



AHNA

HARTFORD
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Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association A Neighborhood NRZ

AHNA Annual Meeting (Virtual – Zoom & Phone) Minutes – January 4, 2021

Board Members;

Jackie McKinney

Chairperson

Edward Edgaro

Vice Chairperson

Nancy Rion

Secretary

Susan Tebolt

Treasurer

Janice Castle

Mayor's Office

Georges Annan-

Kingsley

Michael Barr

Louisa Barton

Duguay

Wayne Benjamin

Jennifer Cassidy

Rev. Mia Douglas

Esther Gonzalez-

Forres

Ken Johnson

Lynn Johnson

Marian Leist

Elender Mathis

Mervin Mathurin

Yvonne Matthews

Michelle McFarland

Janine McMahon

Paul O'Mara

Executive Director

David MacDonald

Board Members Present: Jackie McKinney, Nancy Rion, Paul O'Mara, Marian Leist, Ken Johnson, Esther Gonzalez-Torres, Louisa Barton Duguay, Wayne Benjamin, Janine McMahon, Michael Barr, Michelle McFarland, Lynn Johnson, Georges Annan-Kingsley

Board Members Absent: Mervin Mathurin, Susan Tebolt (excused), Edward Edgaro (excused), Kolsie Mathis, Yvonne Matthews

AHNA Staff and Members Present: David MacDonald, Bernie Michel, Cid Palmieri, Jesus Lopez, Andrene Bent-Jarvis, Katherine Anne Simcic, Sue Carey, Cathy Zeiner, Sarah Morin, Barbara Robbins, Sarah Adanti, Mary Falvey, Karen Taylor, David Corrigan

Visitors: Alexis Dwyer, Arnel Hines, Autumn Florek, John Gale, U Lloyd, Traa Mitchell, Doug Ovian, Nichelle Hudson, Ashley Stewart, Thulani Davis, Laura Suroviak, Matt Ritter

The meeting was called to order by Jackie McKinney at 6:15. About 35 people introduced themselves on zoom or the phone. David read the AHNA Mission.

Executive Director Report: David noted recent accomplishments including a new mural on Marshall St and painting at Farmington Ave plaza, 6 pollinator gardens, and updated AHNA by-laws. Fundraising for 2020 was over \$28,000. In 2021, AHNA is eager to update the neighborhood Strategic Plan. The Steering Committee, that will determine the taskforces and solicit input from AHNA Committees and residents, will be announced soon.

Treasurer's Report: David shared the financial report. The balance at the end of December was \$6,894. David noted December income was \$3,516 and expenses (payroll and mural expenses) were \$6,968. David will send out a written report.

Police Department Report: Asylum Hill's CSO, Sid Palmieri, (palmc002@hartford.gov) reported that he is now working nights as are many other officers in an attempt to curb vehicle and building break-ins occurring at night. Sid is also working with store owners about standing complaints. The police are investigating many reports of stolen packages.

Fire Department Report: Lt. Jesus Lopez, (860-757-4523), Special Services Unit reported that as of today, there have been 10,543 cases of COVID in Hartford. Residents donated over 2000 toys for children.

Report from the City: Andrene reported that there were 59 calls to 311 – many concerning pot holes, and snow removal concerns. All were addressed. Christmas trees will be picked up from curbs until February. Payment of taxes has been extended to April 1. Covid testing will continue into 2021. Wooden hearts are available to residents mourning Covid victims.

814 Asylum Ave., Hartford 06105

Review of Minutes: The December General Meeting minutes were approved.

Update on the 2021 Legislative Session: Speaker-elect Rep. Matt Ritter shared his enthusiasm for the legislative session that begins tomorrow. He announced that Rev. Erica Thompson from Asylum Hill Congregational Church will open the session and will be the House Chaplain. He encouraged residents to call or email him with any concerns at any time.

- In response to a question about funding for the Farmington Ave Streetscape, he encouraged AHNA to send a request to the Bond Commission.
- In a response to concerns about the high charges of phone calls for prisoners, Matt was confident that legislation would pass to reduce the charges this year. He also believes this will be addressed in the Governor's budget.
- In response to the need for funding the renovation of the Comet, Matt encouraged Wayne to work with DECD.
- In response to an interest in declaring racism as a public health crisis, Matt said that the state must subsidize health care because the exchanges are not working for families. He also mentioned that the one dose COVID vaccine produced by Johnson and Johnson, if approved in January, will be widely available (in contrast to currently available vaccines).
- David Ovian stated that the Community Court provides safe access to public defenders.

Hartford Planning Department Update: Autumn Florek (autumn.florek@hartford.gov) shared a list of recently approved applications in Asylum Hill. Autumn also noted pending applications at 167 Collins and 116 Farmington. Autumn updated progress on Union Station, reporting that contractors have been chosen to analyze the data. It could be 2-3 years before they make recommendations. Autumn also reported that Hfddmobility.com is requesting comments; the townhouses at 287 Farmington have been declared blighted; slow street markings will be made this spring on Ashley St.

Discussion regarding Honoring the Native Land: Lynn Johnson recommended that a statement acknowledging that Asylum Hill is on native lands, be read at the beginning of each AHNA meeting. Following discussion, Wayne agreed to draft a brief statement. Suggestions were made to honor our native history with a guest speaker in October, to include the statement and background history on the AHNA website and future materials, and to consider painting a mural in Asylum Hill depicting the history.

Voices of the Neighborhood:

- Michelle McFarland reminded residents that the Hartford Public Library has many virtual activities available for the public
- Michael Barr shared his website, Michael-Barr.com which includes a map that shows building permit requests – updated daily
- John Gale encouraged residents to contact Council members and the Mayor about the proposed ordinance to increase parking lot registration fees.
- Nancy encouraged residents to bring food to the Laurel St food pantry and children's books to the Little Free Library on S. Marshall St.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.