



NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT



August 20, 2022

Vernedale Neighborhood Association

Hosted by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services

Vernedale Neighborhood Association

2022 Board Retreat

Background

On Saturday, August 20, 2022, members of the **Vernedale Neighborhood Association** 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:

- Nilda Navedo
- Kathryn Turner
- Josh Miller

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">• Achieved tangible goals from last year's Neighborhood Board Retreat• Community officer shared that they have been named a safe neighborhood• Mature tree canopy despite neighborhood density• Proximity to nearby Park• Diversity (majority minority – a lot of different languages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language access – make information surrounding events accessible to diverse neighbors and community• Identify a trusted person to better incorporate their cultures into our communities• Determine a way to better tell their stories to allow for them to invite people to their HOA meetings• Determine insurance requirements and whether the HOA needs to become a 501c3 – risk management• Become more involved with nearby schools to support and improve test scores• Engage with kids to better support/reach their parents

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"> • Participation from smaller communities into the larger community which is done by building trust • Knocking on doors and meeting new neighbors (done previously, but didn’t have language access) • Engage communities by hosting events without being held personally liable as HOA members • Create more opportunities for youth engagement – speaks to how neighborhood can gain trust with parents • Introduce mentoring/youth employment program to youth in neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education among neighbors regarding neighborhood involvement • More attendance (including greater diversity) of neighbors to HOA meetings • Something in place to prevent personal liability

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: HOA members not held personally liable for events/programming

Desired Result: Engage community (worry-free)

Aspiration 2: Culturally inclusive engagement with community members

Desired Result: Culturally diverse participation at meetings

Aspiration 3: Create an action plan for engaging with Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation

Desired Result: Improved access to community park

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

2022 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Verne Dale Neighborhood Association

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

1

HOA members not held personally liable for events/programming

2

Culturally inclusive engagement with community members

3

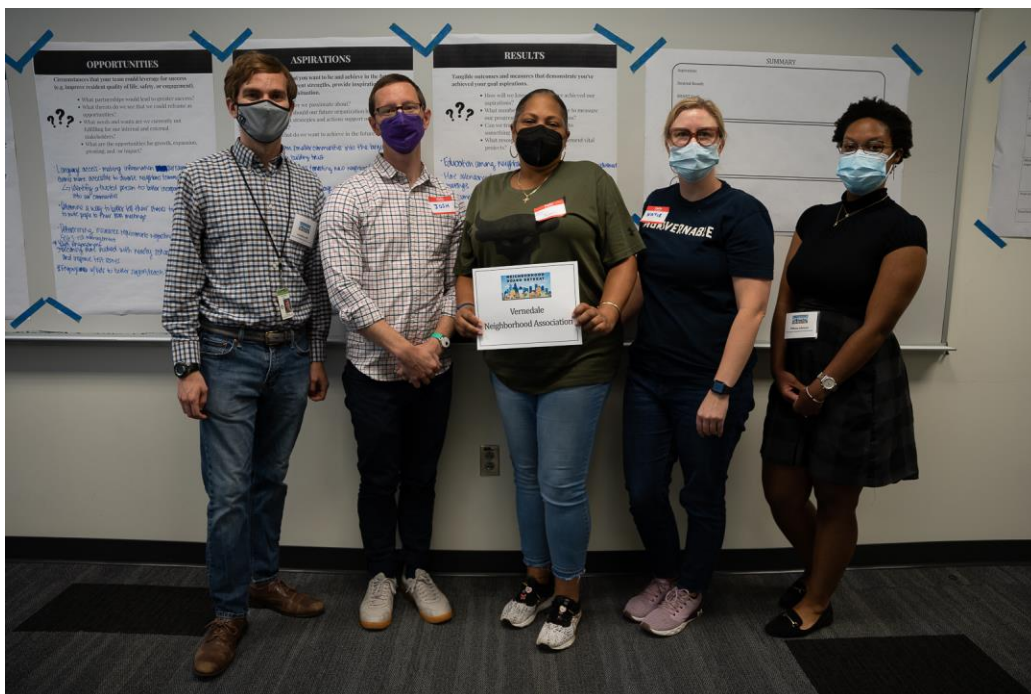
Create an action plan for Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation engagement

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

Within 3-5 months, have the board meet and finalize a way/option for handling liability issues

Within 12 months, create and distribute a print/digital flyer in two languages that directs neighbors to the website and HOA meetings

Within 12 months, have an agreed upon list of improvements that the neighborhood would like to see in the community park



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>Board Organization:</i> Within 3-5 months, have the board meet and finalize a way/option for handling liability issues Lead(s): Board and committee chairs</p>	<p>Community Engagement Training on Demand -Should your Neighborhood Seek Tax-Exempt Status from the IRS?</p>
<p><i>Community Engagement:</i> Within 12 months, create and distribute a print/digital flyer in two languages that directs neighbors to the website and HOA meetings</p> <p>Steps: 1) Finalize card content 2) Publish website/webpage (President of association welcoming new members, list amenities (and their location), move in checklist (for homeowners/ new neighbors)) 3) Print & Distribution</p> <p>Action Team - Nilda & Katie Point Person - Nilda</p>	
<p><i>Neighborhood Improvements:</i> Within 12 months, have an agreed upon list of improvements that they would like to see in the community park (can be done through a survey)</p> <p>Steps: 1) Touch base with Park & Rec to get their calendar/timeline 2) Get input from community meeting to see if people want to form an ad-hoc committee about this topic 3) Determine top five improvements that are agree upon by neighborhood association and present that to Mecklenburg County Parks & Rec.</p> <p>Action Team: Ad Hoc Committee Point Person: Josh</p>	

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

Tiffany Johnson, Service area Community Engagement Liaison	Kim Barnes, Service Area Community Engagement Manager
tiffany.johnson@charlottenc.gov (704-336-1258)	kim.barnes@charlottenc.gov (704-336-8408)

