

Poughkeepsie Public Arts Commission Minutes | January 19, 2023 | 6:30pm | City Hall

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm

Members of PPAC in attendance: Jeff Aman, Art Jones, Tim McQueen, Jean Hinkley, Onaje Benjamin, and Brianna Charter, and Harrison Brisbon-McKinnon

Harrison Brisbon-McKinnon spoke briefly after being welcomed as a new PPAC member by Chm. Aman.

II. APPROVE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 17, 2022 MEETING

Brianna Charter moved to approve the minutes; Onaje Benjamin seconded.

The minutes were approved by a thumbs up vote.

III. CHAIRMAN AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Chm Aman spoke about recent arts events in Poughkeepsie and said Battery Dance representatives will be speaking at the next meeting.

Tim McQueen spoke about the Poughkeepsie Rising show in December and said it was a great success. Moreover it was well attended by young people because the Poughkeepsie Public School District arranged to get students to the event.

Chm. Aman announced that because Mayor Nelson was attending this evening's PPAC meeting, the order of items presented on the meeting's agenda would be changed.

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IV. PRESENTATIONS:

1. VASSAR COLLEGE MUSIC MODFEST 2023

Tom Pacio spoke about some of the highlights of Modfest this year. He highlighted the “Welcome to Indian Country” (an evening-length celebration of Native culture through music and storytelling), while mentioning several other events—including exhibitions at the Loeb Art Center (Vassar College’s art museum).

In addition, Monica Church spoke about the “Imploding Meaning” exhibition, which opens at Vassar College’s Palmer gallery next Thursday, and about events planned around the show too.

V. PPAC 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

Chm. Aman provided an overview of developments in the arts that involved the participation of the Poughkeepsie Public Arts Commission. Below is a partial list of matters he addressed:

- One of the concerns that the PPAC devoted much attention to is the Whale sculpture in Waryas Park, which was considered too damaged to restore and was being removed instead.
- The PPAC was very active in promoting concerts and exhibitions throughout the City.
- The PPAC passed significant resolutions last year regarding, for example, the future use of the Pelton Park Mansion and the BOCES Cooperative Services Program.

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V. PPAC 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW (continued)

- A lot of work has been done with the Poughkeepsie Public School District, which has led to improvements in arts offerings for students. Moreover, a comprehensive plan for arts education is now being developed.
- The PPAC also developed links to the community through social media.
- We helped artists and organizations by providing information and answering inquiries.
- We also invited people to speak at PPAC meetings and helped connect arts organizations with one another.

VI. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR MARC NELSON (added to agenda)

City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Marc Nelson attended this evening's meeting and was asked to speak about some of the things planned for 2023 regarding the arts. He spoke at length, and below is a brief account of some of the matters he addressed:

In general, the Mayor made it clear that he is a strong supporter of the arts, which he thinks are very important for the City and its future.

He said the PPAC is important in helping to advance the arts in Poughkeepsie and make it a better place to reside in. He thanked the PPAC board members for their service.

He announced that youth grant applications are coming out soon and that arts and culture are part of the program.

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VI. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR MARC NELSON (continued)

Aside from supporting youth through arts opportunities, the mayor said he also wants to do more to support senior services and will seek advice from the PPAC regarding this matter.

In addition, the Mayor said that he is and an advocate for more funding for the arts.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

1. PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION 2023 PRIORITIES

Because Mayor Nelson was attending this evening's PPAC meeting, Chm. Aman asked him how he thought the PPAC can make a difference in setting its priorities for the current year. This led to a broad discussion:

Among the several matters discussed were possible sources of funding for promoting arts events and other developments. The Mayor said, for example, that some Economic Development funds might be available from the City to support the arts.

Among some other matters discussed were a desire to bring back "First Friday" as a monthly downtown event and the need of a Spanish-speaking intern for the PPAC to better serve all of the City's residents.

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VII. NEW BUSINESS (continued):

1. PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION 2023 PRIORITIES (continued)

PPAC member Harrison Brisbon-McKinnon brought up the need to better serve the interests of Poughkeepsie's African-American residents in regard to arts activities and events. In response, Tim McQueen recommended the formation of a Cultural Curation Committee to consider ways to better represent all demographics in the City of Poughkeepsie.

2. LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLAN - Arts Perspective.

Chm. Aman briefly discussed the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and said it is a very detailed document. He mentioned outdoor art included in the plan and said that entertainment is also part of the revitalization. He described the plan as a positive document overall and encouraged all PPAC members to read it.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

1. WHALE SCULPTURE IN WARYAS PARK - status update.

Chm. Aman announced that the whale sculpture has been demolished. He also provided an "autopsy" of the sculpture, explaining how, from the time of his creation, it was doomed to collapse from underneath. He added that nothing could have been done to save it.

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VIII. OLD BUSINESS (continued):

2. POUGHKEEPSIE ARTS AND CULTURE NON-PROFIT - Feasibility and plan of attack.

Chm. Aman suggested that if a non-profit organization of this type is formed in Poughkeepsie, it might be good to have something similar to Beacon's arts nonprofit—with a clear mission that deals with public arts events. He also recommended that a separate committee be formed with community members from outside of the PPAC to plan its development fairly quickly. This would require some funding support from the City of Poughkeepsie.

Several PPAC members got into discussion on this issue.

IX. RESOLUTIONS: None.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: 3 minutes per person on any topic.

Poughkeepsie artist Suprina announced that she is setting up a gallery on Main Street to try to help rebuild Main Street as a place where art has a noticeable presence.

XI. CURRENT EXHIBITS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Vassar College MODFest 2023, January 26-February 5: <https://www.vassar.edulmusic>
- Gallery 40: "A Kind of Magic" group show.
- WomensWork.art: closed for winter break

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XI. CURRENT EXHIBITS AND UPCOMING EVENTS (continued):

- Fall Kill Creative Works: Classes and workshops at www.fallkillcreativeworks.org
- Adriance Memorial Library: Bridget Pavalow "Embracing"
- Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center: exhibits by Renee Samuels, Frank Rapant, and Adrian Lee
- Majed J. Nesheiwat Convention Center: www.midhudsonciviccenter.org
- Bardavon 1869 Opera House: www.bardayon.org
- Museum of the Hudson Valley at Christ Episcopal Church

XII. ADJOURNMENT:

Tim McQueen moved to adjourn the meeting; Jean Hinkley seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

The next PPAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

Minutes prepared by Art Jones, PPAC Secretary