



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 6, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the regularly scheduled Meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is Monday, February 6, 2023, and the time is 6:33 pm.

I. ROLL CALL: 8 present; 1 absent (Councilmembers Thompson)

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

**Public Hearing Meeting – January 30, 2023
Public Hearing Meeting – January 30, 2023
Common Council Meeting – January 30, 2023**

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

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

-YES-

ADD: Under VIII. CONSENT AGENDA: MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

R-23-21, Resolution Setting a Public Hearing on the Draft Update to the Zoning and Land Use Regulations Dated December 2022

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- **Nick Kalogris – 14 Maryland Ave.**
- **Marta Knapp – 10 S. Clinton**
- **Sal Maiello – 132 Thompson St.**
- **Laurie Sandow, S. Grand Ave. – *submitted written comments***
- **Daniel Atona – College Ave. – For the Many**
- **Melissa Hoffman – Lexington Ave.**
- **Kamal Diogen**

Newly minted Senator Rolison was recently quoted as saying the Governor must (quote) “take negotiations out of Albany’s backrooms, and expose them to the sunlight of public opinion for all to see.” Yet, the sunlight of public opinion was never Rolison’s policy while in office as Mayor, and it’s equally clear that sunlight is rejected by the City’s current unelected Mayor, its Corporation Counsel, certain City staff and the Common Council alike.

Natalie Quinn won’t expose herself and her zoning plans to public Q&A at a well-publicized, recorded meeting. But out of nowhere a resolution has been added to tonight’s agenda for a public hearing where, once again, our councilmembers are deaf, dumb and silent as to whether they’ve read and commented and interacted with their own constituents on this zoning plan. In fact, when I asked that question on Megan Deichler’s Facebook page, she illegally hid the comment, as Evan Menist tends to hide comments on his page, too—illegally. A suit that Trump lost. But nice that you’re both in the Trump camp.

Natalie Quinn and Chamberlain Davis, of their own accord, have recently altered either webcast video or transmitted public comments. Until a few minutes ago, tonight’s Council agenda listed presentations only, with zero Board and Committee reports and no motions and resolutions. Council packets continue to be posted as non-searchable text by our very public-unfriendly Chamberlain.

Both Nelson and the Council willfully ignore Emails they’ve received, and questions posed to them at meetings. Mr. Mayor, the public would like to know whether you’re collecting two salaries? Are you secretly assembling a Charter Review Commission? Why don’t you trust the City’s webmail system?

Corporation Counsel Valk has taken no action against the Common Council who, for more than two years, has willfully disenfranchised the public and violated the City Charter’s redistricting obligations. The City’s Code of Ethics reads in part: *“that there are rules of ethical conduct for public officers and employees which must be observed if a high degree of moral conduct and public confidence is to be maintained in our unit of local government.”* Valk’s office both spoke with and received a written critique from the Benjamin Center’s Josh Simons **in advance** of the Redistricting Commission’s first presentation. Valk’s office did not inform the Commission of that contact, and only acknowledged it after more than one Freedom of Information request.

And the person who shared the Commission's maps with Simons—as yet unidentified and without sanction or punishment? Could it be Evan Menist, the Majority Leader who stood right next to Nathan Shook and swore he did not know and had no contact with Josh Simons? Who also claimed that no Councilmembers, himself included, submitted Charter-obligated comments in response to the Redistricting Commission's maps, when Councilmember Flowers reports otherwise, including that Menist told her he forgot to forward those comments? the same Evan Menist who was among several council members conveniently absent from the January 30 redistricting public hearing?

What **DOES** Valk choose to enforce? Despite Chair Brown's declaration that the 2023 Council rules were delayed because (quote) "there was some legal ramifications that the way the rules were written, we needed to change" (close quote), neither Brown nor Valk took the opportunity to create a Council consent agenda policy, nor created rules, policies and penalties for a wide spectrum of other Councilmember trespasses. In response to a Freedom of Information request, the Chamberlain—and not the Corporation Counsel—wrote:

"There are no documents responsive to your request. Further, even if such legal opinions had been reduced to writing, the information requested is covered by the attorney-client privilege and, therefore, exempt from disclosure under law."

Over a century ago, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis said: "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants." More than one-half century ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Is 50 years and more not enough time for this Council to bend towards moral, ethical, transparent and community-driven governance?

V. CHAIRWOMAN'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

I have no comments tonight.

VI. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Thank you, Chairwoman Brown. I also didn't have any comments, but I do want to just follow up on a couple of things we've heard from public commenters. So thank you for this. I'll be brief.

With respect to the zoning my office requested, I and development has extended the period of time for public comment through February 23rd. You know, the mayor's office has been receiving the same calls and concerns via the zoning draft that is on our website. As my colleagues on the council have, I want to be clear that it's just a draft. And, you know, as was the case with the city's comprehensive plan, as was the case with the local waterfront revitalization program that took, you know, three and a half, four years before that was passed.

There is going to be ample time for public comment and for revisions to this draft. My colleagues on the council are taking the same action tonight, working on a resolution to set a public hearing. And in the resolution, it specifically says that this is one of presumably many. And I think the chairwoman said that there could be multiple public hearings on this.

So I don't want any public comments to lead folks, particularly watching at home, might have tuned in late to assume that, you know, this council and certainly not my office is going to, you know, railroad some zoning change through without adequate public comment. That just simply isn't happening. And, you know, I believe my signature is required on the document. So I want to work with the public and the council to come up with something that works for the city of Poughkeepsie with respect to a couple of issues.

We are continuing to have some trouble with sanitation. I want to apologize to citizens for service interruptions and delays related to the fire at the transfer station. I reported on this to the common council a few weeks ago. I didn't have much to say then. I can update the public now that we're in the final stages of working with our insurer and we expect to have a resolution to the related insurance claims soon.

Our DPW commissioner has priced out a replacement sanitation truck. One of our trucks was damaged in the fire, apparently beyond repair. I saw the back and forth between our finance Commissioner and Commissioner Gen I and the Commissioner of Finance has approved that, even though we haven't quite finalized the insurance on it yet because we're anticipating that that will be done next week to replace that single piece of equipment is \$125,000.

And obviously, once we order it, it's going to take some time to get here. And, you know, we're looking at other options. And I see our sanitation, Mr. Johnson is here, and I want to thank him and his staff for everything that's happened. We're also close to working out a transfer with our Poughkeepsie City school district to get one of their trucks as well. And I'll update the council more on that.

In two weeks, we should have more information.

Lastly, Chairwoman Brown, I want to just go back to the vacancy study. I want to assure my colleagues on the council and the public that the request for proposals actually just three quotes I think we need on this will be going out from City Hall on the 17th of this month, and we expect a narrow period of time just to get quotes on this. Obviously, the vacancy study is an important part of the council's legislative agenda and we want to facilitate that as quickly as we can. Thank you.

VII. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

~~VIII. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:~~

CONSENT AGENDA:

IX. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A motion to accept the Consent Agenda was made by Councilmember Long and seconded by Councilmember Johnson.

- 1. R-23-21, Resolution Setting a Public Hearing on the Draft Update to the Zoning and Land Use Regulations Dated December 2022**

RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE DRAFT UPDATE TO THE ZONING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS DATED DECEMBER 2022

(R-23-21)

INTRODUCED BY CHAIRWOMAN BROWN:

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council adopted a new Comprehensive Plan for the City by Resolution R-22-62 on September 6, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie has released a draft update to the City's Zoning and Land Use Regulations dated December 2022 (the "Draft Zoning Amendments") and available at the following website: <https://www.pk4keeps.org/home>

WHEREAS, the City is currently accepting public feedback on the Draft Zoning Amendments through February 23, 2023 and, after that date, revisions will be made to the Draft Zoning Amendments as appropriate; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the online submission form available for public comments, the Common Council wishes to hold a public hearing on the Draft Zoning Amendments; and

WHEREAS, this will be the first public hearing on the Draft Zoning Amendments; there will be at least one more public hearing after the next round of revisions are released.

NOW, THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie shall hold a public hearing to receive comments on the draft update to the City's Zoning and Land Use Regulations dated December 2022 on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 2023 at 6 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers, Third Floor, 62 Civic Center Plaza, Poughkeepsie, New York and the Chamberlain is hereby directed to publish proper notice of the above hearing.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER: _____.

R-23-21- VOICE VOTE						
			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled	Councilmember Grant	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Long	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Deichler	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Thompson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Shook	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chairwoman Brown	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

XI. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

XII. PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- 1. A PRESENTATION FROM JOULE ASSETS / COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION**, Regarding Hudson Valley Community Power
- 2. A PRESENTATION FROM RELATED AFFORDABLE**, Regarding Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Opportunity - Rip Van Winkle House
- 3. A PRESENTATION FROM BAXTER LLC.**, Regarding Development of the Garden St. Lot

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

4. **FROM WILLIAM SMART**, a notice of personal injury sustained on or around October 28, 2022.
5. **FROM ROBERT SCORES**, a notice of property damage sustained on or around September 19, 2022.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Councilmember Thompson and seconded by Councilmember Shook to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM.

Dated: February 15, 2023

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, February 6, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmin Nicole Davis
City Chamberlain