



# AHNA

Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association  
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## ASYLUM HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE NOTES FOR THE MEETING OF APRIL 15, 2015

The Quality of Life Committee of the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association (AHNA) held a meeting in two sessions on Wednesday, April 15, 2015 as follows: at Noon and the Center for Health Equity, 140 Woodland Street, and at 5:30 at Veeder Place, 20 Sargeant Street.

In attendance were as follows:

Session 1: David Corrigan, NINA; Luwannia Martin, Asylum Hill resident and AHNA member; Bernie Michel, Asylum Hill resident and AHNA program manager; Christina Polce, Aetna; and Nancy Rion, Immanuel Congregational Church and AHNA member.

Session 2: David Ambrose, Asylum Hill resident and AHNA member; David Corrigan, NINA; Vic King, Asylum Hill resident; and Luwannia Martin, Asylum Hill resident and AHNA member.

Parkville MDP: A presentation by Glenn Geathers on the expansion of the Parkville MDP to include the former Hartford Office Supply Building was postponed due to Mr. Geathers's scheduled appearance before the Parkville Revitalization Association at the same time. Mr. Geathers will make his presentation to AHNA at its May 2015 meeting on May 4, 2015.

Additionally, the proposed expansion was approved by the Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission at its meeting of April 14, 2015 as commensurate with the goals of the City's Plan of Conservation and Development, *One City, One Plan*. The proposed expansion will allow the Hartford Redevelopment Agency to loan the developers, Dakota Properties, \$3.1 million from a municipal bond set aside for municipal housing projects.

Next Public Forum, Safety at the Intersection of Asylum and Sigourney: The following individuals and organizations have participated in direct interviews on this matter:

- Andrea Barton Reeves, President and CEO, HARC
- Richard Bowsza, Chief Financial Officer, HARC
- Officer Chris Chanaca, Asylum Hill Community Service Officer, Hartford Police Department
- Tiffany Glanville, President, West Middle Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization
- Gregory Grant, Senior Vice President, Program and Services, HARC
- Mary Kiernan-Gonzalez, Unit Director, Asylum Hill Boys & Girls Club
- Ramona Rancourt, Director of Operations, HARC
- Frank Williams, Finance Manager, Jumoke Academy

Interviews were conducted at NINA and on site at Asylum Hill Boys & Girls Club, HARC, and Jumoke Academy.

The Quality of Life Committee will prepare a report on the consensus problems and proposed solutions. This report will serve as the basis for discussion at a second public forum, which will be scheduled for May 2015, and it will present the report to AHNA prior to its May 2015 meeting.

Parking Restrictions and Garbage Collection: The Committee requests the following action from AHNA:

*That AHNA approve transmission of a letter to the appropriate officials within the City of Hartford, the Hartford Parking Authority, and the Hartford Police Department requesting a moratorium on ticketing and towing cars parked during hours reserved for garbage collection on weeks during which a municipal holiday occurs.*

A draft of this letter will be presented to AHNA for review and approval prior to transmission. The Committee will form a team of individuals to draft a proposed plan for altering parking restrictions to accommodate residential parking and garbage collection altered by municipal holidays. This team will refer its recommendations to AHNA for consideration upon completion of its draft proposal.

Proposed Regulations, Transit-oriented Development: This discussion was tabled as the regulations were approved by the Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission prior to this meeting of the Committee.

Summer Walking Tours: The Committee will seek eight (8) AHNA members and Asylum Hill residents to serve as greeters for the weekly walking tours for employees of Aetna and The Hartford that will be run during June and July 2015. These individuals will greet tour participants at the tour's gathering spot, will escort the participants to the tour guide, and will share with the participants their experiences and observations as an Asylum Hill community member.

Additionally, the Committee supported the inclusion of the weekly farmers market at the Mark Twain House and a tour of Immanuel Congregational Church on the tour schedule. Ms. Rion indicated that Yvonne Mathews would be contacting the new pastor at Immanuel in the near future, and it was agreed that Mr. Corrigan should hold off contacting the new pastor until after Ms. Mathews had made her contact. The Committee suggested a tour of Connecticut Public Broadcasting be added to the tour schedule, and Mr. Corrigan agreed to pursue that.

Pop-up Libraries: Pop-up libraries are kiosks that will be established within the Asylum Hill neighborhood that will offer books for loan to the community. They will be established at locations most likely to serve neighborhood students. The Committee requests the following action from AHNA:

*That AHNA support a program to create pop-up libraries in partnership with the West Middle Elementary School PTO.*

Neighborhood conditions: Ms. Polce reported the following:

- The Asylum Hill foot beat patrol had been removed and is now in a car in the North End.
- Individuals have been soliciting money at the Sigourney Street off-ramp, both from pedestrians crossing the interchange and from drivers stopped at the light at the interchange.
- Aetna has requested that the Connecticut Department of Transportation prohibit CTfastrak and CTTransit buses from idling on Hawthorn Street at the Sigourney Street CTfastrak station due to the obstruction they create for Aetna employees departing from the parking garage onto Hawthorn.
- Several students from the Culinary Institute attempted to rob an Aetna employee. The students had been on school buses parked outside the Culinary Institute on Sigourney Street.
- The Flower Street Parking Garage had been tagged with graffiti.

Additionally, Jennifer Cassidy had complained separately about the idling buses, which park at several locations in the neighborhood. Ms. Rion reported that the diesel fumes could be smelled as far away as South Marshall Street. The Committee agreed to pursue this matter.

New Item: Asylum Hill Resident Parking Permit Pilot: Mr. King reported that he lived at 784 Asylum Avenue, which is a condominium on the corner of Asylum and Sumner Street (782-788 Asylum Avenue). He further stated that he, his neighbors, and their visitors have limited private parking accessible from Sumner Street but also use Sumner Street for parking, as parking on Asylum Avenue in front of their condos is prohibited. He reported that the recent roll-out of the residential parking permit pilot had adversely affected him and his neighbors, as they are excluded from the pilot even though they park on Sumner. He requested that the Committee explore whether his condominium could be included in the pilot. The Committee agreed to pursue this matter.

New Item: Public Safety Issues on Huntington Street: Two residents from Huntington Street reported on various illicit activities that affected both safety and public health on Huntington Street. The Committee agreed to pursue these matters.

#### Updates on Matters Already before the Committee

- 1 *Letter to Mayor Pedro Segarra re income limits and municipal homeownership projects.* Sent to Yvonne Matthews for final review and approval.
- 2 *Proposed homeownership development on South Marshall Street.* Keith Powell provided an updated proposal to the Committee for review.
- 3 *Proposed Alterations to Trident.* The Committee SME team decided on a potential alternative and is now soliciting additional opinions. The SME team has also been in contact with DOT about next steps.
- 4 *Flower Street "up and over" bridge.* The Committee has not received the requested documentation from DOT.
- 5 *Progress on The Hartford's Parking Plan.* Ray Marcotte reported as follows:
  - a. Soil is being removed from the extension site at Collins and Sumner.
  - b. They have begun to drive sheet piles net to the existing garage to support Tower Drive during excavation, and this will continue through 5/1/2015.
  - c. The contractor will begin H-pile testing in advance of the pile driving operation for the extension, and this will continue through 5/8/2015.
  - d. Environmental abatement continues at the old Power House on Fraser Place.Further update: demolition of the Fraser Place Parking Garage began on 4/27/2015.
- 6 *OPPportunity Academy.* The Committee possesses contradictory information on this project. An OPP press release states that OPP will have the school open at Veeder Place by August 2015, while a Courant article on the HPS budget reports that OPPportunity Academy will lose 18.5 positions and be moved out-of-district. The Committee seeks to resolve this matter by its May meeting.