



NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT



August 20, 2022

Seversville Community Organization

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services

Seversville Community Organization

2022 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, August 20, 2022, members of the **Seversville Community Organization** participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat hosted by the City of Charlotte at Central Piedmont Community College. The following board members and/or community members participated in the retreat:

- Amanda Prokupek
- Ray Feaster
- Jennifer Wilson Rezende
- Rachelle Reid
- Ashley Weidner
- Thomas Casias
- Piniel Tadesse

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 the quality of life in the neighborhood
- Outline a direction for the future of the neighborhood that represents the needs and desires of current and future residents
- Set clear goals and priorities for the upcoming year(s)

By participating in the retreat, the board earned up to \$1,500 toward volunteer hours required for the Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) to help execute one of the projects listed below.

To receive this credit, neighborhood organizations will submit a copy of the Developing Your Ideas worksheet with their NMG request. This credit will expire following the March 1, 2024, NMG application deadline.

Process

The board retreat was conducted by trained facilitators tasked to keep conversations on-task, productive, and focused on achievable objectives. The process was designed to build on the organization's current strengths, identify opportunities, and create a short-term vision for the neighborhood. The focus was:

- Analyzing neighborhood trends and conditions
- Developing strategic priorities
- Developing project ideas

The agenda for the day was as follows:

- Welcome & Overview
- Introductions
- Group Agreements
- SOAR Model (includes QoL review)
- Conducting a SOAR Analysis
- Lunch/Networking
- SMART Goals
- Developing Your Ideas
- Participant Survey
- Wrap-up/Next Steps

SOAR Analysis

The primary retreat activity was a group discussion using the SOAR analysis framework. The activity was intended to help participants reflect on:

- Their values
- The best things about the community and the people who live there
- Past successes
- Potentials and possibilities

Our discussion helped us to find commonalities in our conversations.

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong history as a Ring Village• 1st AME Zion Church• Walkable, can walk to school• Urban cultural arts center• Friendly, everybody says hi• Front porch community• Close to uptown• Greenway, 5 Points• Diversity• Strong relationships, sense of community• Community garden• Streetcar and access to transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New organization, new leadership• Remain inclusive• Be transparent• Improve communication and engagement• Expand engagement of long-term residents and seniors through outreach• Manage nuisances (picking up after dogs, noise)

After identifying the organization's strengths and opportunities, participants began to brainstorm aspirations for their neighborhood. These aspirations will serve as short-term goals for the organization. This is where participants began to define priorities for their neighborhood.

Participants generated a list of aspirations and then narrowed that list down to three priorities. The idea is to focus on a few things and do them very well as opposed to many things and missing the mark.

Aspirations	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be included in decisions that directly affect us, be at the table for important conversations with City/other partners • Have a more powerful, unified voice • Be aligned on core advocacy issues within neighborhood • Build a board structure with committees aligned with strategic goals • Increase member/meeting participation • Inclusive engagement of long-term and senior residents • Centralized information sharing with consistent, accessible communication • Follow-through on goals and plans • Develop stronger ties with city leadership, invite to speak at meetings • Serve the community through partnerships (clean-ups, book drive) • Engage businesses and developers • Partner with neighborhood school to invest in educational opportunities • Develop creative fundraising strategies • Utilize City grants for beautification, lighting, safety features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong organization with new bank account, updated bylaws, established budget and engaged board/committees • New bank account rebuilt to 75% of previous amount • Developers in neighborhood are engaged/contribute to community through events, funds, special projects • SCO has a formal outreach letter for developers to request partnership • SCO hosts events - golf, dinner, matching grants, other creative fundraising ideas • Increased engagement and attendance (in-person/online) at meetings • Strengthened relationships and more neighbors helping neighbors - putting put lights, personal visits, mow yards • Increased awareness of new/upcoming developments within/around neighborhood • Community leaders attending and participating in neighborhood meetings • Increased impact/influence/voice for SCO with future developments

Results

Three aspirations were agreed upon by the group. These aspirations will serve as the organization's strategic priorities for the next twelve months. Participants then identified a desired result for each priority that they felt would be most impactful.

Aspiration 1: Create a plan to improve engagement through inclusive outreach to long-term residents, seniors, and school/community leaders.

Desired Result: Improved resident engagement and more diverse meeting attendees/membership.

Aspiration 2: Build stronger relationships with city leaders to better advocate for community interests.

Desired Result: Increased awareness of development and ability to advocate for community interests.

Aspiration 3: Lay the foundation (bylaws, bank account, goals, budget) for a strong organization.

Desired Result: Realistic fundraising goals based on strategic goals with creative strategies.

The strategic priorities and activities are summarized on the following page.

2022 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Seversville Community Organization

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

1

Create a plan to improve engagement through inclusive outreach to long-term residents, seniors, and school/ community leaders.

2

Build stronger relationships with city leaders to better advocate for community interests.

3

Build stronger relationships with city leaders to better advocate for community interests.

IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR ASPIRATIONS:

Establish a committee tasked with resident outreach and engagement at board meeting on 9/20.

Research resources and city structure (e.g., zoning) by 11/15.

Establish board leadership, update bylaws, secure bank account and build a budget by end of Q1 2023.



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
<p><i>Community Engagement:</i> Establish a committee tasked with resident outreach and engagement at the board meeting on 9/20.</p> <p>Sub goal: Conduct survey outreach and implement activities (neighborhood walks, street captains, etc.) by Q2 2023.</p> <p>Lead(s): Amanda, Rachelle</p>	<p>Community Engagement Training on Demand</p>
<p><i>Organizational Development:</i> Research resources and city structure (e.g., zoning) by 11/15.</p> <p>Sub goal: Build key relationships with city/county leaders by end of 2023.</p> <p>Lead(s): Jennifer, Thomas</p>	<p>Service Area Team</p>
<p><i>Organizational Development:</i> Update bylaws, secure bank account, build budget by Q1 2023.</p> <p>Lead(s): Ashley, full interim board, new board president</p>	<p>Community Engagement Training on Demand</p>

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

Randy Harris, Service Area Community Engagement Manager
randy.harris@charlottenc.gov (704-432-2433)