

Town Hall Meeting with Mayor Bronin

On Saturday morning Mayor Bronin held another of his monthly town hall meetings to speak directly to the citizens of Hartford and to hear their concerns and answer their questions. This one was at 2550 Main St, home of



Hartford Communities That Care among other organizations. The main topic was the Promise Zone.

The Mayor spoke for the first 25 minutes explaining what the “Promise Zone” means in terms of gaining Federal grants, and how much of what is being accomplished is not visible from the street.

He next introduced many of his staff who were present, Thea Montanez, Chief of Staff; Diane Jones, Director of Re-entry Services; Kim Oliver, Director of Families Youth, Children and Recreation; Janice Castle, Director of Community Engagement; Chief Rovella and Don Chapman, Director of Small Business & Community Development and also Faith Palmer Assistant to the COO, Courtenay Jackson newly appointed Director of Promise Zone and Logan Singerman, AmeriCorps coordinator.

The first initiative discussed was **Youth Employment**; \$2mil in the *Promise Yes* program, for 275 youth, a STRIVE Grant for \$800,000.00 to help those returning from the Criminal Justice system & Juvenile Reentry Assistance Program (JRAP), a grant for legal assistance especially for youth. Also *Youthbuild* \$1mil construction training and Youth Service Corp, year round training & employment \$2 mil for 200 youth. There are a total of 700 youth affected.

Next was **Public Safety**, Dept. of Justice Burns grant for \$1 mil for strategy to bring community and law enforcement together on strategy. Hartford also just received the largest COPS grant in the US, and the only City to receive the three top grants.

Housing, CT Fair Housing got grants to support education and enforcement from Promise zone.

Health – a private Robert Wood-Johnson grant for the City & St Francis to partner on the Promise Zone.

Also \$5mil per year for 5 years grant to reduce teen pregnancy.

Education

Promise Neighborhoods Grant application is in for \$5 mil for 5 years for the promise Zone schools to deal with problems around education.

Hartford is applying for and hopes to get a CRDA grants with \$20 mil available for promise zone. Areas to be included are Albany & Woodland, Brackett Knoll development phase II, Terry Square and Albany Ave & North Main. Also Federal funds are paying for recently hired Blight Remediation Director Laura Settlemeyer

The next hour and a half was spent answering questions about the Civilian Review Board, Tax lien sale of private homes, Library funding, Bond money from the State for Blight Bank, School Closings and Equity 2020, with the last hour almost exclusively about Schools. After one comment about the importance of class size by former Councilman Ken Kennedy, three members of the Promise Yes program came forward to speak about their experiences and answer questions from the audience. They received a very warm reception from everyone present. All in all it was a lively and informative town hall meeting.