



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 6:00 pm

Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the scheduled Public Hearing in the City of Poughkeepsie. The date is April 16, 2024, and the time is 6:00 pm.

This Hearing is for the purpose of receiving comments concerning the designation of 124 Smith St and 63 Cottage St – the AME Zion Church – as local historic landmarks.

I. WELCOME

II. ROLL CALL: ALL PRESENT

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Five (5) minutes per person public comment.

1. Desiree King – Ferris Lane
2. Antonia Mauro – Willow Ave
3. Holly Wahlberg – Garfield Ave
4. John Mylod – Beechwood Ave*
5. Eileen Hayden – Gaskin Rd
6. Gary Privratsky – Worrall Ave*
7. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave*

*Submitted written statement

John Mylod
P.O. Box 1169
Beechwood Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY
12602

April 16, 2024

Poughkeepsie Common Council
City Hall
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601
Members of the Council,

Re: Nomination of the Smith Metropolitan
A.M.E Zion Church on Smith Street.

My name is John Mylod. I live on Beechwood Avenue in the City. I am a founding member, and current Secretary of Springside Landmark Restoration, a City Landmark, as well as National Historic Landmark, on Academy Street.

Tonight, I am here in support of the nomination of the Smith Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church to be included on the list of City Landmarks.

The details in the nomination are clearly spelled out in the written document and application by Holly Wahlberg, who is well known for her impeccable research and well sourced scholarship.

I believe that Landmarking the church is the right and just thing to do. It recognizes not only the important facts associated with the building itself, but in doing so, also recognizes the congregation's journey over half a century from its early years on Washington Street, to Church Street, then to Catharine Street, and finally to the corner of Smith and Cottage Streets.

This journey included many struggles, rivalries and challenges, but with each move there was progress and new life. The congregation was blessed with finding the right person at the right time with the appointment of Rev. Judd as pastor. Rev. Judd had a reputation as a doer and builder of community as well as buildings. He reached out to Willaim Smith who owned property on Cottage Street and convinced him to help build a new church. Smith was one of the Smith Brothers, whose cough drops were famous throughout America. Although not part of the congregation, Smith believed in the effort and in Rev. Judd. From corner stone to capstone William Smith and Rev. Judd were crucial members of the team that made the dream of a new church a reality.

More of this story can be and needs to told and it is fitting that this site should be approved and enrolled on the list of City Landmarks

April 16, 2024

Smith A.M.E. Zion Church Landmark Nomination-

Public Hearing Points to be read to the Common Council:

Good evening everyone, my name is Gary Privratsky, 83 Worrall Avenue a lifelong resident of Poughkeepsie, and past commission member of the HDLPC.

I was so amazed of all the history here in Poughkeepsie as I served on the HDLPC that I started a list of local landmarks. I call that list "the Honor Roll".

I'd like to add the Smith African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to the Honor Roll.

There were those who were prominent in this community who were beloved by and associated with the Smith A.M.E. Zion Church congregation.

William W. Smith of Smith Brothers Cough Drops, donated the land for the church.

The Honorable Jane Bolin, was the first African American Woman Judge.

I urge this council to approve this nomination.

Thank you for hearing me.

**Laurie Sandow comments, April 16, 2024, Smith Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church
Historic local landmark nomination, Common Council public hearing**

I am absolutely in support of establishing local landmark designations for 124 Smith Street and 63 Cottage Street in the City of Poughkeepsie. I want pay respect to and acknowledge Holly Wahlberg—former highly qualified and diligent member of the City of Poughkeepsie’s Historic District and Landmarks Preservation Commission (HDLPC)—for her extraordinary time and effort preparing the Statement of Significance submitted in nomination of this parcel at the HDLPC’s February 22, 2024 meeting.

But I also feel compelled to recite a little bit of earlier history concerning this church. Back in 2020, when the neglected Flowers warehouse building at 123 Smith St., directly across the street from the church, was on the market—as it had been for many years prior—the late, lamented Ms. Mae Parker Harris and I made efforts to have the Flowers building sold to the church, so that parishioners would have close-by parking. That effort was rebuffed by both Marc Nelson and Yvonne Flowers, who complained that they hadn’t heard from anyone and that the inquiry was delaying their sale. In the end, the person to whom they were so anxious to sell the building chose not to purchase the building. The building was eventually sold to a different bidder, but not offered for sale to the church.

At the HDLPC’s February 22, 2024 meeting, Councilmember Ondie James and a representative of the Church were in attendance. But they were elsewhere, and not present, at the HDLPC’s March 14, 2024 public hearing concerning the nomination as a historic landmark; just as no member of the current HDLPC is present at the Council’s public hearing tonight. If unfamiliar with the process, submitting a nomination is a necessary first step. Attendance, participation and testimony at public hearings is essential to establish public awareness and support in moving the nomination forward for lawmaker approval.

Who spoke in favor of the nomination at the HDLPC’s March 14, 2024 public hearing? Antonia Mauro, who spoke here earlier tonight; and Gary Privratsky, who just spoke—two other former highly qualified and diligent members of the City of Poughkeepsie’s Historic District and Landmarks Preservation Commission who were forced out of their positions by a City hostile to actual preservation knowledge, efforts and interests. Who else spoke passionately in favor of the nomination? Marta Knapp, who knows that church well, not only as a longtime friend of Ms. Mae Parker Harris, but as a participant in many community events hosted by Smith Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church.

Who else wasn't in attendance at the HDLPC's March 14, 2024, public hearing? the repeatedly absent, yet newly reappointed HDLPC member Anthony LaRocca. The same Anthony LaRocca who—along with Marc Nelson and Rob Rolison appointees Tom Parise, Da'Ron Wilson and Tim McQueen—all gained their seats on the HDLPC for the very political purpose of approving a stipulation to grant Pelton Partners a certificate of appropriateness to build their development in the alienated Wheaton Park, a park whose use was ushered into discontinuance by then-Common Council Chair Chris Petsas.

The same absent-on-March-14, unqualified HDLPC member Anthony LaRocca who, at the April 11, 2024, HDLPC meeting went on at length about how (quoting from the meeting transcript): "...we get such a bad rep sometimes. And really, that's not that's not fair to all the people that are sitting on, on the, on the, on these, voluntary boards. So, you know, I think the more we promote ourselves, the better, right? And we represent a, a broad spectrum of different expertise. We do experience and ideas. So I think it's way more than just approving or denying or, certificate. You know, there's a lot more that we can contribute to the city from this position. Right? And I just want to add one thing, and this may be, really, a footnote. The less political we become, the West, less political we are, I think it's better. I just want to add that as a footnote. You know, it's not really about politics on this commission. It's about doing something good for the city of Poughkeepsie. Right? Regardless of what side of the fence you sit on. So, I would like to eliminate any, political, myths about this, the about this board and commission. That's just my own story, and I'm sticking to it." (close quote)

Yes, I am absolutely in support of the Council voting in favor of local landmark designations for 124 Smith Street and 63 Cottage Street in the City of Poughkeepsie. I am absolutely opposed to the Historic District and Landmarks Preservation Commission (HDLPC) being populated by unqualified and very political puppets who somehow—and I say "somehow" in air quotes—jump the line to be seated, while the highly qualified, long-standing, yet long-languishing applications and applicants continue to be ignored.

There are two other meetings tonight that I'd registered to attend before the change in Council dates, and which I'd much rather be attending. But I'm here because I care about this city and about preservation in this city. And if I can make the choice to change and sacrifice plans in order to attend these meetings, so can others who've taken on official seats and titles, and even salaries, to rule on this City's business.



PUBLIC HEARING MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 6:00PM
Common Council Chambers

City of Poughkeepsie Common Council Public Hearing;

Pursuant to the Charter and Codes of the City of Poughkeepsie, Administrative Code, Section 14.04, a Common Council Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 6:00 PM and will be held in the Common Council Chambers, for the purpose of receiving comments concerning the designation of 124 Smith St and 63 Cottage St as local historic landmarks.

- I.** Welcome
- II.** Roll Call
- III.** Public Participation:
- IV.** Adjournment:

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE, SETTING A PUBLIC
HEARING REGARDING THE PROPOSED NOMINATION OF 124 SMITH STREET
AND 63 COTTAGE STREET AS LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS**

(R-24-27)

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER JAMES:

WHEREAS, 124 Smith Street and 63 Cottage Street in the City of Poughkeepsie are owned by AME Zion Church, who is desirous of securing a designation of both 124 Smith Street and 63 Cottage Street as local historic landmarks; and

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie Historic District and Landmarks Preservation Commission (hereinafter “HDLPC”) held a public hearing on March 14, 2024 regarding the nomination of 124 Smith Street and 63 Cottage Street as local historic landmarks; and

WHEREAS, the HDLPC voted in favor of the proposed nomination and approved the application on March 14, 2024; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 19-4.5(4)(f) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Poughkeepsie, the HDLPC’s approved application was forwarded to the Common Council for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council is required to hold a public hearing prior to the designation of any historic landmark; and

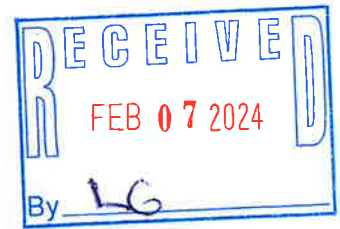
NOW THEREFORE,

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 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** concerning the designation of 124 Smith Street and 63 Cottage Street as local historic landmarks.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER _____ .



CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK
BUILDING DEPARTMENT
(845) 451-4007
(845) 451-4006 (FAX)



HISTORIC DISTRICT & LANDMARKS NOMINATION FORM

LOCATION (For District nominations, attach list of all properties)

Street and Number: 124 Smith Street and 63 Cottage Street

NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name (if any): Smith Metropolitan AME Zion Church and Parsonage

Other Names (if any): AME Zion

CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

☐ Private

Owner: AME Zion Church
Address: 124 Smith Street
City: Poughkeepsie
State/Zip: NY 12601

☐ Public

Owner: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State/Zip: _____

Category of Property

☒ Building(s)

☐ District

☒ Site

☒ Structure

☐ Object

FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Functions or Uses:

Church and parsonage

Current Functions or Uses:

Church and parsonage

NAME OF ARCHITECT (if known): Dubois Carpenter

ATTACHMENTS

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION: Describe the historic and current conditions of the property on one or more continuation sheets, and attach the sheets to the application.

MAPS: Please attach a map of the subject property or properties.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Please attach photographs of the property or properties.

Nomination Form
Page 2

Statement of Significance: Mark "X" in all of the applicable boxes below for the criteria qualifying the property for local register listing.

- ☒ Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ Property is associated with the lives of person significant in our past.
- ☒ Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- ☒ Property is listed, or is eligible for listing, on the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places.

Narrative Statement of Significance: Explain the significance of the property, in terms of the boxes checked above, on one or more continuation sheets, and attach the sheet(s) to the application.

Bibliography: Cite any books, articles or other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets, and attach the sheet(s) to the application.

Form Prepared by:

Name/Title: Holly Wahlberg

Organization: _____

Street: 35 Garfield Place

City/State/Zip: Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Telephone: 845-418-0990

Date: February 7, 2024

HDLPC RECOMMENDATION

The HDLPC hereby certifies that this application ☐ does ☐ does not meet the criteria for designation as a local historic district, landmark or landmark site, and recommends approval of the application to the Common Council in accordance with the provisions of Section 19-4.5(3) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Motion: Brian Hoyer

Second: John Bartelstone

Votes: 4 0 0

Ayes Nays Abstentions


Signature of Chairman
Date: _____

Official Minutes of the Public Hearing of April 16, 2024, for the purpose of receiving comments concerning the designation of 124 Smith St and 62 Cottage St as Local Historic Landmarks

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Wilson closed the Public Hearing at 6:30pm

Dated: April 20, 2024

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Public Hearing held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

**Respectfully submitted,
Donna M. DeLuca
Deputy City Chamberlain**