



**Recap: December 16, 2014
Charlotte Green Team Meeting
The Ritz-Carlton**

““Holiday Green: Business or Personal, Decorating & Entertaining in a Green, Sustainable Way.””

What a venue; the fully decked-out Ritz-Carlton in all its holiday glory! Those in attendance were treated to great sweets by the chef, and one of the best, most informative meetings dealing with “Holiday Green” we’ve seen.

Tom Murray, CEO of CRVA and co-chair of the Green Team kicked off the meeting by welcoming everyone. He then turned the meeting over to Heidi Nowak, the Director of Sales & Marketing for The Ritz-Carlton, who added her welcome. She then went into describing many of the different decorations throughout the hotel; each with its own place in the hotel; and each with its own theme.

Then we dove right into the panel discussion on “green holiday decorating and entertaining.” The panel started with Barbara Green, owner of Sensibly Chic Designs for Life. She talked about new, green, sustainable trends in decorating, whether it be for business or residential, including decorating for holiday events. There is so much going on, from LEED lights, to artificial trees from recycled materials, it’s hard to keep up; but she said “ask” and you’ll find just about everything you want and need out there today in the marketplace.

Next was Rebecca Stoddard, owner of Shade of Green Events, who covered many of the green, sustainable things that can go into planning a holiday event, again, whether personal or business. She covered everything from selecting foods that are locally sourced, to recycling after the party. She noted that even gift-giving can tie-in, such as not always giving a wrapped present, but giving a donation in someone’s name to a worthy organization.

Nicholas Crawford with Mecklenburg Solid Waste was there to talk about proper clean-up afterward, and even thinking ahead about decorations, packages and packing materials that you won’t have to throw away, if you don’t buy some of them in advance. Bubble-wrap is one big culprit that ends up in solid waste, and yet it’s so easy to substitute other biodegradable materials that afford just as much protection. Unfortunately too many people receive gifts shipped to them from friends or mail-order companies that come in bubble-wrap and they just dump it into their normal residential garbage.

Rob Kinniburgh, Deputy Chief of the Charlotte Fire Department wrapped up the panel presentation and talked about “safety first.” As he jokingly said, *“it’s just not Christmas without*

a visit from the Charlotte Fire Department.” One of the points he made was about live trees in commercial or business offices; there are ordinances requiring these trees to be sprayed with a specific kind of fire-retardant; but when CFD comes in to inspect, while the tree may have been treated, the container with all of the specifications about it has been thrown away and the business can’t prove that it meets code.

There was a lot of good dialogue, with everyone adding other insights and ideas. There was also a raffle for three bottles of eggnog.

The Charlotte Green Team is co-sponsored by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) and the Charlotte Area Hotel Association (CAHA)

