

Exploring Asylum Hill – A Yearend Review



In many ways, 2021 was a year of partnerships and a year of planning. Despite 9 months of quarantines, sheltering in place, Zoom meetings and working from home, AHNA, with the help of our partners was able to take on several large projects with remarkable success. Following up on The Hartford's needs assessment survey, AHNA began a strategic planning process for Asylum Hill for the next 10 years. Areas of concern were identified and task forces were created to research and plan ways to address them. Despite remote meetings continuing to be the norm, progress continued in all eight areas.

As vaccines became generally available, many AHNA members got them, locally from Saint Francis Hospital, Wheeler Clinic and Malta House of Care as well as the City of Hartford Health Dept.

As access to vaccines became less of an issue, willingness to be vaccinated became the next challenge. AHNA helped to promote availability and work with our non-profit partners to host vaccine drives at locations across the neighborhood.

At a hastily organized drive in May, AHNA helped get the word out that both vaccines would be available on a Saturday at Wheeler Clinic and that income tax filing assistance would be available by Legal Aid volunteers as well to allow many Asylum Hill residents to qualify for Federal assistance that was only available to citizens who had filed.

The following week, The Hartford and NINA held a press event at 847 Asylum to announce that The Hartford would be committing \$1,000,000. to homeownership in Asylum Hill beginning with the Plimpton house that South Park Inn was willing to sell to be renovated into homeownership. This sum is expected to renovate more than 20 historic homes into homeownership opportunities.

Then in August, 85 Sigourney St, the former Lincoln Culinary Institute found a new owner after being vacant for more than four years.

While the pandemic has been challenging to be sure, Asylum Hill has seen a good number of successes, most recently, the 200' mural at the 224 EcoSpace on Farmington Ave. and more are in the works. To see even more, go to <https://www.asylumhill.org/strategic-plan.html> and scroll to the videos.