



## **Van Alen Institute Workshops**

In November and December a group called Performing Parks – a team of architects, educators, and anthropologists – led two workshops that engaged park users and other stakeholders in envisioning the future Coltsville National Historical Park. Performing Parks was commissioned by Van Alen Institute and the National Park Service to develop ideas for innovative visitor experiences, partnerships, narratives, and places at the park, as well as strategies for connecting these elements to a broad, diverse audience.

the site and, more importantly, sparked conversations and ideas for potential partners who could contribute to the vision and implementation of a new kind of historical park.



***Stakeholders at the Van Alen Workshop***



***Workshop participants sharing ideas***

Performing Parks is currently synthesizing the outcomes of both workshops in order to identify opportunities to connect diverse audiences to the park through stories, guiding tools, partnerships, programs, or other means. Findings and proposals will be made public in March 2016.

Through a series of exercises the workshops encouraged local and regional community groups and institutions to share their experiences and perspectives related to Coltsville, the surrounding neighborhood, and the broader context of the city of Hartford. Overarching topics that united stakeholder interests included ecology, education, recreation, neighborhood identity, perceptions of crime, infrastructure, and innovation. These were expanded upon through several mapping exercises, along with a participant-initiated exhibit of personal stories related to Coltsville. The workshops helped to identify the many facets of



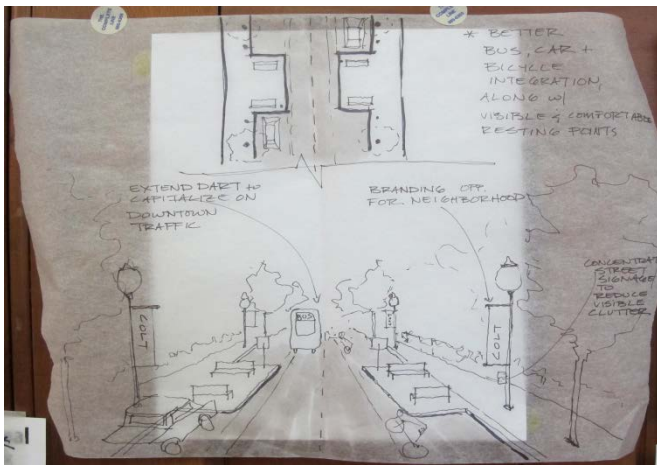
***Participants study the Coltsville Map***

## Walkability Workshops



*Walkability workshop participants*

Dedicated residents of the Coltsville neighborhood spent a Saturday morning envisioning the walkable neighborhood they desire as the National Historical Park is created. With the assistance of John Monroe from the NPS Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, NPS staff and partners from Knox Inc. facilitated five stations set up in the Parish Hall of the Church of the Good Shepherd.



*Coltsville walkability concept*

The hard-working neighbors showed up ready to answer a series of key questions, such as where are the gateways to the neighborhood and what roles can neighbors play as ambassadors? They covered the wall with ideas and annotated poster-sized maps. For additional information or to get involved in Coltsville, please contact Susan Ashman at [Susan\\_Ashman@nps.gov](mailto:Susan_Ashman@nps.gov) or (413) 734-8551.

Many of the residents had attended a “sidewalk detective” training given by Monroe in December. That workshop provided Coltsville neighbors with tools and an approach to assess current walking conditions for residents and visitors.

## Colt's Underwater Galvanic Mine



*The destruction of the ship the Styx by Colt's underwater mine, from a painting by A. Gilbert*

In 1829, when he was 15, Samuel Colt conducted an experiment to use an electric current to fire an underwater explosive to blow up a raft. Elisha Root (Superintendent Colt Firearms) recalled years later:

*It had been noised around that a youngster – one Sam Colt - would blow up a raft on the (Ware) Pond that day, and so I with other apprentices of the neighborhood walked some way to see the sight. An explosion was produced, but the raft was by no means blown sky-high. Yet, curious regarding the boy's explosive contrivances, I then and there made his acquaintance.*

In the 1840's Colt set about refining his design of an underwater mine ignited by an electrical current through an underwater cable. The system was designed to defend harbors from enemy ships. He conducted a series of demonstrations for the Navy and Congress, including the destruction of the Styx on April 13, 1844. Despite the success of the demonstration, Congress and the Navy chose not to pursue procurement of his system.



## Coltsville Advisory Commission

The Coltsville National Historical Park Advisory Commission will advise the National Park Service in the development and implementation of the Coltsville management plan. The management plan must be completed within three years of the park's establishment and provides a five to ten year blueprint for the new park's development. The Commission's job is to offer advice on attaining the primary NPS objectives of preserving Coltsville's historical resources while providing for public enjoyment and visitation.

The legislation creating Coltsville notes that "the Commission shall be composed of 11 members, to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior" and further states that "all appointments must have significant experience with and knowledge of the Coltsville Historic District; and 1 member of the Commission must live in the Sheldon / Charter Oaks neighborhood." The composition of the group will be determined based upon specific recommendations submitted by the following:

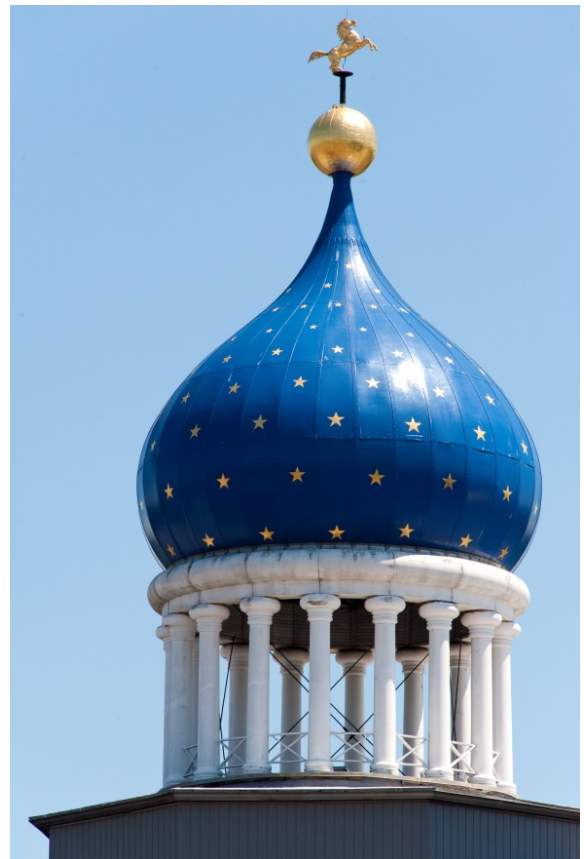
- Governor of the State of Connecticut (2 members)
- Connecticut State Senate President (1 member)
- Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives (1 member)
- Mayor of Hartford (2 members)
- Connecticut's United States Senators (2 members)
- Connecticut's First Congressional District Representative (1 member)
- Those with experience with national parks and historic preservation (2 members)

The Advisory Commission will meet several times a year. Members will be appointed for a three year term although the legislation notes that "a member may be reappointed for not more than 1 additional term." All "Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation"... although Members "shall be allowed travel expenses." Additionally, the "Commission shall terminate on the date that is 10 years after the date of enactment of this Act"

(December, 2024) although there is a provision for a one time extension of 10 years.

The Federal Government has a long history of utilizing citizen input in the policy making process. Creating an advisory commission provides a formal process for citizen input and also provides a necessary means for protecting that input by ensuring that the groups / persons providing advice are accountable to the public. In 1972, Congress provided a system for governing the creation and operation of advisory committees within the executive branch of the United States Government, by enacting the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Federal agencies that sponsor advisory committees must adhere to the requirements of FACA.

If you would like more information on the Coltsville Advisory Commission contact Cassie Werne with the NPS at [cassie\\_werne@nps.gov](mailto:cassie_werne@nps.gov) or 203-834-1896 ext. 13.





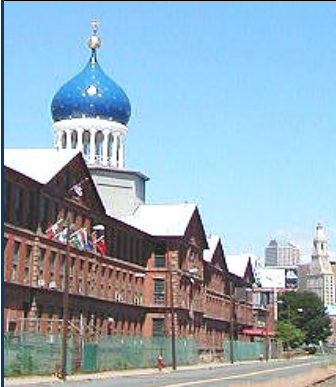
## Restoration of Stained Glass Windows

Elizabeth Colt had the Church of the Good Shepherd built in 1868 as a memorial for her late husband Samuel. It was designed by Edward Tuckerman Potter. Senior Warden Jack Hale indicated that the normal lifespan of stained glass windows is 100 years, with the Church windows now 147 years old. As a result, some were in significant need of restoration. The Trustees of the Colt Trust recently provided \$9000 to restore three windows that had been designed to honor Elizabeth Colt after her death. Stained Glass Resources Inc, documented the windows, removed them, diagrammed each window, removed and replaced the old lead, cleaned the glass, repaired any cracked glass and replaced any missing glass. The restored windows, one of which is shown here, truly reflect the glory of the Church of the Good Shepherd.



*Senior Warden Jack Hale  
in the Church of the Good Shepherd.*

## Contact Us



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