

From the Executive Director
David MacDonald

*Open Letter to the Mayor and City Council, ^[11] Civilian Oversight of the Hartford Police
Department*

Mayor Bronin and City Councilpersons,


We write to express our strong support for those voices calling for greater transparency and accountability by strengthening civilian oversight of the Hartford Police Department. As you know, the composition of Asylum Hill includes 75% Black and Hispanic residents and is predominantly low-income, making police misconduct an issue which disproportionately threatens our quality of life.

AHNA has been working since early June to gather facts and determine the state of civilian oversight of policing in Hartford, including recently hosting a panel discussion with experts on the topic. Based on the discussion and hours of research by our members we have been troubled to learn that:

- the Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB) met only five (5) out of twelve (12) required meetings in 2018 and 2019, as of today has not met since January of this year;
- the board is often unable to achieve the required quorum of five (5) commissioners due to unfilled vacancies and lack of alternates, which has resulted in a large backlog of cases and failure to complete case reviews within the ninety (90) days set out in Ch. 2, Article V, Division 5, Sec. 2-196.13 of the Hartford Municipal Code;
- the board has not been informed by the Chief of Police annually of the final dispositions of complaints and disciplinary actions taken, as is required by CPRB by-laws, for several years;
- automatic resignation for lack of attendance has not been observed, and appointments to fill unexpired terms have not been made by your office within the forty-five (45) days required by municipal code;^[11]_{SEP}
- there appears to be undue political influence on the board's functioning via the appointment of DTC members and other party operatives, rather than appointments made "based on...experience and expertise in fields relevant to the charge" of the board, as code requires.

AHNA began 23 years ago as the Asylum Hill Problem Solving Committee with a Justice Department grant and a mission of improving communications between the community and police. We have a long history of working to provide a public forum for neighborhood input and stand ready to once again partner with the mayor, council, and other stakeholders to address the issues that activists and protestors have brought to the forefront

of our public discussion. We call on the mayor and city council to listen to the voices of residents and to take the necessary steps to make the CPRB a functioning body, which instills public trust in our police through real civilian oversight.

Sincerely,  Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association Adopted 6/22/2020 Jacqueline D. McKinney, Chair David MacDonald, Executive Director