



From the AHNA Chair

I am very excited about being the new Chair of AHNA. I live at Artspace Hartford, which is an Artist Community. I have been there since it opened over 20 years ago. I love Asylum Hill with its two magnificent avenues, Farmington and Asylum and its large number of restored old Victorian homes. It's a neighborhood with three major corporations, the Aetna, Hartford Insurance Company and St. Francis Hospital that began in Hartford in the 1800's and still maintain their headquarters here. We also have the Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe historic houses, and Hartford High School, the second oldest high school in the country.

AHNA is one of the largest and most active NRZ's (Neighborhood Revitalization Zones) in the city. Thanks to

the work of my predecessors AHNA has eliminated most of our blighted properties, spruced up Sigourney Park and supported organizations that have built or restored our housing stock, which encourages homeownership in the neighborhood. We also worked with the administrators and parents at West Middle School to complete a long overdue restoration of the school, and these are just a few of our major accomplishments.

However, there is still a lot to do in our beloved neighborhood. There is a developer who now owns the old Aetna Diner and has begun the restoration process, so soon we will again have a restaurant in our neighborhood. Public safety and quality of life issues are very important to each and every one of us in the neighborhood and we have an active committee working on those issues. This facilitates AHNA being a great place to live and work.

Transportation and economic development are also key issues for AHNA. Farmington Ave and Asylum Ave are major thoroughfares in our city, which makes us the western gateway in and out of downtown. We have to constantly be vigilant to traffic issues particularly during rush hour that impact our quality of life.

The biggest pending project for us is the rebuilding of the I-84 viaducts and the relocation of the railroad station to the Broad St area. The State has done some preliminary concept and design work on these projects but it is important that we remain vigilant and provide input to the project because it will have significant impact on land use and how traffic will flow onto our local streets. There is also an opportunity to expand the economic development in the neighborhood. This is a long term 10 plus year project and will be a large part of our legacy to the next generation.

I am a Hartford native. I grew up in Bowles Park and attended Mark Twain Elementary School and Weaver High School. I have a passion for quality of life and economic development efforts as the key to making my home town a great city. The future is bright for Hartford and Asylum Hill even with our current financial difficulties.

I look forward to working with the AHNA Board, our new Executive Director David MacDonald, the general membership and individual residences and businesses to continue to enhance our neighborhood. Asylum Hill is and will be a great place to live and work.