

The Hartford News

February 3 – 9, 2022



WEST INDIAN PARADE FACING CHANGES?

BY ANDY HART

The West Indian Parade and Festival is one of Hartford's showcase events, drawing thousands to the city. But this year, city officials say that they no longer have the staff, primarily in terms of police, to handle the event, scheduled for Saturday, August 6, and are hoping to modify it in some way to reduce the number of city employees needed. This is due mainly to a decrease in the number of police officers and an increase in large events following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

Founded in 1962, the same year Jamaica gained independence from Great Britain, Hartford's West Indian Independence Parade is one of the oldest in the world.

Thea Montanez, City of Hartford Chief Operating Officer, said she will be meeting with parade organizers this Friday, February 4, to discuss ways the format of the parade and/or festival can be changed so that it would require less staff. Suggestions that have been put forward include having the parade on Saturday and the festival on Sunday, or having both events on Sunday, when calls for police are less.

Desmond Sinclair, President of the West Indian Independence Celebration (WIIC), which organizes the parade and festival, confirmed that his group will meet with city leaders Friday to try and arrive at a plan satisfactory to both groups. "We will listen and



Desmond Sinclair, President of the West Indian Independence Celebration marches in last year's parade. (Hart photo)

see what the city really needs, what is etched in stone, so to speak, and then go from there," he said, "at this point all I know with absolute certainty is that we're going to have something."

Sinclair said the best case scenario would be to have the event as it used to be, on a Saturday, with the parade going down Main Street from the West Indian Social Club near the intersection of Main and Tower or further down, near the intersection of Main and Battles Street, and then ending up in Bushnell Park for the festival. He said it is important to have the parade on a Saturday as Sunday is a day of rest and worship. It is particularly important this year, because Saturday, August 6 is the actual 60th anniversary of Jamaican Independence. August is also a key month for West Indians because Great Britain officially emancipated its slaves on August 1, 1834 and Trinidad

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Weathering the Storm

A major Nor'easter hit New England Saturday with high winds, frigid temperatures and heavy snowfall. Fortunately, the storm tracked east of Hartford and the city's official snowfall total was 8.5", while parts of eastern New England received up to two feet. During the storm on Saturday, virtually everything was shut down in Hartford and even CT Transit suspended all bus service for the day, but some folks did get out to view the spectacle, including this couple walking along the Connecticut River at Riverfront Plaza in Downtown Hartford. (Hart photo)



Hartford...Once Upon a Time

This photo from the Hartford History Center's "Reflection of The Times" collection show the famous Phoenix Insurance "Boat Building" on Constitution Plaza – but the buildings in the background are more interesting, since they all since been demolished. The little building all alone at the southwest corner of Grove Street and Columbus Boulevard is the Connecticut Poultry Company. The store sold live chickens and refused to move to make way for Constitution Plaza, earning its owner nation-wide recognition as "The Chicken Man." Many of the buildings on the east side of Columbus Boulevard were torn down to make way for the new headquarters of Connecticut Natural Gas (CNG). The CNG building, in turn, was torn down to make way for the Connecticut Convention Center. The company now has its offices in East Hartford. The area directly behind the Phoenix Building is now Riverfront Plaza. (Photo courtesy of the Hartford History Center at the Hartford Public Library)

NEWS BRIEFS

Free COVID-19 Test Distribution Saturday

New Mount Moriah Baptist Church, 222 Barbour Street, Hartford will distribute free COVID-19 home test kits and N95 masks to Hartford residents this Saturday, February 5, from 10 am - 1 pm or until supplies last. Proof of Hartford residency is required. This free distribution is being held in partnership with the State of Connecticut and the City of Hartford.

Webinar Series on City Government Starts February 5

Next month, Hartford NEXT will begin hosting a webinar series entitled "It's Your City." The series will focus on Hartford City government, how it works, how it impacts our lives and how residents can get involved.

- February 5, 2022 10:00 am - 11:30 am: Growing the City (Economic Development). Panelists: I. Charles Mathews, Director of Development Services; Erin Howard, Director of Economic Development; Elda Sinani, Director of Licenses & Inspections; Randal Davis, Deputy Director of Development Services. To register: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8rvaxr>
- February 19, 2022 10:00 - 11:30 am: Our Health, Wellbeing & Quality of Life. Panelists: Michael Looney, Director, Department of Public Works; Liany Arroyo, Director Department of Health & Human Services. To register: <https://tinyurl.com/bdh5cp33>
- March 5, 2022 10:00 am - 11:30 am: Children, Youth & Recreation. Panelist: Kim Oliver, Department Head, Families, Children, Youth and Recreation. To register: <https://tinyurl.com/rewx2d6m>
- March 19, 2022 10:00 am - 11:30 am: Public Safety. Panelists: Police Chief Jason Thody; Fire Chief Rodney Barco; Sue Webster, Emergency Services Department Head. To register: <https://tinyurl.com/2vmctnbs>

Climate Change March on Feb. 8

Environmental activists led by the Sierra Club will hold a Climate Justice march to demand that the State of Connecticut do more to address climate change and global warming. The march will start from the Old State House, 800 Main Street, Downtown Hartford, on Tuesday, February 8 at 2 pm. The march will make stops at Eversource (CT's largest utility) Travelers Insurance

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PROJECT PARKS

PRAC puts forth 2022/2023 needs and plans for Hartford's popular greenspaces

BY DONNA SWARR

The city's Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, dedicated stewards committed to keeping Hartford parks in top condition, continued its mission at a January 18th special meeting. In addition to the commissioners, also in attendance were DPW, several park advocates, and city officials and staff whose work focuses on the parks. PRAC shared the "wish list" of priority projects for each park, with one submitted by every park that has a "Friends" group. These groups use different processes to obtain community input for their own park. This list of priorities goes to Frank Dellaripa, who obtains cost estimates, then it goes to the mayor's office, and ultimately, it's reviewed, discussed, and selections are made. Adam Cloud, City Treasurer and trustee of the Park Trust Fund, reviews projects which are being considered for Park Trust Funds. The City Council receives the proposed list for discussion when reviewing the city budget. When the list of projects is submitted to the council, it indicates where the funding will be coming from: the Park Trust Fund, Capital Improvements, or other grants. At this point, PRAC can comment and give advice on the final list of projects. PRAC is advocating for an increase in funding for the Park & Cemetery and the Forestry Divisions, as many park investments do not last as long as they should without proper maintenance. With current staffing levels, proper maintenance has not been

possible. There was a discussion about improvements for the popular South Green/Barnard Park, but one in need of maintenance that lacks community group advocates. In late 2019, the Peace Center put together a plan for improvements, and as a group that would hold community programming. But due to the pandemic, they haven't been able to get their plans off the ground. The Recreation Division was asked to work with the Peace Center to find funding for their initial programming. Barnard Park is also part of the Complete Streets initiative. The redesign of the intersection of Park and Main Streets includes removing the northernmost tip of the park. This discussion will continue at the February 22nd meeting. All PRAC meetings are currently being held virtually. You can go to meeting.com to obtain the agenda, meeting minutes, and meeting links.

Proposed Priority Projects from PRAC

Forster Park

- Basketball court
- Splash pool (ground surface eroded)

Heaven Skate Park

- Garage door repair

George Day Park

- Repair of splash pad water feature & replacement of damaged planters on east side of park

Bushnell Park

- West Side lighting and sidewalk improvements
- Pond

Colt Park

- Clemente field final layer of clay, weeds coming up
- Softball outfield(s)
- Lighting along Stonington and Morris Streets pedestrian path, and for new soccer field with scoreboard
- Walkways
- Pool
- Concession stand
- \$30,000 for Colt Monument to clean bronzes and granite (\$90,000 for base being provided by the National Park Service)

Elizabeth Park

- Dredge pond

Goodwin Park

- Improvements to clubhouse
- West path improvements
- Irrigation system at the golf course

Keney Park

- Environmental center/bandstand
- Tower Avenue playground
- Baseball field improvement

Pope Park

- Design and construct terrace seating/retaining wall on the

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CLOSE BRAINARD? HELL, NO!

The city's pie-in-the-sky won't fly, and here's why

COMMENTARY BY ANNE GOSHDIGIAN

I'm going to get right down to it. No pussyfooting around, because it's about time someone puts the raw truth out there about the city's plan to deep-six Brainard Airport and grab that land for more "mixed-use" market-rate housing and so-called retail, as well as a marina. No matter what they say, this plan isn't about economic development. It's also not about filling a need or attracting more people to Hartford. And it sure as hell isn't about growing the Grand List, which can only happen when property-owning developers pay their fair share of city taxes. Plain and simple, it's about politics, arrogance, and most of all—greed. Greed for such things as elected office, honorary appointments, lucrative jobs, power, and money. Lately, here's been a lot about this plan in print, and a significant amount of public feedback on local social media that's running about 80% against the closing of Brainard and redeveloping



that land. A lot of Hartford residents have long been aware of who's behind that idiotic plan. If you aren't, you will be now. You know the saying, "You can't tell the players without a scorecard"? Well, here goes.

1) William "Bill" DiBella, Chair of the MDC, who's had his eye on the acreage around Brainard for more than a decade. A 2016 legislative report concluded the airport should remain open. The report recommended further investment in Brainard, rather than redevelopment.

Redevelopment, the report said, would be too costly, require large public subsidies and take at least two decades. Others have said contamination in the area, which includes the soon-to-be closed trash burning plant would be too costly. DiBella ignored the report, proba-

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Politically Speaking

A Fresh Look at Issues Facing our Region & State

BY MIKE MCGARRY

Re-val Options

Both the City of Hartford and the State of Connecticut have options that might blunt the brutal effect of the current revaluation of property in Hartford.

The dangers of the unusually steep increases in the re-assessed values of many properties – and a lack of action by the government to soften the effect of these increases – could cause many homeowners of all income levels to just throw up their hands and leave Hartford (and possibly Connecticut). In addition, owners of multi-unit residential properties who find that their taxes have risen to such a level that their properties are losing rather than making money, may just abandon their properties. Or they could drastically raise rents to offset the rise in taxes, causing many tenants – commercial and residential – to move out. History shows that both scenarios have played out in the past, and the dramatic increases on property assessments this year increases the odds this time around, but there are some ways to mitigate the problem. Here are some suggestions.

FIRST, cut the "cash" budget for city expenses by bonding out capital improvements. Future generations will benefit from them, so future generations can help pay for them. This would result in a possible three mil tax decrease.

SECOND, release estimates of the potential increase in the grand list for public discussion. If it is good news, that's what we need.

THIRD, it is possible for City Council to phase in the new assessments for a period of years. This has not worked too well in other situations. It would work if major taxpaying projects were to come online in those years. Do we have any?

FOURTH, in the next two years, dramatically increase the

City of Hartford's efforts to build the grand list, along with those of the Capital Region Economic Authority (CRDA). Department of Development, answer your telephones! Return your calls! Staff up! Get creative! Make 100 calls, get through to 10 businesses and possibly make three sales every week. The Hartford Land Bank should also make an extra effort to sell any property it gets ASAP!

FIFTH, create a board of abatement appeals for homeowners and small businesses specifically to help very distressed taxpayers. Such a board may need state legislature approval. Okay, then pass a law. Staffed by a retired banker, a retired realtor and an average citizen (and working with the current assessor and tax collector), such a board could save homes and apartments in business. For example, tax increases could be abated until the property is sold (a lien). Payment plans could be extended (with approval from the tax collector's office). Other ideas? Suggest same to city council, the mayor and state legislators.

SIXTH, as Councilman John Gale suggested, expand current programs designed to help seniors, veterans, the disabled and low-income taxpayers – and then promote them through every possible channel (social media, radio, TV, newspapers and even flyers put up in churches, community centers NRZ meetings and the like). Communications are far more diffuse now than they were a decade or two ago. Just a tweet or a Facebook posting doesn't cut it anymore, especially for the elderly and those facing tough times economically. When you're almost broke, internet service is usually one of the first

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Letters to the Editor

How does NATO expansion help Hartford or other distressed communities?

Does the expansion of NATO feed, shelter or clothe one Hartford family? Does it help us deal with the climate or Covid crises? Does it help provide support for schools and front line teachers in Hartford or in other distressed communities? Why are we risking nuclear war over the issue of expanding NATO?

NATO is an antiquated military alliance along the lines of the military alliances that brought us World War I and may now bring us World War III. NATO war games so close to the Russian line endangers us all.

We need to be aware of the disguised war propaganda that justifies NATO and NATO expansion to the east. While our US media screams about so called Russian aggression in Crimea, much of the world sees the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan as brutal and unjustified. Why the double standard?

Joseph Wasserman
West Hartford

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Indoor Mask Mandate Ended

On Monday, January 31, Mayor Luke Bronin announced he will not be extending the mandate requiring masks to be worn indoors at restaurants, stores and other public places. Bronin had originally ended the mandate back on November 8, 2021, but reinstated it at the beginning of this year in the face of dramatically rising COVID-19 infections driven by the new Omicron variant. Businesses and other public spaces can still require masks to be worn.

COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

Hartford Public Library Covid-19 Vaccine Clinics

Hartford Public Library will be hosting COVID-19 vaccine clinics in partnership with Griffin Health at three locations across the city during the months of February and March.

The times and locations of the clinics are as follows:

- **Downtown Library**, 500 Main St., Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26; 1-4 p.m. Vaccines available for those 5 and up
- **Albany Library**, 1250 Albany Ave., Feb. 10, 24; March 10, 24; 2-5 p.m. Vaccines available for those 5 and up
- **Camp Field Library**, 30 Campfield Ave.; Feb. 3, 17; March 3, 17; 2-5 p.m.; Vaccines available for those 12 and up

Appointments are not required. First doses, second doses and booster shots will be available. Patients are asked to bring identification and insurance information if available, but nobody will be

turned away for lack of an ID or insurance. Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

FREE Center

The FREE Center, 460 New Britain Avenue (former Goodwin Library) will hold a free COVID-19 vaccine clinic this Saturday, February 5, from 12-4 pm. Pediatric Pfizer shots will be available to those ages 5 - 11 and Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson shots to those 12 and up.

Montessori Magnet School

Charter Oak Health Center, the City of Hartford and Hartford Public Schools will sponsor a free COVID-19 vaccine clinic this Saturday, February 5, from 10 am - 2 pm at the Montessori Magnet School at Batchelder, 757 New Britain Avenue, Hartford. No insurance is required. If you have no means of transportation, call 860-550-7540 for a ride.

Project Parks

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- steep slope east of the soccer field, along with stairway in the center to control soil erosion and improve public safety.
- Design and build a sidewalk on west side of Hillside Avenue from Hamilton Street to opposite side of entrance pillars
- Design & install improvements to destroyed plant beds all around main body of land area
- Install park entrance signs/benches (include as part of bike lane design and in the Bankside Grove Recreational Trail work)
- Redesign/build the second path loop planned for Pope Park north, connecting with the roundabout's sidewalks

Riverfront Recapture

- Riverside Park - wood wire guardrail needs repair/replacement
- Charter Oak Landing - parking lot growing into river fix curbing and guard rail

At Large Member input:

- Lights on fields for youth (artificial turf, grass fields), propose we regulate when we turn on lights
- More concession spaces, Colt
- Futsal court at Colt



Charter Oak Cultural Center Group Exhibit

Charter Oak Cultural Center, 21 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, opened its new group exhibit, "Painting Outside The Lines," on Thursday, January 27. Shown above is one of the four artists whose work is showcased in the exhibit, Lloyd Patrick Henry, with his daughter, Genesis Dickerson. The other artists are Paul Baylock, Christine Chaise Greenwood and Kimberly Heil. The exhibit is on view Monday - Wednesday, 9am to 2pm, through February 24. Admission is free. (Hart photo)

5th District Special Election March 1

A special election for state representative of Connecticut's 5th Assembly District will be held Tuesday, March 1, 2022. The seat, which consists of portions of Hartford and Windsor, became vacant on January 10, 2022, following the resignation of Brandon L. McGee Jr. McGee left the post on January 7 for a top position in the re-election campaign of Governor Ned Lamont.

City Council Meeting, Public Comment on Monday, February 14

City Council will hold a public comment session and meeting on Monday, February 14, at City Hall, 550 Main Street.

The Public comment session will start at 6 pm, the council meeting will follow at approximately 7 pm. Both will be available for viewing on www.hpatv.org, HPA TV Facebook Page, Comcast/Xfinity Channel 96, or Frontier Channel 6032 GOV. Residents can sign up to speak for public comment at City Hall or by reaching out to David Grant (860) 757-9738 or david.grant@hartford.gov.

The deadline to register for virtual public comment is 5:20 pm, Monday, February 14. Once signed up, participants will be given the Zoom meeting details and will be asked to sign/call-in by 5:45pm for further instructions.

Language interpreter(s) for the hearing impaired can be made available if requested in advance. The agenda for this Council meeting was compiled by the Town Clerk's office and can be accessed by clicking <https://hartford.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?Id=79>

Job Fairs

The City of Hartford police, fire and dispatch departments will hold a Public Safety Career Fair on Saturday, February 12, from 9am - 3 pm at the Metzner Center, 680 Franklin Avenue. For more information, email to: JoinHPD@hartford.gov or call 860-757-4242.

Hartford Yard Goats will be having a job fair for gameday staff positions for the upcoming season on Saturday, February 19, from 10am - 1 pm at Dunkin Donuts Park, 1214 Main Street, Hartford. Positions include ticket sellers, concession staff and more. Apply at YardGoatsBaseball.com, and then click "contactus" and "employment opportunities."

City of Hartford Job Opportunities

The City of Hartford is currently hiring for the following positions:

- Development Services - Building Plans Examiner
- Family, Children, Youth & Recreation - Early Childhood Monitor
- Family, Children, Youth & Recreation - Early Learning center Teacher
- Family, Children, Youth & Recreation - Grant Specialist

- Development Services - Inspector
- COO - Performance Manager
- Police - Officer
- Health and Human Services - Public Health Nursing Supervisor
- Finance - Senior Accountant
- Public Works - Traffic Engineering Services Manager

To learn more, go to: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/hartfordct>

Stay Warm with CT Energy Assistance Programs



Don't let high energy costs stand in the way of heating your home.

There is financial help for your winter heating bills, whether you own or rent your home.

To start your application, you can:

- Contact your local **Community Action Agency (CAA)** - Visit ct.gov/heatinghelp to find the CAA serving your town.
- Or text **CTWARM** to 898211.
- Or call 2-1-1.



Please don't wait. Apply today!
ct.gov/heatinghelp

AHNA
Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association
A Hartford Neighborhood Revitalization Zone

News & Views



HARTFORD
HAS IT



ASYLUM HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

From the
Executive Director
BY DAVID MACDONALD

2022 will be a year of growth and action for AHNA

AHNA is beginning the New Year with the recently completed Neighborhood Strategic Plan and a busy agenda for 2022. The AHNA Board of Directors have reviewed the Strategic Plan and identified 8 key projects that will create the foundation needed to achieve the goals in the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will be on the February 7th General Meeting Agenda for approval by our members, we urge you to attend the General Meeting at 6:15pm via Zoom. Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4521915370?pwd=aG9OUHINMIVXSUVaRU1sSEFaZnJSQT09> Meeting ID: 452 191 5370 Passcode: 897273

AHNA's mission statement is that we empower and connect residents and stakeholders to improve the quality of life in Asylum Hill. Many of the goals in the Strategic

Plan require collaboration among our stakeholders and residents. The 8 projects for 2022 include the Food Composting project, Farmington Avenue Improvement project, Blighted Building inventory, Asylum Hill Tree Canopy Assessment, Improving Access to Human Services for our residents, Displaying Art on Farmington Ave., Installing Cameras near crime "hot spots", and funding to complete the Comet Diner restoration.

We had 74 volunteer residents and stakeholders involved in the Strategic Planning process. We will need lots of volunteer support to achieve the goals in our plan. If any of these projects interest you, please reach out (exdir@asylumhill.org) to me to get involved. Below is a summary of each project.

Food Composting Project:

Hartford spends millions each year disposing of food waste. Environmental activists in AHNA propose a better way, composting. Food composting reduces greenhouse gas pollution and will save the city millions if it were done citywide. Food composting is a demonstration project that will provide a better model for disposing of food waste. The project will sign up residents for composting, volunteers will pick up the food scraps, and deposit them in composting bins that will be located at each community garden in Asylum Hill, so that garden waste can also be composted. Each garden will then have free compost for use in the gardens.

Farmington Avenue Improvement project: The state has authorized \$7 million to complete the Farmington Avenue streetscape project. The Strategic Plan calls for AHNA to support economic development along Farmington Ave. This project will work with our merchants to identify more ways to help support their businesses there.

Blighted Property Inventory: To assist the city's efforts to reduce blight in our neighborhoods, AHNA will develop and maintain a definitive list of all the blighted properties in Asylum Hill.

Tree Canopy Assessment: The Strategic Plan sets out a goal of having a 30% tree canopy by 2032. AHNA and Knox will partner to complete a comprehensive assessment of our existing tree canopy, identifying where and how many trees should be planted to maintain a healthy tree canopy of 30% in Asylum Hill.

Improving Human Service Access for our residents: Asylum Hill is blessed with many social service non-profits, as many as 70 different agencies. We have found that many residents are not aware of all these services. Even service providers don't know about all the services available in Asylum Hill. Therefore, this project will identify all services in Asylum Hill, especially youth services. AHNA will work with these providers to better publicize the services to residents and stakeholders. There are discussions about forming a council of the non-profits in Asylum Hill to better coordinate services and referrals.

Displaying Art on Farmington Avenue: Another idea for improving Farmington Avenue is to display the art of local artists at locations along the Avenue. This project is connected to the City's new DominGO program to close streets to traffic for one Sunday a

month, starting on June 26th with Farmington Ave. This is to encourage pedestrians, bicyclists, skateboarders, etc. to come out for events and activities. AHNA and our partners will organize activities and Art displays that promote Asylum Hill as a great place to live and work.

Installing Cameras near crime "hot spots": Increased crime during the pandemic has been a big concern of many people in Asylum Hill. The Public Safety Task Force has recommended more cameras that can assist HPD in locating and arresting criminals. AHNA will collaborate with HPD and our residents to determine where cameras should be located.

As you can see, AHNA has a big work plan for 2022. It may be a lot of work, but completing these projects is essential so that we are ready and positioned to tackle the next goals in the plan. We will need your help to accomplish these important goals. Thanks to the Hartford's communication team in producing a video that describes our vision for Asylum Hill. Please view it at <https://www.asylumhill.org/strategic-plan.html>. I believe this is going to be a great year for AHNA and Asylum Hill. We hope you will join us.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Fresh Start Pallet Products

It's been over five years since we reported on Fresh Start Pallet Products and volunteering. Then we talked about Dr. Ed Johnson, and we're happy to report that he is still happily engaged there. This month we're featuring Rich Carman, a very active board member and member of the executive committee. Rich and his wife Barbara moved into Asylum Hill nearly 25 years ago when they bought a condominium at Woodland House, but for quite a while they didn't spend a lot of time there. As a social worker with a penchant for management and an attraction to foreign assignments, Rich and Barbara have been called to countries in Africa and Eastern Europe over the years to assist people with disabilities to help themselves.

But now they are spending more time here in their Asylum Hill home both because of retirement and the pandemic that makes foreign travel so difficult. So Rich is using the skills he has developed since his college degree in Social Work Administration to advance the cause of Fresh Start Pallet Products.

Helping people to be the best version of themselves that they can be is the skill that he applies to every challenge that comes along, and it's become a 40 hour a week offering.

He worked with Carlos Mouta who had a vision to create the Parkville Market and with Rich's efforts Fresh Start was able to provide much of the unique outdoor furniture and fixtures for that project. So much so that Carlos came to the Fresh Start Christmas party in 2020



and as the photo above shows, he accepted an award from Fresh Start presented by Rich.

Several other projects have come to Fresh Start including the Swift Factory in the North End of Hartford, where tables and chairs were refurbished and refinished and Soul de Cuba Café in New Haven for whom custom designed benches were built. Some of this work was just a variation on products that Fresh Start makes, and others are new projects using salvaged wood not from pallets. All of it has helped to expand the experience and skills of the workers, and increase the awareness of Fresh Start, its mission and its capabilities. In all of this, Rich has taken the lead in managing the project, communicating with the customers and clients and providing the information to the staff and the other Executive committee members. For more information on what Rich and Fresh Start are up to, go to <https://www.freshstartpalletproducts.org>

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EXPLORING ASYLUM HILL

Sewing in Asylum Hill

Back in 2015 the News & Views published a story about a sewing program at the Asylum Hill Boys & Girls Club. By then it had become quite successful, with many girls and boys signing up to learn the basics of how to use a sewing machine to create something from cloth, for themselves. In the process of course, they also learned a few other lessons. The children came to know the suburban ladies who volunteered to help teach the class, and those volunteers got to know the urban children by name and face and personality. But circumstances change, and Sandy Fromson, who began the program, moved to the shore with her husband Howard, and without her leadership the program lost its energy.

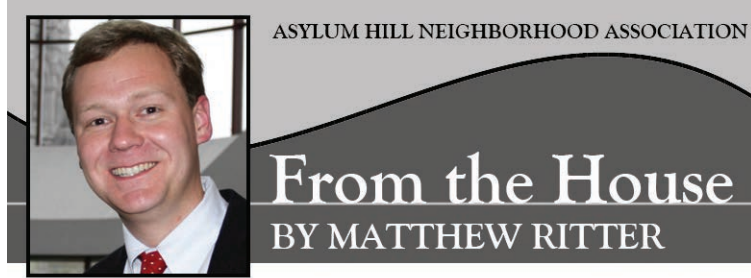


Today what is left is a closet at the club with 18 very nice, but currently unused sewing machines and bolts of material. Sewing classes are among those things that don't translate well to Zoom, and having a dozen or so teachers and learners leaning over cloth and thread at machines is not compatible with current COVID guidelines.

At a recent Zoom meeting of nonprofit service providers gathered to share information, these details were shared, and it turns out

that Loaves & Fishes, who for years offered a program to teach sewing, to women in need of a marketable skill, had just begun planning to start that program up again in the next few months. And Lynn Webber at the Village Spring Street Family Center mentioned that they had a sewing training program with 20 machines, cutting tables and bolts and bolts of cloth, just waiting to begin again.

The trigger for all of these connections was WNPR's morning program *Where We Live* with Lucy Nalpathanchil on January 28th about the growing popularity of sewing your own clothing and such. If you're someone who is skilled at sewing of any sort, or someone who has always harbored a desire to learn, the opportunity is just around the corner. Reach out to staff@asylumhill.org for more information.



Winter Assistance is Available

Fuel and energy prices are going up...and up. For those who need help, I want to share information on available energy assistance services.

Connecticut Energy Assistance Program: Administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services, the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), provides winter heating cost assistance to more than 75,000 income-eligible households every year, regardless of their heat source. In Hartford we go through CRT to apply. Statewide consumer and application information is available on the web at www.ct.gov/staywarm or by calling 2-1-1. CEAP has significantly higher benefit levels from a record \$135 million in federal funding to help heat Connecticut homes. Both homeowners and renters can be eligible. CEAP helps enrollees afford the cost of natural gas and electric heat, as well as deliverable fuels like oil and propane.

Nonprofit heating assistance services: Operation Fuel and other

nonprofits provide year-round emergency energy assistance to low-to-moderate-income households that don't qualify for CEAP or who run out of CEAP benefits. Information is available at operationfuel.org.

COVID-19 Payment Plans for Utility-Heated Customers: The Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) has directed all regulated electric, gas, and water utilities in the state to offer COVID-19 payment plans, which both residential and non-residential customers are eligible to enroll in through the end of the public health emergency declaration. COVID-19 payment plans are available to any customer requesting financial assistance to facilitate the repayment of past due balances in addition to the customer's current monthly bill. These plans require no initial or down payment or demonstration of financial need; can be up to 24 months in length; and waive any fees or interest in the

calculation of the monthly payment amount.

Electric Utility Bill Assistance from UniteCT: UniteCT provides rental and utility assistance funding for those financially impacted by COVID-19. UniteCT has become a model for other states by successfully delivering more than \$18 million to electric customers to date to help pay down their overdue bills. For more information, visit portal.ct.gov/DOH/DOH/Programs/UniteCT.

Winter Protection Program: There is a winter moratorium in Connecticut on heating source shut-offs for eligible households. Customers should contact their utility and inquire about the Winter Protection Program, as well as other programs for which they may be eligible. More information is available from 2-1-1 by visiting uwc.211ct.org/winter-protection-winter-moratorium/.

Energy-Saving Solutions - Energize CT: Energize CT can help customers save money on energy bills by providing advice, information, and financial incentives to make homes more energy efficient. For more information, visit energizect.com.

For further guidance on energy assistance programs available in Connecticut, please call 2-1-1.

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El Informativo Latino

En Hartford: mandato de mascarilla termina el lunes en la noche

La ciudad de Hartford, Connecticut finalizará su mandato de uso de máscaras en interiores a la medianoche del lunes, según el alcalde Luke Bronin.

"Restablecimos el mandato de máscaras para interiores a principios de enero ante el rápido aumento del número de casos y las tasas de positividad, y ahora hemos visto una disminución constante en esos números en las últimas semanas", dijo Bronin en un comunicado. Cuando se restableció el mandato a principios de enero, el alcalde dijo que la ciudad lo reevaluaría a fines de mes. Con números decrecientes, la ciudad terminará el mandato de máscaras en interiores. "Le dije a nuestra comunidad que esta sería una medida de tiempo limitado debido



al aumento extraordinario y, a medida que comenzamos a superar la ola de Ómicron, creo que es importante demostrar que nos tomamos ese compromiso en serio", dijo Bronin.

El alcalde también dejó en claro que las empresas en Hartford tienen derecho a exigir que las personas en sus establecimientos usen máscaras.

By Iris Rodriguez

Pfizer pide a la FDA la autorización de su vacuna contra el Covid-19 para menores de 5 años

La farmacéutica estadounidense Pfizer y su socia BioNtech solicitaron este martes la autorización de emergencia en Estados Unidos de su vacuna contra el COVID-19 para niños de entre seis meses y cinco años, anunciaron las compañías en un comunicado.

"Tras una solicitud de la Administración de Alimentos y Medicamentos (FDA, por sus siglas en inglés), las empresas han iniciado una presentación para modificar la autorización de uso de emergencia, para incluir a niños de entre seis meses y cinco años, en respuesta a una urgente necesidad", aseguran las empresas. De aprobarse, esta sería la primera vacuna contra el coronavirus para niños de esas edades.

Poco después de darse a conocer el anuncio, la FDA convocó para el 15 de febrero la reunión de su comité asesor para revisar los datos aportados por Pfizer para la vacuna de niños de seis meses a cinco años. Según Pfizer y BioNtech, han aportado información sobre la seguridad y la eficacia de dos dosis de tres microgramos en los niños de este

rango de edad, como parte de una serie de tres dosis.

Sin embargo, Pfizer advirtió de que la información sobre la dosis de refuerzo en este rango de edad no se presentará hasta dentro de unos meses.

"Tener una vacuna segura y eficaz disponible para los niños de este grupo de edad es una prioridad para la agencia y estamos comprometidos con una revisión oportuna de los datos", aseguró la comisionada en funciones de la FDA, Janet Woodcock, en otro comunicado.

El pasado octubre, la FDA autorizó la vacuna de estas farmacéuticas para niños de entre cinco y 11 años y, recientemente, dio luz verde a una dosis de refuerzo para los menores de entre 12 y 15 años.

Mientras llega la vacuna, "la mejor manera de proteger a los niños, incluso cuando están en la escuela o en la guardería, es practicar el distanciamiento social y el uso de mascarillas, de acuerdo con las recomendaciones de salud pública", agregó Woodcock.

By Iris Rodriguez

West Indian Parade

Continued from page 1

and Tobago gained their independence on August 31, 1962.

Sinclair also said having the parade through the North End is vitally important. "We are trying to showcase our culture to the community...if it's just in the park, no one will notice," he said.

Sinclair said his organization has always worked with the city through the years to accommodate its needs, but feels as though, "Every time they make a change, they seem to start with us." He pointed out that the parade has changed direction (it originally started Downtown and went north), and found ways to raise funds to lessen the financial strain on the city. Last year, parade officials agreed to reduce the length of the parade route so that fewer police officers would be required, as there was increased demand for a police presence at that time due to large gatherings in the area around Colt Park that were blocking traffic.

"I've been to West Indian Independence celebrations all over the world, and they're beautiful...but here [in Hartford], I get the feeling the city considers us a burden."

Samuel Vega, President of the Connecticut Institute for Community Development, which oversees the Puerto Rican Parade and Festival said he called city officials after reading the *Hartford Courant* story about the possible changes to the West Indian Parade. He said it is his understanding that because the Puerto Rican Parade is being held on a Sunday, no changes are required at this point. However, he is meeting with city officials next Thursday, February 10, to clarify the situation. "There was a suggestion last year to move our event to September," he said, "because people are less active then, but I don't agree with that. The people are going to come out for the [Puerto Rican] Parade no matter what, even if we held it in November or December."

Montanez said no changes are foreseen for the Saint Patrick's Day Parade this year either because of two major factors. First, the parade is held in the winter, she said, when there are not as many other events in the city that require city staff. And second, because it is only a parade and no festival is held afterward in Bushnell Park. The Saint Patrick's Day Parade this year is scheduled for Saturday, March 12.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Annie K. Francis, AKA Annie Francis (22-00095)

The Hon. Foye A. Smith, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated January 27, 2022, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Carmen Y. Zayas,
Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Mark T. Francis
c/o Gerald A Delpiano,
Law Office Of Gerald Del
Piano, LLC,
41B New London Turnpike,
Glastonbury, CT 06033

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Barbara Conway (21-01185)

The Hon. Foye A. Smith, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated January 31, 2022, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Carmen Y. Zayas,
Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Louise B. Priest,
8837 Belhaven Court,
Lewisville, NC 27023

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Devonte Poitier, Jr. (22-00085)

The Hon. Foye A. Smith, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated January 31, 2022, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Carmen Y. Zayas,
Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Demetria Noland
c/o Daniel S Jo,
Silver Golub & Teitell LLP,
184 Atlantic Street,
Stamford, CT 06901

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Elizabeth Ruiz (22-00103)

The Hon. Foye A. Smith, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated January 31, 2022, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Carmen Y. Zayas,
Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Alberto Ayala
c/o Owen P Eagan,
Eagan Donohue & Falsey, LLP,
24 Arapahoe Road, West
Hartford, CT 06107

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Arlene Temple, AKA Arlene L. Temple (22-00078)

The Hon. Foye A. Smith, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated January 27, 2022 ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Carmen Y. Zayas,
Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Kathleen E. Temple,
701 Briarwood Court,
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF Justin Jackhari Joseph (22-00076)

The Hon. Foye A. Smith, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated January 26, 2022 ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Carmen Y. Zayas,
Clerk

The fiduciary is:
Jacqueline A. Blair,
353 Granby Street,
Hartford, CT 06112

NOTICE TO CREDITORS ESTATE OF David E. Henry, AKA David Henry (21-00972)

The Hon. Foye A. Smith, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated December 27, 2021, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Carmen Y. Zayas,
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The fiduciary is:
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Wilkinson Law Firm,
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News Briefs

Continued from page 1

and the Connecticut State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), before ending at the State Capitol, where the governor and legislators will be opening the new legislative session. Register Here: <https://act.sierraclub.org/>

Sonia Plumb Dance Company Re-opens February 7

The Sonia Plumb Dance Company will resume in-person classes for the public this Monday, February 7. Classes will be held in the company's new studios in the old GFOX building, 960 Main Street, Hartford. Classes are held Monday through Friday in the morning starting at 9am and in the evening at 4:15 pm. Drop-in classes available. To register for a class, go to: <https://dancestudio-pro.com/online/schoolofspdc>. Parking is available in the Morgan Street parking lot, Morgan Street Garage or on the street. At this time all visitors must enter via Market Street. Please make your way to the 5th Floor and follow the signs. Registration is required 24 hours in advance. On-line options available for some classes.

MARG Monthly Meeting February 10

The Maple Avenue Revitalization Group (MARG) will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, February

10, at 6 pm in the lower level of Saint Augustine Church, 10 Campfield Avenue, Hartford. Guest Speakers will be John Philip, City of Hartford Tax Assessor, who will discuss the impact of the recent tax revaluation, and City Council President Maly Rosado and Thea Montanez, City of Hartford Chief Operating Officer, who will discuss the city's possible use of red light cameras. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing. For more information, call Hyacinth Yennie at 860-296-5543.

Journey Writers Present I Put A Spell On You

On Saturday, February 26, at 7:00 pm, Journey Writers, Inc. will present "I Put A Spell On You," a virtual dramatic reading of LGBTQ historical figures of African American origin. The presentation will challenge audience members to take another look at these polarized and popular personalities who aren't traditionally presented during Black History Month. The cultural contributions of these heroes and heroes, including, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, Langston Hughes, and Nina Simone go without question. They will be presented in the full context of who they were and the times they lived in. "I Put A Spell On You" can be viewed online on the Journey Writers YouTube page or on the group's website: JourneyWriters.org.

Close Brainard? Hell No!

Continued from page 2

bly because there would be nothing for him to gain personally by supporting that plan.

2) Marc DiBella, Bill's son and heir apparent, who chairs Hartford's Democratic Town Committee a private—not city—organization, well-known for unofficially but successfully controlling Hartford's elections. Marc DiBella decides who will be elected mayor and elected to the Democratic seats on City Council...period. The process reeks of shady tactics, coercion, and corruption. Those elected are indebted to DiBella and answer to him, not the people of Hartford.

3) City Councilman James Sanchez. Before becoming a councilor in 2015, Sanchez had a blue-collar job at the MDC. After agreeing to run for office, he was promoted to a white-collar position there at double his former salary (and has two free parking garage spaces downtown—one for each job). Sanchez was the mouthpiece for ventriloquist Marc DiBella and the MDC, hand-picked to put a resolution before City Council to close Brainard and redevelop the land. The six Democrats and councilor John Gale, who formed the 2-3 member "Hartford Party" all voted "Yes", like the good sheep they are. By doing so, the go-along get-alongs on council strengthen their chances of being re-elected.

4) State Senator John Fonfara, a seat he's held for 26 years and is

running for again this November. His predecessor in that senate seat? Bill DiBella, who chose not to run again in 1996 and was instrumental in getting Fonfara elected—and re-elected several times. Fonfara is also indebted to the DiBellas, who both earn their living as influential lobbyists, and he's not going to rock their boat.

5) Mayor Luke Bronin, who also wholly owes his two elections to the city's top job to the machinations of Marc DiBella and the DTC. The benefit to Bronin of redeveloping Brainard is that his wealthy developer pals, who've contributed heavily to his campaigns and in turn have received the green light to get whatever they desire from the city and state in the way of funding and tax breaks, will no doubt get their greedy little hands on the project. And they'll likely financially support the mayor's campaigns for any future elected office.

There you have it. Now, according to Connecticut Airport Authority Executive Director Kevin Dillon, Hartford-Brainard Airport supports 361 jobs, brings in \$28 million in wages, has an economic impact of \$59 million and pays \$1.3 million in state and local taxes. State-owned Brainard is controlled by the CAA, which says it has no plans to close the airfield. But Brainard could still be closed with a vote of the state legislature. Remediation of the land on which Brainard sits is estimated to run into millions of dollars. And word is that the entire redevelop-

ment could take up to 20 years. It's the proverbial pig-in-a-poke, with no guarantee that the expensive players' vision is a viable one. It's an attempted land grab at best, and detrimental to the city of Hartford with no guarantee of success. Do we really need another ill-conceived vanity project in our hurting city? I think we've seen this movie before, and it'll again bomb at the box office, and be a loser in the court of public opinion. Betting on overpriced pie-in-the-sky is unaffordable and stupid. Brainard Airport has a long, notable history and a bright future. It's an asset to the city; more unneeded and unaffordable housing is not. Make your voices heard and stop the steal.

Mike McGarry

Continued from page 2

things you cancel.

Finally, we'll pull out the old saw. If the state is flush financially, seniors and poor people don't need tax credits. They would benefit much more from an increase in the state's payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) again, for all cities and towns, but especially distressed cities. Just two or three mils could save some homeowners and maybe forestall some flights south.

Your reporter does not claim any credit for the suggestions above, they come from varied sources. What the current government does remains to be seen. But doing nothing is a difficult option.

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