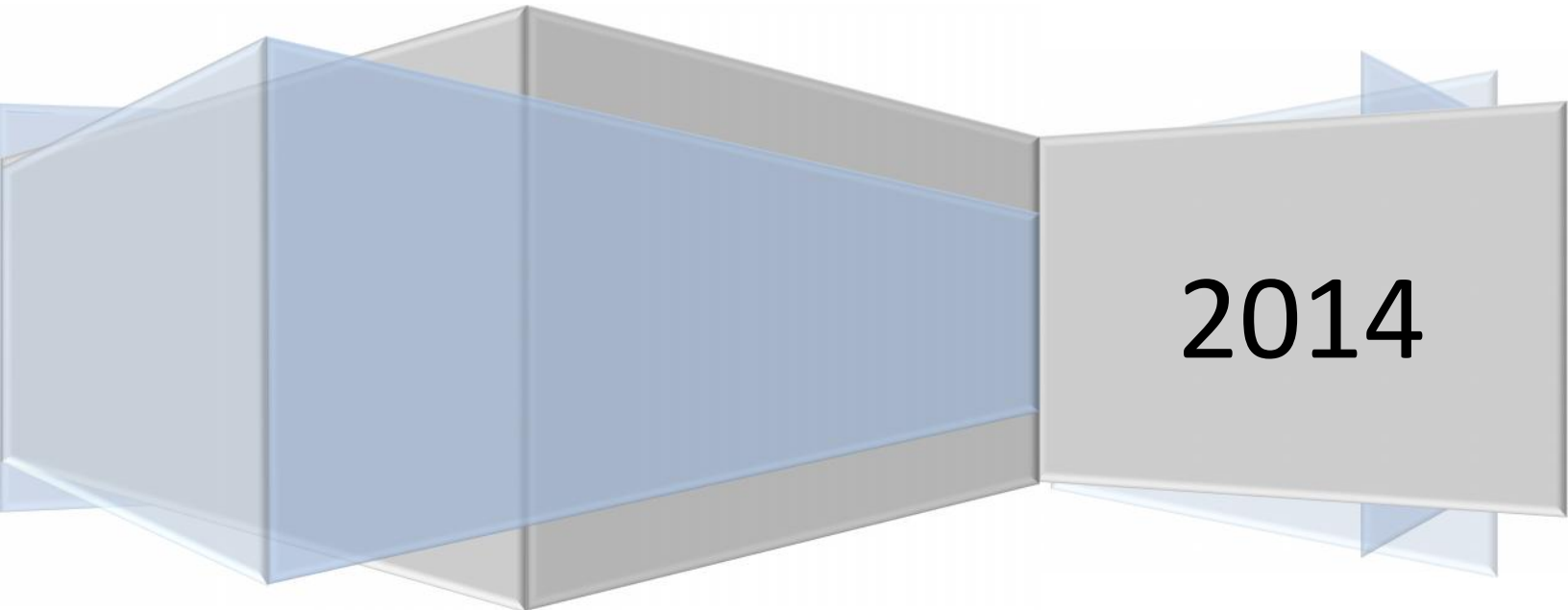


Vera Jones Neighborhood Association

Board Retreat

Hosted by the City of Charlotte at UNC Charlotte Uptown Campus



2014

Vera Jones Neighborhood

2014 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, February 15, 2014, the board members of the Vera Jones 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:

- **Brian Nelson**
- **Elizabeth Corsa**
- **Ron Crosier**



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?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dealing with unmaintained/foreclosed properties - Street congestion because neighbors park on street instead of in driveways + Helpful neighbors + Great hospitality + Great City service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversized truck that blocks street - Number of vehicles on the street - Quality of local middle school and high school + Value of properties + Low Crime + Mature trees and landscape + Quiet neighborhood “feels like you are in the country” + Within 5 miles of great commercial and health serv. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No on street parking Improved neighborhood schools Initiate community get-togethers to help really know neighbors Improve street lighting No crime No foreclosed properties

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:

Vera Jones Neighborhood is a welcoming, established and diverse community where relationships are nurtured and “small town” is valued in a big city!

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:

(1) Community Engagement

- Community Block Party
- Community Get Together
- Community Volunteering

(2) Safe & Secure Neighborhood

- Install (additional) streetlights
- Neighborhood Watch program and Signs
- Learn more ways to keep neighborhood safe (Neighborhood Matching Grant Application)

(3) Aesthetics

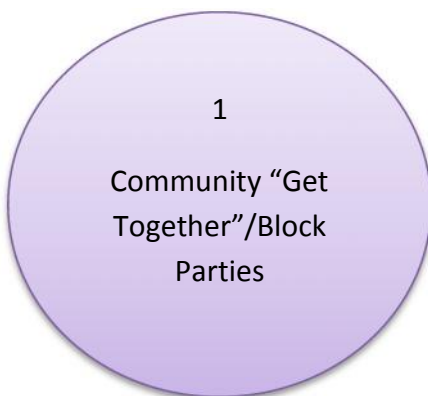
- Keep foreclosed properties maintained
- Install “cut-through” fence and foliage
- Reduce on street parking

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:



Action Items for 2014-2015

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



2014 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Vera Jones Neighborhood

Our Vision: Vera Jones Neighborhood is a welcoming, established and diverse community where relationships are nurtured and “small town” is valued in a big city!

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

1

Community Engagement

2

A Safe and Secure
Community

3

Community Aesthetics

IN 2014-2015, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:

1

Community Block
Parties

2

Community Street
Lighting

3

Reduced On street
Parking

Resources to Get Started

Project	Getting Started	Resources
Project #1 Community street lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request an upgrade for street lighting from the City 	Contact the City by calling 311 or visiting http://tinyurl.com/ceglDMf to request an upgrade for street lighting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider applying for a Neighborhood Matching Grant to purchase new lights or improve current lights. 	Neighborhood Matching Grants provides grant funding to improve lighting and make your community safer Contact Atalie Zimmerman at azimmerman@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-4594 or go to the Neighborhood Matching Grant website for more information http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/pages/default.aspx
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) from Duke Energy 	Request free CFL's from Duke Energy http://www.duke-energy.com/freecfls/ or call 1-800-943-7585.
Project # 2 Reduced on street parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Charlotte Department of Transportation for advice 	CDOT can make recommendations to help you improve/reduce street parking in your neighborhood http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Code Enforcement to reduce on street parking 	City of Charlotte Code Enforcement will work with your neighborhood to address street parking http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/CodeEnforcement/Pages/default.aspx
Project #3 Community block parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find resources to fund block party and seek sponsorship from area businesses 	Neighborhood Matching Grants can provide funding to host a community block party (see above contact information) http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communityengagement/nmg/Pages/default.aspx?NotFoundURL=http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/communitycommerce/Pages/NMG.aspx&Referrer=
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with City to ensure proper licenses/approvals are obtained for event 	Charlotte Department of Transportation for street closure requests http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx CMPD for sound permits http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CMPD/Pages/default.aspx
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite council representative to the event 	Contact City Council representative and invite he/she to the event http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/CityCouncil/MeettheCouncil/Pages/home.aspx

