



AHNA

Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association
A Neighborhood NRZ

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AHNA General Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2016

Board Members Present: Yvonne Matthews, Michelle McFarland, Sekienna Ellis, Paul O'Mara, Jackie McKinney, Ken Johnson, Jennifer Cassidy, Dean Amadon, Maureen Mish, Nancy Rion

Board Members Absent: Nancy Caddigan, David Ambrose, Mark McKinney, Luwannia Johnson-Martin, Chris Montross, John Prescod, Frank Hagaman, George Annan-Kingsley,

AHNA Members & Staff Present: Louisa Barton Duguay, Barbara Morton, Maura Hallisey, Sue Carey, David Corrigan, Bonnie Matthews, Lloyd Carter, Carolyn Havrda, Shelley Best, Val-Gene Gripes, Esther Gonzales-Torres, Mike McGarry, Ted Carroll, Ofc. Chris Chanaca, Bernie Michel.

Visitors: Mayor Bronin, Neville Brookes, Rev. James Shanley, Rev. Michael Ruminski, Morgan Ferrarotti, Diane Cantello, John Wyatt, Jennifer Diaz, David Case, Janice Castle, Ofc. Zweibelson, Juanita Vidal, Lt. Mike Cacioli, Michael Smutnick, Mary Kiernan-Gonzalez, Mario Chiappetti, Andrew Rodney, Cheri Colson, Jinelle Hooker, Laverne alexander, Chloe Eristhee, Ashley Simpson, Dianne Jones, Cynthia McKenna and Alfie Blake.

The meeting was called to order by Yvonne Matthews at 6:15. Yvonne recognized Ken Johnson, AHNA Board member, for his work with AHNA and his commitment to building and renovating homes in Asylum Hill. The Mission of AHNA was read. The March minutes were approved.

Police Report: Chris Chanaca reported that crime is down 12%. Last month there were 4 car break-ins, 2 robberies, 5 burglaries (4 at one location after a fire), and 4 stolen vehicles. There was a felony arrest at 200 S. Marshall. The cameras on Marshall and Huntington streets are quite helpful. There continue to be issues of panhandling on Farmington Ave, and quality of life issues at 10 Marshall Street. Chris noted that the Conditions Unit was lost to budget cuts. Nancy Rion shared appreciation of Chris's effective police work from residents of S. Marshall Street who noted that conditions are improving.

Finance Committee:

April 1 balance: \$498

April 30 balance: \$ 25.32

Asylum Hill Congregational Church approved a \$6,500 grant to AHNA but it has yet to be received. Currently Bernie Michel continues to work for AHNA as a volunteer until there is money to pay him. The Governance Committee has recommended the creation of a Fundraising Committee to seek ways to generate funds. Residents were invited to join this effort.

AHNA Strategic Planning Priorities for 2016-2017

- Economic Development: improve the quality of life on Farmington Ave., support and build businesses and prevent blight
- Education: highlight the array of high quality schools of choice in the neighborhood with particular attention to the opening of the renovated West Middle School and its volunteer resource center

814 Asylum Ave
Hartford, CT 06105

- Public Safety: focus on quality of life issues aided by the new cameras; monitor the impact of options for moving I-84

Invited Guest – Mayor Luke Bronin

Mayor Bronin described the massive budget crisis in Hartford, indicating the current structural imbalance leaving Hartford \$40M short. He described his 5 principles: do not raise the mill-rate, have honest projections, find sustainable savings, don't sell assets that generate income, and focus on priorities – deliver required services. He has recommended \$15.5M in cuts to organizations and agencies, \$15.5 M in savings from proposed labor negotiations, \$1M in cuts of non-union employees – which leaves \$16.5M shortfall not yet addressed. Future years will pose an even greater challenge with \$15M additional debt payment in 2018. In response to a question, Mayor Bronin said Hartford is close to bankruptcy, which, if it happened, would have an enormous negative impact on the whole region. Bronin is aggressively seeking federal money, grants, investors and developers.

Mayor Bronin proposed launching a statewide campaign to support the capital city. He urged AHNA and all Hartford residents to be ambassadors of the City. He encouraged AHNA to promote neighbors getting to know neighbors, holding each other accountable for cleaning up and working together and developing pride in the City.

Mayor Bronin addressed AHNA strategic priorities. Public Safety: Hartford must recruit new police officers and must invest in new fire equipment. Education: the libraries are essential to education and the branches should not be closed. The Board of Education is making many cuts already. There may be savings in the consolidation of services such as facilities, HR and back office but consolidation takes time. Economic Development: Bronin is working hard to attract more investors.

In response to questions and suggestions, Mayor Bronin suggested that Hartford consider one big arts and culture event instead of many little ones; reduce the size and location of the waste disposal facility; and invest in new technologies to dispose of trash.

Mayor Bronin commended the good work and active participation of AHNA.

Community Conversation and Announcements:

- Resident requested more trashcans in residential areas.
- Resident expressed concern for traffic on Sigourney and Farmington with many accidents at the Funeral Home
- Spaces are available at the Niles Community Gardens
- May 28 – Catholic Charities is sponsoring People Empowering People
- Discover Asylum Neighborhood walking tours- noon on Wednesdays beginning May 25, continuing throughout the summer
- May 18 and June 1, at noon – Hartford Symphony orchestra concerts in the park at the Hartford
- Asylum Hill Fresh Express, shuttle to Billings Forge Farmers Market on Thursdays begins June 2 continuing throughout the summer.
- June 2 Stowe House Prize – afternoon fair at Immanuel Church and evening dinner at Stowe
- South Marshall Street Block Party is seeking table sponsors

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10.