



AHNA

HARTFORD
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Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association A Neighborhood NRZ

AHNA General Meeting (Virtual – Zoom & Phone) Minutes May 4, 2020

Board Members;
Jackie McKinney
Chair
Edward Edgaro
Vice Chair
Nancy Rion
Secretary
Sue Tebolt
Treasurer
Janice Castle
Mayor's Office
Georges Annan-Kingsley
Michael Barr
Louisa Barton
Duguay
Wayne Benjamin
Jennifer Cassidy
Rev. Mia Douglas
Esther Gonzalez-Torres
Ken Johnson
Marian Leist
Yvonne Mathews
Ellen Mathis
Mervin Mathurin
Michelle McFarland
Janine McMahon

Board Members Present: Jackie McKinney, Nancy Rion, Susan Tebolt, Jennifer Cassidy, Paul O'Mara, Esther Gonzalez-Torres, Michelle McFarland, Edward Edgaro, Janine McMahon, Marian Leist, Georges Annan-Kingsley, Wayne Benjamin, Michael Barr, Janice Castle

Board Members Absent: Louisa Baron Duguay, Yvonne Mathews, Kolsie Mathis, Mervin Mathurin, Ken Johnson

AHNA Staff and Members Present: David MacDonald, Jesus Lopez, Andrene Bent-Jarvis, Barbara Robbins, Cathy Zeiner, Catherine Saur, Katherine Anne Simcic, Lynn Johnson, Bernie Michel

Visitors: Claire Bergin, Patrick Doyle, Marian Griffin, Karen Taylor, Annette Hardrew, Sue Carey, Frank Williams, Sweets Wilson, Hector Cruz, Sarah Morin, Patrick McMahon, Luke Bronin

The meeting was called to order by Jackie McKinney at 6:05. Paul read the AHNA mission statement. About 35 people attended on zoom or the phone. Jackie thanked David for his leadership during her recent hospitalizations.

Executive Director Remarks: For the last 6 weeks of sheltering in place because of Covid 19, David has primarily been working on grant writing. Although the Beautification Grants have been postponed till next spring, AHNA is working on two Love Your Block Grants, due June 5, and a Civic Engagement proposal with Asylum Hill Family Center to the HPG for \$30,000. Thanks to the help from Webster Bank, AHNA received \$7,200 from the Paycheck Protection Program. The Communications Committee and the Development Committee have both met twice since the last meeting.

Finance Report: David reported the balance to date is \$16,973 of which \$1500 is restricted. AHNA received \$5000 from the Hartford and \$10,000 from Asylum Hill Congregational Church. AHNA anticipates some profit from the Guidebook after expenses are finalized.

Police Department Report: Asylum Hill's CSO, Sid Palmieri, (cell number 959-282-5138) was unable to attend the meeting.

Report from the City: Janice Castle share information about Covid19: to date, 1174 residents have tested positive in Hartford County; 64 cases so far in Asylum Hill, second highest neighborhood in Hartford. She described some of the city's responses:

- schedules free rides for residents with appointments to be tested for the virus
- participates with the United Way in distributing \$200 gift cards to resident families
- follows up on complaints about lack of social distancing
- small business grants are available – at www.capitalforchange.org/grant
- loan programs are at www.hedcoinc.com/hedco-loan-programs

In other news, Janice also announced

- a new city website: www.beta.hartfordct.gov/home
- Leaf collections will finish this week
- The spring/summer booklet will be available soon
- May 28 – there will be a Zoning 101 webinar
- Census – residents are encouraged to complete the hard copy, or on line, or by phone

- Spotlight on Hartford Heroes: send nominations to Janice

Fire Department Report: Lt. Jesus Lopez, (860-757-4523), Special Services Unit, reviewed the March statistics, noting that there has been less activity recently. He noted that the Fire Marshall can be contacted at 860-757-4530. In a response to a question about trends in Asylum Hill, Jesus and Janice responded that the data is all on the website, but the city does not have an analyst to analyze the data. The city will try to do more in this area.

Guest, Mayor Luke Bronin: The Mayor said that the Covid19 numbers are decreasing, but the reason is social distancing. He asked for help from residents to encourage social distancing. They are finally able to do more testing. Anyone who suspects they might have the virus should call the Hartford Hospital hotline: 860-972-8100. If they get an appointment, residents can call 311 for transportation to get the test.

Food insecurity - school lunches are being distributed; food share and food pantries are all trying to help residents. Economic challenges - the federal paycheck program, unemployment checks and the federal stimulus are all helping some. Hartford has received \$1 million to begin to help small businesses.

The Mayor said the near future is a question mark. He thinks it's unlikely that the schools will reopen this year. He doubts that there will be any large scale gatherings this summer, and that the Yardgoats probably will not play. Some restaurants may open with seating outside, possibly expanding into parking lots. There is no way to know the financial impact on the city's budget; he's hopeful the federal government will help.

Most homeless folks are housed in hotels with shelter staff there to help them. FEMA has authorized funding through June 1. Six homeless persons have Covid19 and are sheltered at the Armory. The city is working to get testing for all homeless folks. Journey Home is working to anticipate more and new homeless persons who may not be paying rent and building up debt. The mayor encouraged everyone to pay the rent on time if possible.

Because the Hartford Public Library is closed, they are trying to provide hot spots around the city for residents to use Wi-Fi. In response to a question about the timing of a decision to ease the residency requirements for city department heads, the mayor said the proposal is now before the City Council. He stated his support for the proposal, saying that Hartford is the only city in the state with such rigid requirements for so many lower level officials. He fears losing some very talented individuals if the requirements are not eased.

Review of Minutes: The March General Meeting minutes review was postponed.

Voices of our Neighborhood:

- Planting will begin in May for the Pollinator Gardens even though the grant proposal deadline was moved to June. A pollinator webinar will be May 18 at 7 PM.
- AHNA gave conditional approval to landscaping plans for ST. Joseph Cathedral. The planned walk through is on hold.
- Shout out to police who have been responding quickly to noise and distancing concerns
- Bernie requested help with ideas for the newsletter

Announcements:

- Catholic Charities is offering a virtual census party next week

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00.