

From the Executive Director

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AHNA Embarks on Neighborhood Strategic Planning

AHNA is beginning the new year with recently updated bylaws and a busy agenda for 2021. The Farmington Avenue Alliance has been resurrected and will work to ensure the needed streetscape improvements to Farmington Avenue are completed from the Trident all the way to the West Hartford border. AHNA has also decided it's time to update the Neighborhood Strategic Plan, which was last completed in 2009.

The Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association's biggest project in 2021 will be to update the Neighborhood Strategic Plan. AHNA held a Board of Director's retreat on January 30 and decided on the process to use to update the plan and respond to the changes that have happened since 2009, such as the I-84 project. The AHNA Board established a Steering Committee and 8 Task Forces that will develop recommendations on their topics. The chairs of the Task Forces will serve on the Steering Committee along with representatives from stakeholders and residents in Asylum Hill. The Steering Committee will recommend the Strategic Plan to the AHNA Board and membership. The Task Forces that have been established include Employment, Public Safety, Economic Development, Human Services, Arts and Culture, Environment (Green), Youth Enrichment and Education, and Housing, Historic Preservation and Blight Remediation. The Steering Committee will be majority Asylum Hill residents.

The Hartford recently conducted a survey of Asylum Hill that identified 3 top priorities of the neighborhood as employment/jobs, housing/homelessness, and public safety. AHNA looks forward to partnering with the Hartford to incorporate these priorities into AHNA's update of our Neighborhood Strategic Plan, as well as identifying potential projects to address the priorities.

Watch for emails in March to sign up for any of the Task Forces. Task Forces will bring forward collaborative solutions to our neighborhood challenges to the Steering Committee. The Task Force meetings will be held via Zoom.

In additional AHNA news, AHNA acknowledged and honored the native land that Asylum Hill sits on at our February General Meeting. This statement will be read at the beginning of each General Meeting. The statement is: "We acknowledge and honor that Asylum Hill is on the traditional lands of the Pogonook, Sicoag, Tunxis and Wangunk tribes." These were all Algonquin speaking tribes of the CT river area. In countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and among tribal nations in the U.S., it is commonplace, even policy, to open events and gatherings by acknowledging the traditional Indigenous inhabitants of that land. While some individuals, and cultural and educational institutions in the United States have adopted this custom, the majority have not. #HonorNativeLand is a national movement to change this and AHNA supports honoring Native Lands.