



# AHNA



## Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association A Neighborhood NRZ

### AHNA General Meeting (Virtual – Zoom & Phone) Minutes – September 13, 2021

**Board Members Present:** Jackie McKinney, Nancy Rion, Paul O'Mara, Louisa Barton Duguay, Wayne Benjamin, Marian Leist, Lynn Johnson, Georges Annan-Kingsley, Michelle McFarland

**Board Members Absent:** Mervin Mathurin, Kolsie Mathis, Janine McMahon Esther Gonzalez-Torres (excused), Ken Johnson (excused)

**AHNA Staff, City Representatives and Members Present:** David MacDonald, Bernie Michel, Cid Palmieri, Police Chief Jason Thody, Lt. Rebecca O'Shea, Andrene Bent-Jarvis, Doug Ovian, Sarah Adanti, Claire Bergin, Sue Carey, Ted Carroll, David Corrigan, Barbara Morton, Barbara Robbins, Katherine Anne Simcic, Lynn Webber, Cathy Zeiner

**Visitors:** Carolyn Austin, Shanica Bynoe, Emmanuella Hart, Debi Martin, John McCormack, Maxine Nugent, Sonsearae Sawyer, Kiera Steele, Marty Spitzer

The meeting was called to order by Jackie McKinney at 6:15. Over 35 people introduced themselves on zoom or the phone. Paul read the AHNA Mission and an acknowledgement that Asylum Hill is located on native lands.

**Executive Director's Report:** David gave an update on Strategic Planning: all Taskforces have drafted plans; the Steering Committee will finalize a draft on Sept 22. The AHNA Community Fundraising Breakfast will be Nov. 17 with a goal of raising \$30,000. The S. Marshall St. Block Party was successful with over 400 residents attending. The 85 Sigourney building was sold. The new owner is 85 Sigourney LLC from Brooklyn NY

**Treasurer's Report:** Louisa reported income

\$2,500 – Webster Bank

\$1,200 – donations

Sept 13 operating balance

\$8,154

Members, residents and visitors were encouraged to donate to AHNA.

Concern was expressed for Louisa who went to Canada to visit her mother and was not allowed to return to the US because of visa status.

### REPORTS FROM THE CITY:

- **CITY Update:** Andrene encouraged residents to call 311 for fuel aid. Last month there were 70 calls to 311 from Asylum Hill. All issues were addressed. Golf days are free on Sept. 17 and 18. Love Hartford Week is Oct 19-23.
- **Police Department Report:** Asylum Hill's CSO, Cid Palmieri, ([palmc002@hartford.gov](mailto:palmc002@hartford.gov)) reported he is now working at some schools and spending time at Sigourney Park. He is working with Officer Barrett with the homeless, especially those who hang out at Farmington and Laurel. He reported 16 incidents of larceny. He encouraged residents to remove valuables from their cars. Lt. O'Shea reported successes in reducing car break-ins.
- **Fire Department Report:** Lt. Jesus Lopez, (860-757-4523), Special Services Unit was not present.
- **Hartford Planning Department Update:** Paul Bengston was not present.
- **Community Court Report:** Doug Ovian ([douglas.ovian@jud.ct.gov](mailto:douglas.ovian@jud.ct.gov)) reported that the Community Court is extremely busy. Community Service has begun. The Greater Hartford

Harm Reduction van offers information and help for those with drug challenges. COVID vaccines are available on Washington St.

**Committee Reports:**

- **Economic Development:** Comet Diner is now on the National Park Preservation list. Wayne shared a concern about a conflict regarding parking on the side of the Comet. Conversations are beginning about popups on Farmington Ave.
- **Green Committee:** the Energy Fair Festival will be Oct. 16 from 1-5. Barbara reported that new composters have been placed at Niles Garden and Trinity Church and hopefully at West Middle School.
- **Nominations and Governance Committee:** The Committee is preparing a slate of candidates for the AHNA Board to be presented at the October 4 meeting. Interested persons should contact David or Bernie if interested.

**Emergency Relief Fund:** Lynn Webber from the Village announced the establishment of an Emergency Relief Fund just for Asylum Hill residents that provides up to \$3000 for families to use for rent, security deposits, unpaid bills, etc. She will send out the 2 page application to members and encouraged folks to share.

**Police Chief Jason Thody:** Chief Thody responded to questions posed previously by the Public Safety Taskforce.

- Sigourney Park – Friends of Sigourney Park could be reconstituted and include a police officer. Thody suggested educating officers in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design to deal with lighting, trash, bench placement etc.
- Request for increased police presence: this is a challenge because police are leaving Hartford for better salaries and benefits. He encouraged ‘Neighborhood Watches’ to help with prevention and the need for residents to note and report problems. He is trying to streamline the application process to recruit more police and more diversity. He noted the current pipeline with the Explorer Program, PAL and Cadets.
- Speeding: traffic calming and speed tables work.
- Homeless: Officer Barrett is assisting the homeless population in Asylum Hill
- Community Court: has a new judge, Michael Wu who will be helpful
- Cameras: used to solve crime – not prevent crime. There are 1100 cameras in Hartford. City wide WIFI will help with better feed. Temporary portable cameras are available for specific problems.
- Car Burglaries: lock wheels, keep cars clean inside, park under street lights to deter crime

**Buyer for 85 Sigourney St:** John McCormick introduced Marty Spitzer from NY, representing the new owners. They plan to do a neighborhood needs assessment, but they are planning to provide rental units. They are seeking an architect.

**Review of Minutes:** The August General Meeting minutes were approved.

**October 4 meeting:** focus will be on Strategic Plan for Asylum Hill

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03.