



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 3, 2022, 6:30 p.m. Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the regularly scheduled Meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is October 3, 2022, and the time is 8:10 pm.

I'd like to acknowledge that we are gathered, wherever we are, on the traditional territory of the Lenape people and this territory was a critical resting place along a popular trade route for people of the Lenape Nation and other cultures as is evidenced in the earliest derivation of the name 'Poughkeepsie' with an indigenous string of words, U-puku-ipi-sing, that, when translated, means 'reed-covered lodge by the little water place' or resting place.

Let's all recite the pledge of allegiance.

I. ROLL CALL: 8 present

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Common Council Meeting – September 19, 2022

**Motion to accept the minutes: Councilmember Long
2nd: Councilmember Thompson**

III. READING OF ITEMS by the City Chamberlain of any items not listed on the printed agenda.

-NONE-

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Jamar Cummings – 415 Maple St.

2. **Justin Newmon – 147 Union St. (For the Many)**
3. **Nick Kalogris – 14 Maryland Ave.**
4. **Kane Bowers - 147 Union St. (For the Many)**
5. **Sofia Monosson – 57 Cannon St. (For the Many)**
6. **Daniel Atona – College Ave. (For the Many)**
7. **Naomi Brooks – S. Grand Ave. - submitted written comments**

Common Council October 3, 2022

Thank you for selecting The Newberry project in the RESTORE NY Round 6 funding application. This project should rank quite high using the scoring criteria listed in the Municipal Grant Program's guidelines for funding of proposals. The Newberry already has obtained a SEQRA negative declaration and land use approvals, putting it far along in the development process and demonstrating that it aligns with the principles and processes in place for development in our city.

The project will provide rehabilitation of a pivotal building in the Main Street Corridor, adding to commercial space availability and creating substantially sized new residences. The vacant land that is part of this proposal will be integrated into the project as green space, with programming to benefit the entire community.

The Newberry cannot apply for some other typical sources of funding for buildings of similar age and condition. It is not designated as an historic landmark, it does not meeting the criteria for brownfield remediation, it will not use Low Income or Supportive Housing funding because it will be a market rate development, and it is ineligible for Opportunity Zone benefits because it was purchased prior to that program's inception.

Main Street has become depressed and blighted. Vacant properties add to the hollow feeling of a city whose primary commercial streets are languishing. Having a large iconic building rehabilitated and populated with a vibrant mix of community activity, commercial space, and roomy residences will provide a microcosm of what our newly approved updated Comprehensive Plan seeks to create: a city that has places to live, work, shop, and enjoy the outdoors – all within a compact, convenient, and attractive area. The project will not only increase city property tax revenue from its parcel, but its success should help with increasing the value of other Main Street area properties and *their* tax revenue as well. It will be a key step toward injecting new life into Main Street, a place that can once again be a destination for families to spend time and money.

-Naomi Brooks
S Grand Avenue, Poughkeepsie
October 3, 2022

- 8. Ken Stickle – 118 Catharine St.**
- 9. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave. – submitted written comments**

Laurie Sandow comments, City of Poughkeepsie Common Council meeting, October 3, 2022, Page 1 of 3

I'm going to have to revise my public comments tonight on the fly.

First, briefly expanding on Ken Stickle's remarks about the Fall Kill: If certain members of this Council had not obstructed the LWRP—the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program—the Fall Kill would now be included in the waterfront's expanded boundaries. So this Council has to take some responsibility for the lack of grants, the lost opportunities for grants, the general obstruction of the LWRP, and because the LWRP boundaries still remain limited, the developments that currently escape scrutiny regarding their potential impacts on the Fall Kill and the waterfront.

Regarding Airbnb's, yes, they play a part in the unaffordability and reduced number of rental units in this city, but they are a minor player in the bigger picture of proliferating market rate developments, where every landlord in this city—whether decent or slumlord—takes an attitude similar to “well, if Baxter can get that rent, I can get it for my rental property, too,” and nobody is dealing with that outcome.

This housing crisis is hardly new. In September 2019, RUPCO and the Benjamin Center at SUNY New Paltz hosted a seminar titled “Hudson Valley Housing: The Impact of Short-Term Rentals and the Prospect of Rent Regulation”. Short-term rentals, including Airbnbs were on this Council's agenda in early 2021, a year and a half ago, and the Council for the most part blew it off, more worried about friends who might lose revenue from renting their properties during events like Vassar weekends. And so that item came and went from this Council's agenda and never showed up again.

Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson/For the Many was not in the room at the time, nor were they in the room at the time that Natalie Quinn introduced the Innovation District zoning in 2018. That zoning didn't protect existing affordable housing, and only incentivized, but didn't require, affordable housing.

So I have to shake my head at some of the people who are so righteous now about these issues when they regularly fail to show up and pay attention to these and other issues that come up in front of this Council until one selected issue suddenly wakes them up to organize and promote resolutions. And certain council members like Evan Menist and Megan Deichler—previously inactive on these issues—get involved in pay-to-play support and sponsorship of those resolutions because Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson and For the Many endorsed their campaigns and/or paid for their campaign literature.

Regarding transparency in this city, a certain quote appeared in a recent news article, saying: “The people of this city are the top priority,” and that they would “work to insure that the process [for choosing the new Council Chair would be] as transparent as possible....” I want to make it clear that what follows is a global criticism of both Administration and Council, and not a criticism of any single individual.

And that criticism is: the people of this City are clearly NOT the top priority in this City, and the vast majority of issues, processes and decision-making in this City are conducted behind closed doors, and are decidedly NOT transparent. If they were transparent, City Administrator Marc Nelson would not be blasting me at a public meeting for filing too many Freedom of Information (FOIL) requests. In 2012, NYC passed an “Open Data Law,” mandating that all public data be made available on a single web portal by the end of 2018. That law did not cause the government to topple. On the contrary, during the pandemic, access to open data proved invaluable as members of the public—at no cost to government—used it to create all kinds of applications that served both government and public needs and uses. Yet no-one in this City has ever introduced a similar law or otherwise made the effort to make data and decision-making open and accessible to the public. As a consequence, FOIL requests are the only option for obtaining most information, and the City consistently sits on those requests as long as possible before providing answers, most often answering incompletely.

I understand that my own 8th Ward representative, Megan Deichler, who held just one dog-and-pony ward meeting, and who makes no effort to keep her constituents informed and engaged, has behind closed doors, put some time and efforts into rallying other councilmembers to call me out. Is calling me out an urgent matter on this City's agenda?

This Council is composed of members, nearly all of whom have never spoken before the Council as private citizens, never attended or asked questions at Informational Meetings, never attend or speak or keep themselves informed about the agendas of other City board and committee meetings, yet fall all over themselves to limit public comments at Council meetings, and slash and burn the time allotted to public participation at the 2x-yearly Charter-mandated Informational Meetings.

Adding to their secrecy and silence, this Council has embraced the use of Consent Agendas where decisions have been made behind closed doors, masking the non-participation, absences and ignorance of certain councilmembers. Not one Councilmember chose to step up and talk about their experience on the PK4Keeps Steering Committee, nor did one councilmember set up a public hearing or a Ward meeting where Natalie Quinn would have to meet and answer to the public in person. A very recent example of failure to communicate, and absence of open data, is the resignation of Council Chair Sarah Salem. Neither the City nor a single member of the Council posted about that resignation, even after it was covered by local news outlets. It wasn't until I tagged all the Councilmembers on social media, that the Acting Chair responded to say the issue was on the agenda for an upcoming Caucus meeting.

Until the councilmembers whose primary contribution during meetings is "no comment, no questions"—rather than seriously and publicly address the questions and concerns on the minds of their constituents—perhaps it would be fitting to shift those members to the other side of the Chamber rail and consign them to the 3-minute time limit of public comments.

10. Gus Kazolias – Noxon St.

V. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Chairwoman Cherry: My comments are just simple. So we have put out a call for resumes for the position of Councilmember At-Large. As of today, yesterday, well, actually, Sunday, I reached out to my colleagues. We had five applications yesterday. As of tonight, we have seven. We will be reviewing all the resumes together as a council and we'll be making a decision. This is a decision based on majority vote. So I will reserve further comments until we get together and discuss the applicants. But you still have time to put in your resume. The posting closes on Friday. I did reach out to each applicant today just sending I received sort of email. So if you did not receive that email, you might want to resubmit. And that concludes my comments.

VI. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

VII. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

VIII. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

CONSENT AGENDA:

IX. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A motion to receive and print the Consent Agenda items was made by Councilmember Long and seconded by Councilmember Menist.

- 1. R-22-71, Resolution Approving the License Agreement with the Poughkeepsie Alliance for the Champion's Walk Project**

**RESOLUTION
(R-22-71)**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR INSTALLATION,
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF AREAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE "COREY
INGRAM CIRCLE OF CHAMPIONS WALK"**

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER FLOWERS:

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie is the owner of certain property at 225 Smith Street, City of Poughkeepsie, Tax Id #6162-57-605460, dedicated to be known as "Corey Ingram Circle" as well as certain lands within the right of way of Smith Street and Salt Point Turnpike as shown in the attached Exhibit A (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Property"); and

WHEREAS, the Poughkeepsie Alliance Inc. wishes to collaborate with the City and other not-for-profits to establish: 1) the "Corey Ingram Circle of Champions Walk" (hereinafter the "Champions Walk"); 2) a memorial to Corey Ingram; and 3) install a centerpiece marking the entrance to the City of Poughkeepsie at the Property as well; and

WHEREAS, the Champion's Walk will consist of improvements to create a memorial recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to the Northside of the City of Poughkeepsie; and

WHEREAS, a license agreement is necessary between the City and the Poughkeepsie Alliance Inc. in order to install, operate and maintain the Champion's Walk.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie hereby finds and determines that it is in the best interest of the City to enter into a License Agreement with the Poughkeepsie Alliance Inc. upon the terms and conditions annexed hereto as Exhibit A and made a part hereof; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor, City Administrator and Corporation Counsel are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the terms of this resolution including but not limited to the execution of the attached License Agreement.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER _____.

R-22-71						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Long	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Thompson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Shook	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Deichler	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chairwoman Cherry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

2. R-22-71, Resolution Approving an Agreement with NYS DOT

RESOLUTION (R-22-72)

INTRODUCED BY ACTING CHAIR CHERRY _____:

WHEREAS, pursuant to General Municipal Law Section 99-r, the City may enter into a contract with any state agency for services; and

WHEREAS, the City's Department of Public Works has a long-standing relationship through prior Shared Services Agreements with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) wherein the City and the State share services, exchange or lend materials or

equipment which shall promote and assist the maintenance of State and Municipal roads and highways and provide a cost savings by maximizing the effective utilization of both parties' resources; and

WHEREAS, prior Shared Services Agreements have expired; and

WHEREAS, the parties wish to continue this long-standing and mutually beneficial relationship by executing the Shared Services Agreement attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Common Council hereby authorizes the Mayor to execute the attached Share Services Agreement with the NYS DOT.

SECONDED BY _____.

R-22-72			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled	Councilmember Long	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Thompson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Shook	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Deichler	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chairwoman Cherry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

3. R-22-73, Resolution of Support for The Newberry Project in Application to the Restore NY Grant Program

**RESOLUTION
(R-22-73)**

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER MENIST :

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie is desirous of submitting a grant application to Round 6 of the Restore NY grant program, offered through Empire State Development Corporation for funding to support the rehabilitation of a vacant property at 278-288 Main Street, also referred to as “The Newberry;” and

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie is committed to advancing its economic development strategy and local revitalization goals through ongoing collaboration with other governmental units and private partners; and

WHEREAS, the funding for the Restore NY program is appropriate for this specific rehabilitation project and facilitates the effective and efficient use of existing and future public resources so as to promote both economic development and the preservation of community resources; and

WHEREAS, the City held a public hearing on September 16, 2022 in order to receive public comment on proposed applications and related Property Assessment Lists; and

WHEREAS, the City was presented with two (2) potential projects equally qualified for this grant award;

WHEREAS, the Common Council's decision was a difficult one, as both projects reflect great steps forward in the revitalization of Poughkeepsie; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council is desirous of lending its support and endorsement to the Newberry application which has been deemed to support its overarching revitalization goals.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie supports and endorses the City's Restore NY Round 6 grant application to secure funds in supporting of rehabilitating the vacant property at 278-288 Main Street commercial and residential use;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor is authorized and hereby shall do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution including but not limited to signing any document needed for submission or acceptance of the grant.

SECONDED BY _____.

R-22-73						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Long	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Thompson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Shook	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Deichler	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chairwoman Cherry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

X. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

ACTION AGENDA:

XI. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

XII. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

XIII. PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- 1. COMMUNICATION FROM COMMISSIONER OF FINANCE DR. BRIAN MARTINEZ**, Regarding an Administrative Change to the Sanitation Billing Process
- 2. COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ADMINISTRATOR NELSON** Authorizing the City to Transition Certain Employee Health Care Benefits from NYSHIPs “Empire Plan” to NYSHIPs “Excelsior Plan”, and to pursue same via the Collective Bargaining Process.

A motion was made to defer the below communications/petitions to Corporation Counsel by Councilmember Long and was seconded by Councilmember Menist.

- 3. FROM RENA CLARK**, a notice of personal injury sustained on June 20, 2022.
- 4. FROM TALIA TURK**, a notice of personal injury sustained on August 13, 2022.
- 5. FROM LUIS R. DIAZ RODRIGUEZ**, a notice of personal injury sustained on September 6, 2022.
- 6. FROM KATHERINE A. LOJA**, a notice of personal injury sustained on September 12, 2022.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A motion was made by Councilmember Thompson and seconded by Councilmember Diechler to adjourn the meeting at 9:32pm.

Dated: October 12, 2022

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, October 3, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmin Nicole Davis
City Chamberlain

