



NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT



July 27, 2021

Vernedale Neighborhood Association

Hosted online by City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services

Vernedale Neighborhood Association

2021 Board Retreat

Background

On Tuesday, July 27, 2021, members of the Vernedale Neighborhood Association participated in the virtual Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte online. The following board members and/or community members participated in the retreat:

- Fergus Horner
- Hilary Gettinger
- Kathryn Turner
- Josh Miller
- Nilda Navedo

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 match credit toward a Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) to help execute one of the projects we identified.

To receive this credit, we'll submit a copy of the Developing Your Ideas worksheet with our NMG request. This credit will expire following the March 1, 2023 NMG application deadline.

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
- SWOT Analysis
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- Idea Development – Time for participants for develop an action plan for goal achievement

SWOT Analysis

We began our day with group discussion using the SWOT Analysis framework. 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

Our discussion helped us to find commonalities in our conversations.

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lots of independent small business owners in the community• Nice park• Diverse community• Young professionals are moving into the community• Affordable homes• Location (proximity to uptown and restaurants)• Possible new park	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No secular location to meet• Most residents don't know the park exists• No direct access to the park• Aging community who are increasingly unable to maintain property upkeep• Upkeep of the appearance of the community• Language barrier with the large Asian population
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership with the Hindu Center• Business social or business show and tell• Harness the young professionals in the community	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bringing all the micro communities together• The unknown of the Eastland Mall development• Socio-economic issues• Failing public schools

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. This activity led us to the following priorities/action items being identified as important within our community:

- Dog park
- Wheelchair accessible path to the park
- Business directory
- Movie in the park with Spanish subtitles
- Community garden
- Set up a retreat for the LatinX community
- Sign toppers
- Beautification projects
- Website to tell the community story
- Business membership to raise funds
- Outdoor engagement event

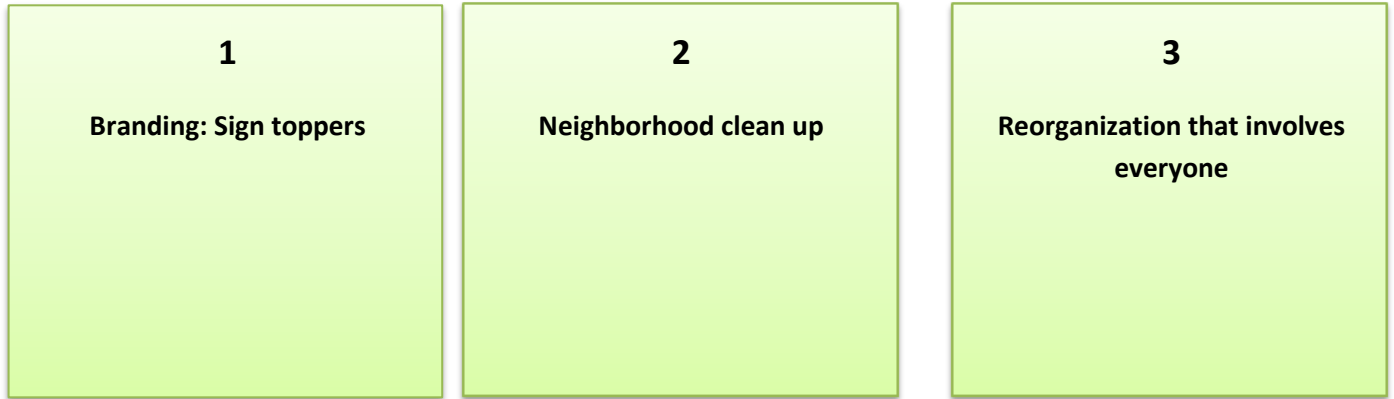
The three priorities receiving the most votes are the strategic priorities that are most important for us to begin working on to achieve our vision. Within these three categories, there were three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities.

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

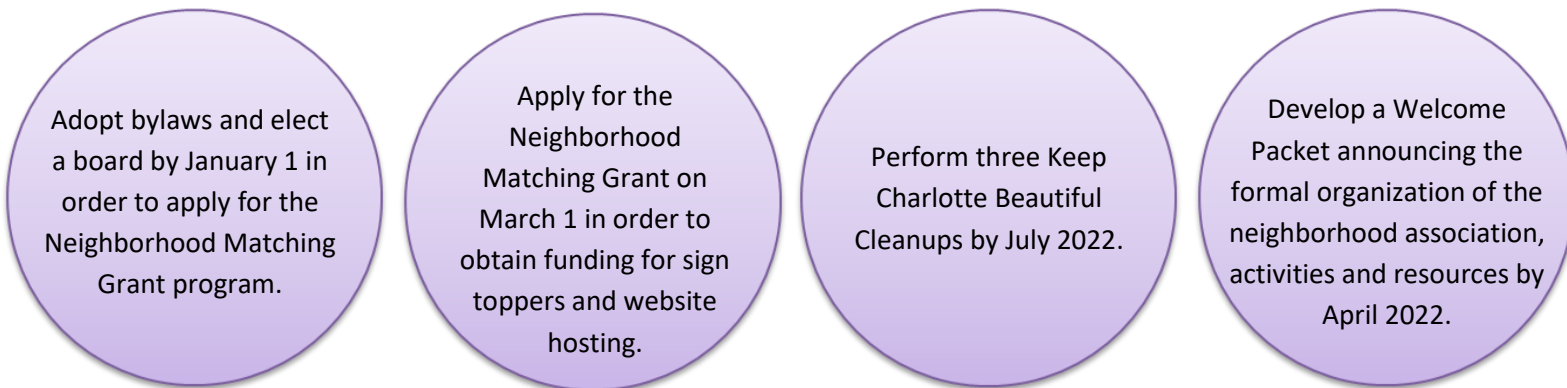
2021 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

Vernedale Neighborhood Association

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



IN 2021-2022, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:



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 Categories of Interest
Adopt bylaws and elect a board by January 1 in order to apply for the Neighborhood Matching Grant program.	Board Organization Training on Demand Neighborhood Training Resources
Apply for the Neighborhood Matching Grant on March 1 in order to obtain funding for sign toppers and website hosting.	Branding; Communication Neighborhood Matching Grant Program
Perform three Keep Charlotte Beautiful Cleanups by July 2022.	Beautification Keep Charlotte Beautiful
Develop a Welcome Packet announcing the formal organization of the neighborhood association, activities and resources by April 2022.	Communication Neighborhood Training Resources

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

Faith Estrada, Service Area Community Engagement Liaison	Kim Barnes, Service Area Community Engagement Manager
Faith.Estrada@charlottenc.gov or 704-353-1879	Kim.Barnes@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-8408