



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 15, 2021 6:30 p.m.

City Hall

The Council Meeting was conducted using videoconferencing, as permitted by the NYS Open Meetings Law.

Welcome to the regularly scheduled meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is March 15, 2021, and the time is 6:34 pm.

Effective immediately and based upon notices and health advisories issued by Federal, State, and Local officials related to the Coronavirus, the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council will not hold in-person meetings. Until further notice, all future City Council meetings (including public hearings) will be held via videoconferencing, as permitted by the NYS Open Meetings Law.

Due to public health and safety concerns, the public will not be permitted to attend at the remote locations where the City Council members will be situated. The public, however, will be able to fully observe the video conference meeting by using the registration link that was posted with our meeting notice and the meeting will be available for viewing at a later date and available on our website.

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. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL- Seven present, two absent (Councilmember Cherry and Councilmember R. Johnson)

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Official Minutes of the Common Council Meeting of March 15, 2021

- 1. A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Menist to accept the minutes.**

CCM Minutes of Public Hearing 03-01-2021						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember McNamara	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

CCM Minutes of 03-01-2021						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember McNamara	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

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

NONE

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Three (3) minutes per person up to 45 minutes of public comment on any agenda and non-agenda items.

1. Joan D. Mandle, PhD – 201 Riverview Drive
2. Kevin Carswell - 38 Maurerbrook Drive, Fishkill, NY
3. Bill Rubin – 18 Eagle Lane
4. Nick Garin – 98 S.Hamilton St
5. Darrett Roberts – Franklin St
6. Laura Forman – Washington St
7. Judy Lombardi -6 Spoor Ave
8. Robert Phillips – 130 Hudson Pointe
9. Kris Tal
10. Brian Robinson -143 Montgomery St
11. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave
12. Mae Parker Harris

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Laurie Sandow comments at Common Council meeting, March 15, 2021 — Pg. 1 of 2

It is ironic that today's Special Informational Meeting was abruptly curtailed, only half taking place during Sunshine Week, the annual, enduring event launched in 2005 to promote open government and access to public information. And that with only three remaining members of the public signed up to speak—myself among them—Sarah Salem chose to reschedule the Informational meeting rather than delay the start of the Council meeting. As if delays were a rare occurrence, and the public not repeatedly kept waiting by Councilmembers who show up late, and meetings that are constantly delayed by the irresponsible and overly long use and abuse of recesses and executive sessions.

I understand Ms. Cherry's excused absence (due to death of coach Chris McLaurin), but what's Chris Petsas' excuse for yet another absence and short shrift to the job he's elected to and paid for, instead choosing to pop on and off camera from the kitchen of the Exempt Firemen's.

As with the two previous Information meetings during Salem's term as Council Chair, Salem again violated the City Charter in convening that meeting, failing to post and publish written public notice in the city's official newspaper as well as on the city's website fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. An additional violation was the Councilmembers who did not show up and are not on camera now.

But there's no news there—Council Chair Salem violates Council Rules, the City Charter and the Administrative Code on a regular basis, as do several other councilmembers. While pretending to be greatest defenders and advocates of transparency and democracy, these self-glorifying, grandstanding councilmembers have devolved the Council into an opaque, backbiting, infighting, behind-closed doors operation catering to internal factions and citywide deception.

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Laurie Sandow comments at Common Council meeting, March 15, 2021 — Pg. 2 of 2

I'm going to withhold my questions and comments about the smear that appeared in a Mid Hudson News article, which I would have addressed to Chief Pape had the Special Informational Meeting not been illegally, abruptly terminated and rescheduled, except to say that no legitimate news source would lend itself to circulating the smear campaign leaked from Police Department records. Of course, our own Common Council has itself set the low bar for leaks, infighting, smear campaigns and false narratives.

Lastly, I have heard some people complain that the walk-on at the last Common Council meeting was undemocratic. They are wrong. It's one of the few occasions where the Council actually followed its own rules, exercising the option provided under Council Rule V, which consigns walk-ons to New Business, an item always scheduled at the end of meetings. I wonder why the same people complaining about the walk-on, have never once protested other last-minute agenda additions and deletions, or other Council member refusals to respond to Freedom of Information requests—these having become commonplace under Salem's regime, including certain agenda alterations that have still never been posted or were only made public once the Council meeting got underway.

As to the public being deprived of their voice, what else is new? The Council Chair, by law, had the power to invoke a rule at the last meeting that permits comment by any member of the public who wished to be heard prior to that late-night vote. The Chair chose not to do so. During the Council's recess, it seems the Chair also chose not to give access or voice to some of their very own fellow councilmembers. Instead, only a select, privileged small faction met in recess with the City's counsel—yet another window into the world of Council backbiting, infighting and lack of democracy.

You have no idea how much I wish that all members of the public would actively watch and participate in the entirety of Council meetings, rather than jump on and off as quickly as their item of particular interest has passed. Perhaps a good but hard way to learn that democracy's not a spectator sport, and that this City would be improved by constant, weekly, determined, sometimes tedious advocacy for good governance and transparency.

V. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

The Common Council is still accepting resumes and Letters of Interest for the Southern Waterfront Site Redevelopment Task Force, with a deadline to submit by March 20, and the Redistricting Commission, with a deadline to submit by March 31. There are always opportunities for community members to get involved with the City as a volunteer. We rely on volunteers to fill our committees, boards, commissions, and more and to lend their expertise. More information on how to get involved and if there are requests for positions to be filled can be found on our city website at www.cityofpoughkeepsie.com.

COVID is still causing incredible harm to our community. It's been a year since we had to cancel our in chamber Council Meeting and figure out another way, which we did, at the very next meeting by using GoToWebinar, which didn't work, so we switched to Zoom Webinar, which isn't perfect, however, it's working and we are trying to work it the best we can and allow for public participation. This platform does present on-going challenges for folks who don't have stable and consistent internet access, if at all, and who don't have a device suited to host virtual meetings. I understand that this virtual platform does present these challenges to folks who are facing these barriers to accessing meetings online. The Coronavirus has thrown a lot of uncertainty onto us as a community. One of the things that I've been thinking a lot about today the way that our community has and continues to come together in the face of this incredible challenge, incredible adversity. A virus that has taken so so so many lives and that we're still dealing with to this day. Although things are looking better than they were a year ago. It's good to see how our community has adapted to the crisis put before us. I wanted to give thanks to the City, Departments, to all the Councilmembers, who adapted themselves, our Public Safety employees, our educators, our families, First responders, our food access organizations, and our farmers, and Health Care workers who put their lives out on the line every single day and who continue to do that- the list is incredible.

I've been thinking about this all day because on this day a year ago at my job we had to completely change the way we operate to continue to provide food to folks and think of a way to do that with dignity and we are continuing to think about that with the emergency need still out there. One of the things that I keep coming back to is the fact that this community demonstrated just how much care we have for each other. Between the mutual aid networks that just seemed to appear almost organically, and the way that we were able to extend what we had to folks who didn't have as much as us. We're continuing to see this demonstrated as we have vaccines and we finally have an increased rollout of access to those vaccines although it is still difficult for many to get appointments and we still need more pop-up sites specifically here in the City of Poughkeepsie for folks who can't drive up to the edges of the state or wherever else there are appointments available. But this demonstration of care gives me hope and I am feeling optimistic that we can we will continue to get through this as long as we work together as long as we understand that through City Government especially, and in politics, there's always going to be differences of

opinion. That's ok. It's encouraged, actually, in a Democracy. However, us being able to lean in on each other and to try and figure out the best path forward for ourselves, our family, our friends, our community together, instills so much optimism and hope in me. I know that if we can do that, we will continue to get through this.

Information on getting tested, contact tracing, resources available are available on the city and county website. Vaccination information is available on the County and New York State websites. I understand the eligible folks are having difficulty making appointments locally to receive the vaccine. Limited supply is causing this to occur. I'm feeling optimistic that with more vaccine supply, we will see more local and accessible pop-up vaccination locations for those who are eligible for the shot. In the meantime, available appointments are posted to the County and State websites, you can sign up for email or text alerts, or you can call directly for access to appointments. If you are eligible, get a vaccine- whichever one you can get, wear a mask (wear two!), keep your distance in public places, and continue to use all of the safety devices we have been using over the last year.

VI. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

NONE

VII. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

2. A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Flowers to receive and print.

1. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE, SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE PROPOSED NOMINATION OF "EASTMAN PARK OVAL" AS A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

(R-21-33)

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER MENIST:

WHEREAS, an application for nomination as a locally designated Historic Landmark has been received by the City of Poughkeepsie for property known as the "Eastman Park Oval"; and

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie Historic District and Landmarks Preservation Commission (hereinafter "HDLPC") held a public hearing on February 11, 2021; and

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WHEREAS, the HDLPC voted in favor of the proposed nomination and approved the application on February 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 19-4.5(4)(g) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Poughkeepsie, the HDLPC's approved application was forwarded to the Common Council for consideration on February 16, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council is required to hold a public hearing prior to the designation of any historic landmark within sixty (60) days from receipt of the approved application from the HDLPC; and

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Chamberlain be, and she hereby is authorized and directed to publish a Notice of Public Hearing to be held April 5, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. concerning the designation of the "Eastman Park Oval" as a locally designated historic landmark.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BRANNEN

R21-33			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember McNamara	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chair Salem	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐

VIII. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- 1. A PRESENTATION FROM GERALDINE LAYBOURNE and DR. JULIE RIESS ,**
on the Day One Early Learning Community.

2. **A COMMUNICATION FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**, regarding a Resolution Transferring Ownership of the former YMCA Property to Dutchess County for the Design and Construction of a New Youth Center.
3. **A COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCILMEMBER CHERRY**, regarding a proposed IMA with the School District regarding Parking Enforcement.
4. **FROM KENDRA SMITH**, a notice of personal injury sustained on December 23, 2020.
5. **FROM EL BRACERO RESTAURANT**, a located at 581 Main Street, a notice of intent to renew their Liquor License.
6. **FROM TERESA FANDEL**, a notice of property damage sustained on or about February 23, 2021

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

X. NEW BUSINESS:

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Flowers to adjourn the meeting at 9:53pm.

Dated: March 18, 2021

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, March 15, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. DeLuca
Acting City Chamberlain

