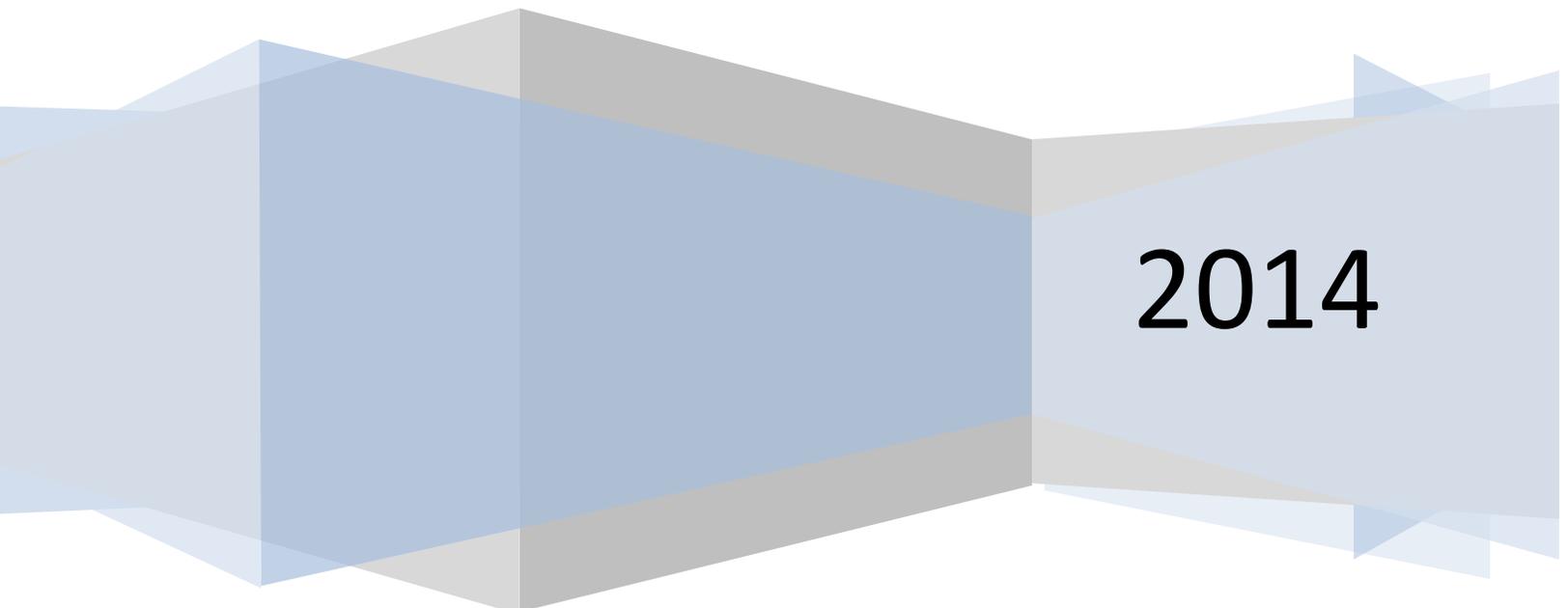# RAVENWOOD

Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus

2014

Ravenwood Neighborhood
2014 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, July 19th 2014, the board members of the **Ravenwood** neighborhood participated in a board retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus. The following board members participated in the retreat:

- Augie Beasley
- Mary Anne Beasley
- George and Irene Thomas
- Dale and Barbara Warren
- Bill Focht
- Gwen Warren
- Debbie Dryden
- Marsha Johnson
- Fred and Rosemarie Belcher
- Tim and Linda Diggs
- Claude and Dorothy Williams

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/why not would 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: Neighborhood Events around the "Triangle" Beautiful Neighborhood Worst: Group Home Issue Void in Neighborhood Leadership Lack of Civility at Meetings Lost Eastland Mall and Shopping Centers Section 8 Housing built in area	Why: Stable, Well-Educated Residents (Artists, Educators, Writers, Etc) Diversity Beautiful Homes, Large Lots, Mature Trees Affordable, Larger Homes Great Newsletter for Residents Active Neighborhood Organization Respectful Meetings Why Not: Lack of Quality Shopping Options A lot of Rental Property in the Area Close Proximity to Troubled Neighborhoods Property Devalued Negative Media Perception	Create a Better Image of the Neighborhood Be More Proactive, Rather Than Reactive More Connected to Surrounding Communities 90% of Neighborhood Knows Their Neighbors Recruit More Members to the Neighborhood Organization Host More Neighborhood Events Retain Civility and Increase Attendance at Meetings Implement Neighbor of the Month Award Improve Inter-Neighborhood Communication Better Shopping Options Leverage Block Captains

		Create a Marketing and Promotions Team Affiliate Ravenwood with a Neighborhood School

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:

- **Increase Block Captains**
    - Smaller blocks, More block captains****
    - Increase block captains through personal invitation*
    - Involvement: Block captains/members, to get new members! Knock on doors!*
    - Block captains monitor empty houses/yard maintenance and notify City if there is a problem

- **Neighborhood Beautification**
    - Clean up creeks*
    - Keep it Clean! Campaign**
    - Fall clean-up of street gutters to clear leaves*
    - Stream, Lake, Natural Area Clean-Up – Get younger people involved
    - Pick up trash in neighborhood as a group
    - Cankerworm project – City Arborist involved
    - Wash existing street signs
    - Litter control

- **Increase Partnerships**
    - Join other communities to increase our voice***
    - Sponsor Health Fair – Guest speakers, booths at Hickory Grove Elementary
    - Quarterly meetings with Chessington, Grove Park and Ravenwood
    - Partner with Hickory Grove School
    - Meet with adjoining community leaders
    - Neighborhood Watch
    - Back to School supply drive, book drive (back-pack giveaway)
    - Community Events
    - Partner with a charity – A Child's Place – sponsor families for Christmas
    - Create a Political Committee*
    - Identify neighbors who may need some help
    - Realtor – line up a contact (Theresa McDonald?)
    - Send representative to CECP and EAST
    - Partner with YMCA to emphasize health and wellness
    - Partner with Police to enforce speed limits
    - Reaching out to County Commissioners and City Council about Neighborhood Association***

- **Enhance Marketing and Promotion**
    - Limit Next Door Ravenwood to only Ravenwood residents
    - Sunshine Committee*
    - Promote neighborhood meetings on my street by calling on neighbors with newsletter or info about street toppers
    - Create a Marketing/PR Committee
    - Do a follow-up newsletter on group meeting activities and questions***
    - Invite neighborhood (new neighbors) to meetings and offer to take them
    - Social Media Leverage/Goals
    - Facebook page – use it!
    - Ravenwood T-Shirts*********
    - T-Shirt sample ready for National Night Out
    - Contacting New Neighbors**
    - Use internet to better promote
    - Promote bookclub through newsletter

      Part of newsletter in Spanish
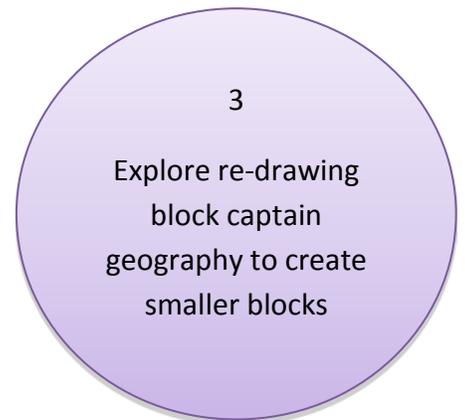   - Facebook page – who? What?

- Let the welcoming committee know of new neighbors on your street. Each person should welcome their own neighbor
- Neighbor buddies (Family level)
- Award-given/Recognition to the person cleaning litter from the streets*
- Award for Ravenwood/Grove Park citizenship
- Do a neighbor profile for 3 or 4 people in each newsletter*
- Blog about neighborhood and gardening club with guest bloggers
- Work with EAST team for better stores
- Do a neighbor of the month prize or recognition certificate***
- Welcome new neighbors with a welcome basket*
- Welcoming committee*

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
Increase Partnerships	Enhance Marketing and Promotion	Increase Block Captains

Action Items for 2014-2015

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

1	2	3
Join Other Communities to Enhance Our Voice & Reach Out to City	Create Ravenwood T- Shirts for Adults and Children	Explore re-drawing block captain geography to create smaller blocks

2014 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

RAVENWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

OUR VISION:

Ravenwood – A Neighborhood Of Involvement, Diversity, and Unity

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

1	2	3
Increase Partnerships	Enhance Marketing and Promotion	Increase Block Captains

IN 2014-2015, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITES:

1 — Join Other Communities to Enhance Our Voice & Reach Out to City Council and County

2 — Create Ravenwood T-Shirts for Adults and Children

3 — Explore re-drawing block captain geography to create smaller blocks

Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
Project #1 Join Other Communities to Enhance Our Voice & Reach Out to City Council and County	• Increase communication between neighborhoods	Nextdoor: Create a private social network for your neighborhood: https://nextdoor.com/about_us/ Local Resources for Neighborhoods: http://digitalcharlotte.org/ Knight School of Communication at Queens University: http://www.queens.edu/Academics-and-Schools/Schools-and-Colleges/Knight-School-of-Communication/Spotlight-Stories/How-Do-Neighborhoods-Communicate.html
	• Build sustainable neighborhood partnerships	How to create and sustain community partnerships: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/creating-and-maintaining-partnerships
Project # 2 Create Ravenwood T-Shirts for Adults and Children	• Talk with another neighborhood that has created t-shirts for residents	Coventry Woods Neighborhood Association http://coventrywoods.org/ Questions: info@coventrywoods.org
	• Decide how you would like to market your neighborhood to the broader community	How to brand your neighborhood: http://www.neighborhoodnotes.com/news/2012/08/how_to_launch_your_neighborhood_brand_and_engage_your_community/ More on branding: http://www.stablecommunities.org/sites/all/files/documents/Branding%20and%20Marketing%20Presentation%20CS%20Forum%2012_11_12.pdf
Project #3 Explore re-drawing block captain geography to create smaller blocks	• Recruit more block captains	Tips for organizing block captains and other volunteers: http://www.decaturalabamausa.com/departments/policedept/community Example of block captain guidebook: http://www.ci.neenah.wi.us/assets/files/police/crime-prevention/Block%20Captain%20Guide.pdf