



Leading Connecticut's housing industry in growing affordable and equitable housing

Dear Valued Members, Supporters and Friends:

The Affordable Housing Alliance (AHA), (formerly known as the Connecticut Housing Coalition), Board of Directors recently voted to wind up and dissolve the organization. This decision was an especially difficult one as it occurred amidst the COVID 19 pandemic and the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others, which have us all grieving. Today, we find ourselves with the on-going reality that tomorrow's hope for eradicating racism and finding a vaccine for the virus seem years away. At the heart of the solution for each of these current struggles, as well as many other obstacles facing an increasingly disproportionate number of residents in Connecticut, is our fundamental belief that equal access to opportunity will lead us all to healthier relationships and collaborative and safer behaviors.

At AHA, for over 30 years we took many steps towards increasing opportunity in our State. Unfortunately, we have come to realize that the challenges we have been wrestling with now require much larger resources than what we were able to assemble. So, we are stepping aside as an organization, not as individuals, to make room for the leaders of our State, our Financial Institutions, our Philanthropic Partners, our Corporate Sector Foundations, and others to collectively intensify and direct the concerted local efforts that are needed to close the gap and increasing opportunity through housing choice in each and every county of our State.

Connecticut remains a State of segregated communities. We can debate on how we got here and why we have not progressed in the past 30+ years as much as we would have liked. However; this is our reality today. An increasing percentage of residents across our State do not have equal access to opportunity. We can either choose to seek to improve access to opportunity for people living in our State, or we can continue to further widen the gap of opportunities among our communities and continue to drive up the cost of doing business for all of Connecticut. We believe we can figure out together a way to turn "local control" into "local action". This starts first and foremost with safe neighborhoods with quality housing that is affordable for everyone, regardless of a family's employment, health, education, race or religion. Our State is uniquely positioned between Boston and New York City, and is small enough in population to be an incubator for innovative thought, and holistic system changes to take Connecticut's economy from "penny stock" to "blue chip stock", where the investment yield is measured in terms of private sector business growth, sustained tax base, and services that are meaningful to all, resulting in less apprehensions and tensions and more acceptance of the different and the unknown.

We would very much like to believe that we can pass on the baton we created at AHA to a Think Tank style body of engaged, connected, and realistic minds to team up and create a blueprint for what lies ahead in terms of affordable housing policy, development, financing, and operations. Please consider this moment as the beginning of a market rally, a space type contest for brand new ideas, where excitement and invention intersect with the goal of helping our State and our local communities close the gap of economic opportunity. We believe this has to begin today, with giving every family a safe affordable home in a community where they would like to live, with educational opportunity and quality services. Let's get started.

If you have the passion to be involved with closing the gap of opportunity or would like to recommend someone who you believe would be a positive contributor to it, I urge you to contact me at cmartin14@snet.net

Warm regards,

Carol J Martin
President, AHA Board of Directors

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