

The Mansions on Asylum Avenue



If you've been down Asylum Ave lately you are certain to notice a lot of construction work going on between Asylum Hill Congregational Church and Asylum Avenue Baptist Church, most specifically the three century old grand homes that some may remember as the long time home of the Hartford Conservatory and others may remember as the property of Jumoke Academy. A lot has taken place since either of these two institutions were in control of them, but suffice it to say they have been owned by Chrysalis Center for the past two years and they are on their way to becoming yet another restricted housing development, low to moderate income apartments in a neighborhood with a lot of apartments so restricted.

To say what happened will take a lot more time and space than we have here, but we'll begin and continue each month until we can explore what happened, good and bad, and learn as many lessons as possible.

The development called Clover Gardens, which encompasses 834, 846 and 852 Asylum Ave as well as 1 Huntington St. began when Chrysalis Center Real Estate Corp purchased the properties in August and December of 2017. It was days later that they began to get pushback from the City and they requested a letter of recommendation from AHNA for the project. In quick succession, Maryellen Shuckerow, then the Chief Community Relations Officer at Chrysalis, appeared at the January 8th 2018 meeting of AHNA only to be greeted with a lot of unexpected resistance, and instead of the letter of recommendation Chrysalis was seeking, they got a copy of the letter from AHNA to Evonne Klein, then Commissioner of CT Department of Housing requesting that the project be halted.

Within weeks an article appeared in the Hartford Courant that the CT Dept. of Housing was withholding funding. It also appeared in the NY Daily News and the Chicago Tribune, and can be found at <https://bit.ly/37Ti7SL>

All of this took place against the backdrop of AHNA's 20th Anniversary Gala Celebration.

For the next six months or so AHNA and Chrysalis met and communicated with the hope of finding a way to salvage an unfortunate situation. We'll pick up there as we continue this effort to learn and make progress.

For more photos of the buildings, especially the interiors, involved go to:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/QfNmHKjczu9PadDfA>