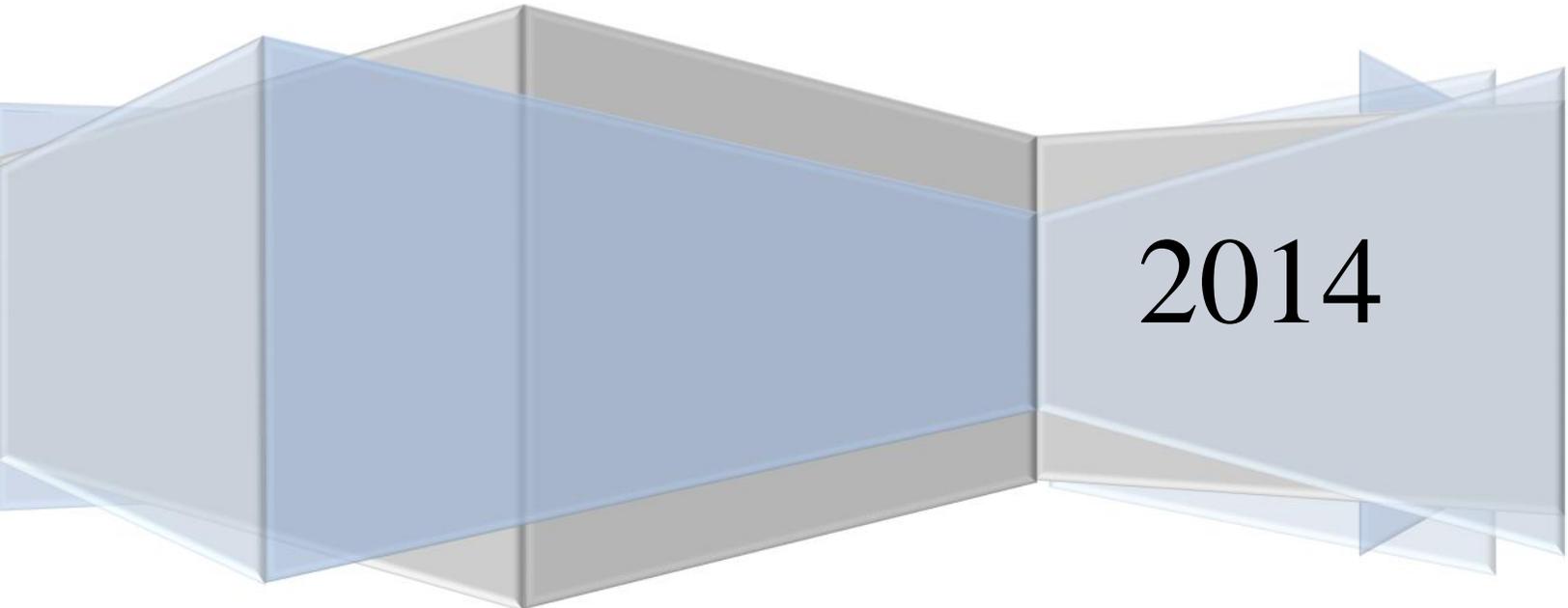# University Park Neighborhood Association

Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus

2014

Background

On Saturday, February 15, 2014, the board members of the University Park Neighborhood Association 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:

- Tammy Hill – Vice President
- Venita Hood - Secretary
- Ella Dennis – Committee member
- Darryl Goodman – Chaplain
- Ronald Campbell – Treasurer / PAC

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

Before we got started – our *City Councilman for District 2, Al Austin* stopped by to encourage us for the day

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?
-Middle-class/professional/ seasoned community - Community engaged - Proud homeowners - Notable schools/quality teachers - High graduation rates - Low crime - Proud black business owners - Healthy environment / creeks - Children playing	**Why Not:** - High crime, loitering - Low community engagement - Serious environment issues - lower home ownership, code violations - Poor schools (11 closed) - High concentration of low-income families - Lack of city/county support **Why:** -Opportunity to return community to former glory -Strong leadership interested in reviving community - & battling negative perceptions - Strong commitment to legacy	- Quality schools - Professional businesses return - Good community employment opportunities / low unemployment - Balanced income levels - Community fully engaged - Sustainable environment / clean creeks -Enhanced pride in home ownership

Based on this activity, our group identified shared values that would help us craft the vision for our community:

- Crime Reduction
- Community Partnerships (businesses, neighbors, city, state, county, federal, & schools)
- Sustainability (environment, housing, up keep, education)

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:**
>
> University Park is a community that highly values vibrant neighborhood relationships and community partnerships that are focused on providing a beautiful and safe place to live, work and play.

What other stakeholders can add value to our vision?
CMPD, Project Lift, Churches, Schools, Elected officials, Businesses, City, County, State, Park & Rec, Assisted Living Centered, Library, Fire Station 18, Banks

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 Reduction
- Partner with CMPD
- Request a CPTED review by the CMPD
- Restart Neighborhood Crime Watch
- Hold a "Are U Aware Cookout"
- Clean up corner (loitering/crime spot)
- Institute Neighborhood Crime Watch signs visibility
- Ensure all street lights are working in the neighborhood

Community and Neighborhood Partnerships
- Invite Businesses to the neighborhood association meetings
- Participate in 2014 National Night Out
- Distribute newsletter to every neighbor
- Reactivate block captains – with responsibilities clearly defined
- Create and distribute Welcome packets for new neighbors
- Hold town hall meetings
- Participate in annual Halloween activity at the WC Center
- Provide information to neighbors concerning safety resources
- Hold a neighborhood relay walk/ block to block – partner with West Charlotte Rec Center
- Partner with Lincoln Heights neighborhood association
- Create and distribute brochures about neighborhood – history, etc.
- Hold a neighborhood clean-up day campaign – include folks generally hanging out on the corner
- Hold a band competition/challenge with West Charlotte and House of Prayer church
- Replace the 'Lion Paws' along streets going into neighborhood towards West Charlotte HS
- Hold 'yard of the month' competitions

Sustainability
- Identify & apply for Grants for environmental clean-up
- Partner with CATS for trash receptacles at the bus stops

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 **Crime Reduction**	2 **Community and Neighborhood Partnerships**	3 **Sustainability**
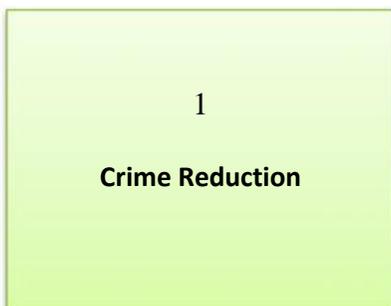
Potential Projects

The board then began to brainstorm on possible projects or activities that aligned with their strategic priorities: *(based on the possibility tree activity)*

Strategic Priority	Potential Projects	Sources that could give life to success
"The Trunk"	*"The Fruit"*	*"The Roots"*
1. **Crime Reduction**	• Partner with CMPD • Request a CPTED review by the CMPD • Restart Neighborhood Crime Watch • Hold a "Are U Aware Cookout" • Clean up corner (loitering/crime spot) • Institute Neighborhood Crime Watch signs visibility	• CMPD • Neighborhood block captains • CPTED review • City Council reps
2. **Community and Neighborhood Partnerships**	• Invite Businesses to the neighborhood association meetings • Participate in 2014 National Night Out • Distribute newsletter to every neighbor • Reactivate block captains – with responsibilities clearly defined • Create and distribute Welcome packets for new neighbors • Hold town hall meetings • Participate in annual Halloween activity at the WC Center • Provide information to neighbors concerning safety resources • Hold a neighborhood relay walk/ block to block – partner with West Charlotte Rec Center • Partner with Lincoln Heights neighborhood association • Create and distribute brochures about neighborhood – history, etc. • Hold a neighborhood clean-up day campaign – include folks generally hanging out on the corner • Hold a band competition/challenge with West Charlotte and House of Prayer church • Replace the 'Lion Paws' along streets going into neighborhood towards West Charlotte HS • Hold 'yard of the month' competitions	• Nat'l Night Out Coalition • CMPD • City • Fire Station #18 • Association communication plan • West Charlotte • Churches • Businesses
3. **Sustainability**	• Identify & apply for Grants for environmental clean-up • Partner with CATS for trash receptacles at the bus stops	• Grant writers • City research • Grant information • Association communication plan

Action Items for 2014-2015

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

1	2	3
Restart Neighborhood Crime Watch	Participate in 2014 National Night Out	Identify & apply for Grants for environmental clean-up

University Park   Neighborhood Association

OUR VISION:

University Park is a community that highly values vibrant neighborhood relationships and community partnerships that are focused on providing a beautiful and safe place to live, work and play.

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

1	2	3
Crime Reduction	**Community and Neighborhood Partnerships**	**Sustainability**

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

1	2	3
Restart Neighborhood Crime Watch	**Participate in 2014 National Night Out**	**Research & apply for Grants for environmental clean-up**

Resources to Get You Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
Project #1 **Neighborhood Watch**	• Canvass neighborhood for interest • Identify persons who may be interested in being block or street captains	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Study by CMPD crimepreventionunit@cmpd.org Visit Charmeck.org and enter "CPTED" in search box Neighborhood Matching Grants an provide funding to get a Neighborhood Watch Program off the ground azimmerman@charlottenc.gov or 704.336.4594 CMPD: Neighborhood Watch Program http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/cmpd/safety/neighborhoodwatch/Pages/default.aspx
Project #2 **Hold National Night Out (NNO) Event**	• Solicit volunteers for event • Talk to business owners for their interest in participating/giving donations • Research other NNO events in Charlotte/across the country for ideas • Brainstorm the potential outcomes of a NNO event	Fundraising information http://www.afpnet.org/ Neighborhood Matching Grants can provide funding for National Night Out and other events azimmerman@charlottenc.gov or 704.336.4594 NNO National Organization 1-800-NITE-OUT http://natw.org/ CMPD NNO 'How to' & Registration Form http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/cmpd/safety/communityprograms/pages/national%20night%20out.aspx
Project #3 **Apply for environmental clean-up funding**	• Review the Quality of Life Study for environmental standing/variables	Quality of Life Study- Neighborhood Scale Info for All of Mecklenburg County http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/qoldashboard/ Keep Charlotte Beautiful provides litter clean-up opportunities and grants http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/kcb/pages/home.aspx or 704.353.1235 Neighborhood Matching Grants can provide funding for clean-ups and other events azimmerman@charlottenc.gov or 704.336.4594 City Brownfield Grant Program - 704-336-5849 http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/ed/financialprograms/brownfields/Pages/GrantPrograms.aspx or visit charmeck.org and enter "Brownfield" in search box