February 24, 2018

Ravenwood Neighborhood Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services at
Goodwill Opportunity Campus
Background

On Saturday, February 24, 2018, the board members of the Ravenwood Neighborhood Association participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at the Goodwill Opportunity Campus. The following board members and/or community members participated in the retreat:

Charlotte Gore
Corey Dergazarian
Debbie Dryden
Buz Dowd
Tim Diggs

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. More information on the grant program can be found online at http://charlottenc.gov/nmg.

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 June 1, 2019 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

Ravenwood Neighborhood Association
2018 Board Retreat
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where We Were: Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?</th>
<th>Where We Are: Why would or wouldn’t a person/business want to move into our community?</th>
<th>Where We Want to Be: If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best</strong></td>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Children draw you together”</td>
<td>• Increase in owner-occupied homes</td>
<td>• Aging neighborhood (pro and a con)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hickory Grove 4th of July Parade</td>
<td>• Disposable income (but nowhere to spend it save a few new options)</td>
<td>• Aging board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good feeling of small community built around school</td>
<td>• Increase in property values (but also an increase in property taxes)</td>
<td>• More disconnected (some former leaders “over it” vs. those who may just be too busy, living their own lives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sense of small-town identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of common community rallying point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Winterfest</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of public housing and impact on greater community (schools, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Methodist church and school pairing</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Positive and Negative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Own post office</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Neighborhood park (positive if all folks use respectfully)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Worst**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Shooting on Fairlawn Rd. (but it created a rallying point for those involved to clean up their act)</td>
<td>• Upscale business like what we used to have (like bakery, coffee shop)</td>
<td>• Connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More rentals with absentee landlords</td>
<td>• Harris Teeter or Publix (higher tier grocery store)</td>
<td>• Small town feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positive and Negative**

- • Neighborhood park (positive if all folks use respectfully)
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:
Ravenwood—A Neighborhood of Involvement, Diversity, and Unity

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:

- **Community Focus/Projects**
  - Flowers/plants at entrance signs (4 votes)
  - ONE goal per year to focus on as a community (2 votes)
  - The new park
  - Picnic tables in the park
  - Bird houses in the park
  - Notice board at the park
  - Community garden
  - Grants
  - More community involvement
  - Statue of man and dog for our neighborhood

- **Community Participation**
  - Halloween gathering/park party (2 votes, opted to move forward)
  - More group get togethers (block party-like events) (2 votes)
  - Kid meetups at the park (1 vote)
  - Website (in progress) (1 vote)
  - Kids’ activities
  - School partnerships (volunteering)
  - Like to see more of the “young people” at meetings, planning meetings, etc.
  - Run/walk club
  - Dog walking or dog club
  - Dedicated Ravenwood groups (not with Grove Park)
  - Another potluck event like Winterfest
  - Coffee mornings meetup
  - Cleanup days (drains, etc.)
  - Painting fire hydrants
  - Tree banding committee
  - Holiday lights competition (more than just monthly garden)
  - Community helpers/volunteer team (checking in on elderly/helping with yardwork)
  - Block captains
  - Ravenwood Float/4th of July Parade
  - Grassroots involvement
  - Board members
  - More new people taking over for the warriors

- **Infrastructure**
  - Sidewalks (2 votes)
  - Street lights (1 vote)
  - Stoplight at Highland and Hickory
  - Bridges over creek
  - More trails
  - New street signs/posts
  - Greenway?
  - Meeting place outside for our neighborhood

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.
Ravenwood Neighborhood Association

OUR VISION:
Ravenwood—A Neighborhood of Involvement, Diversity, and Unity

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

1. Implement Community Project
2. Encourage Community Participation
3. Advocate for Infrastructure Improvements

IN 2018-2019, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

- Plant flowers and plants at 3 entrance signs before the 2018 Garden Club Tour
- Hold Fall Fest in new Delta Creek Park in October 2018 and explore interest in future festivals
Please list any parking lot items or additional activities beyond the initial 3 here.

- School Partnerships
  - Explore ideas on how to partner with local schools [here](#).
- Street sign replacement program
- Street light improvements
- Zoning issues

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Potential Resource Categories of Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant flowers and plants at 3 entrance signs before the 2018 Garden Club Tour</td>
<td>Beautification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold Fall Fest in new Delta Creek Park in October 2018 and explore interest in future festivals</td>
<td>Beautification; Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauge community interest in infrastructure improvements by National Night Out 2018.</td>
<td>Communication; Welcoming &amp; Engaging Neighbors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charlenea Duncan, Northeast Community Engagement Liaison</th>
<th>John Short, Northeast Community Engagement Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:csduncan@charlottenc.gov">csduncan@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-2173</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jshort@charlottenc.gov">jshort@charlottenc.gov</a> or 704-336-3862</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>