



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 17, 2024 6:30 p.m. Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the regularly scheduled Meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is September 17, 2024, and the time is 6:57pm

- I. ROLL CALL:** 7 Present, 2 Absent (Council Chair Wilson and Councilmember Deichler)
- II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:**

Common Council Meeting Minutes of August 27, 2024
Minutes of Special Information Meeting of September 3, 2024
Common Council Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2024

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Councilmember Patterson Thompson and seconded by Councilmember Grant.

CCM Minutes of August 27th & September 3 rd – VOICE VOTE						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Henry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Brown	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember James	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Grant	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Deichler	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Majority Leader Patterson Thompson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Vice Chair Shook	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chairman Wilson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒

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

-NONE -

- IV. PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. **FROM REGINA LEWIS**, a notice of personal injury sustained on September 7, 2024

A motion to defer the notice of personal injury to Corporation Counsel was made by Councilmember Brown and Seconded by Councilmember Patterson Thompson

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

- **Daniel Atonna – College Ave/For the Many**
- **Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave***
- **Walter Vicuna – Pershing Ave**
- **Paul Vogelsen – Radcliffe Rd**
- **Andrew Sysak – Radcliffe Rd**
- **Melanie Vetter – Garfield Place**
- **Gladys Lyles – N. Clinton St**
- **Lezette Williams/Ramon Vazquez – Blvd Knolls**

***Submitted written comments**

Laurie Sandow comments, City of Poughkeepsie Common Council meeting, September 17, 2024

There is no small irony that today, September 17, is Constitution Day. Why, the Mayor and some Council members even attended a production this past weekend about Poughkeepsie's pivotal role in the Constitution's ratification, and the fight for the Bill of Rights. But what did our Mayor and Councilmembers learn? What about their behavior will they change? How do they apply or undermine the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in their daily life as elected representatives?

The Council schedules 24 meetings a year, providing just three minutes to each public commenter. That adds up to only 72 minutes, barely over an hour, plus the twice-yearly Informational Meetings, which Council Chair Da'Ron Wilson, in collusion with Corporation Counsel Valk, has illegally reduced to just 5 minutes for all questions by each member of the public — an amount of time annually that still doesn't even add up to an-hour-and-a-half for Councilmembers to listen to, but otherwise avoid interaction with, the constituents who pay their salaries and benefits.

Gus Kazolias, the man this Council admired only after he died, had a few favorite sayings. One was that the "fish stinks from the head". The public got a heavy dose of rotting fish at the recent Informational Meeting when the Council Chair, in classic behavior—straight out of the playbook of authoritarians, tyrants, and schoolyard bullies—blamed a member of the public for depriving people of their opportunity to participate, rather than taking responsibility for his own ongoing hostility to the public. Not a single other Councilmember stood up to object. One can only wonder how much bullying takes place behind closed doors as well as in public.

To be clear: Councilmember At-Large Da’Ron Wilson, the de facto Council Chair, does not have the right, the power, or the authority to alter, negate or single-handedly rewrite the language of the City Charter. The public was deprived of their comments from the moment the Chair announced his illegal imposition of a 5-minute limit on questioners, and not by a citizen who insisted on their rights at the Informational meeting, and who was the only member of the public who attended all previous Charter review meetings

At the Council meeting that followed the Informational meeting, a very bright light was shone on a Councilmember who did not communicate with constituents, and what happened when the Council did not undertake due diligence before altering parking regulations on Radcliffe and Blvd. Knolls.

Rather than act as information disseminators, in the City of Poughkeepsie dominated by Democrat- and faux-Democrat electeds, as well as in the Dutchess County dominated by Republican electeds, we have representatives who behave as if they possess authority beyond public service and the public realm, and as if all information in their possession is privileged information, absolutely not to be shared with constituents (for fear that information-sharing would lessen their “stature”). Who is watching these Gatekeepers, Decision-Makers, Influencers, and Blockers? How and when will the public achieve transparency and accountability?

Specifically regarding the September 3, 2024, Charter-mandated Informational Meeting, which the Charter most assuredly does NOT term a “special” meeting:

City of Poughkeepsie Charter Section 2.05 Informational Meetings

In addition to its organizational, regular and special meetings as hereinabove prescribed, the common council shall convene meetings in March and September of each year which shall be solely informational. All members of the common council, the mayor, the city administrator and the heads of all city departments and offices shall be in attendance unless excused by the council chair for good cause shown. The general public in attendance at such meeting may inquire of any such persons with regard to any

aspect of city governance. Written public notice of each such meeting shall be published in the city's official newspaper and on the city's official website and by whatever other electronic means as may be commonly used by the city for such purposes, and may otherwise be given as provided by the rules of the common council, not later than the fourteenth day next preceding such meeting.

I had prepared many questions to ask at the Informational Meeting, and had many more that I did not list. The questions that I did ask at the meeting were never answered at the meeting or afterward. My remaining questions were neither allowed at the meeting, nor have they ever been answered afterwards by any Administration or Council member or Department Head. In fact, when I wrote to ask about forthcoming answers, I received the following reply from City Administrator Joe Donat on Wednesday, September 18, 2024:

Ms. Sandow,

Thank you for your email. The City provided those who were unable to receive their five minute allotment of time the opportunity to submit questions in writing after the meeting was adjourned. Due to you being provided the appropriate amount of time to speak, we will not be responding to additional questions or comments at this time.

In the event you have any other concerns or issues, please do not hesitate to contact me directly and I will respond appropriately.

Regards, Joe

VI. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

NONE

VII. MAYOR'S COMMENTS:

Well, one, I guess I'll address what happened on Radcliffe. And I did go over because Mr. Paul came up here, was very upset about what happened at the council meeting. And so, I told him that I will go there later on that evening when I left from here.

So I did. And councilmember Nedra Thompson came with me as well. We did talk to the neighbors that were on Radcliffe and it was.. it was almost like the street was against the two individuals that live on Blvd Knolls. So I.. it was very disheartening to see the division that was on the street. I mean, they are new and they're trying to fit in as much as possible.

But the thing is, is that there were decisions that were made in the change of the parking restrictions on the street and it was my understanding, after talking with everyone, that no one else knew what was going on the street. So, they were concerned of the fact that there were changes to the parking on the street and which would limit where they were going to park their cars. So, after being on the street, I realized that it is a very short street and there must be eight, maybe eight houses, I think? Eight or nine houses on the street only on one side. And so, there are a couple of cars that park on the other side of the street because of the fact that it's very limited due to the sidewalk... I mean, the driveways, there's also a fire hydrant. People have a couple of cars, so they have a problem similar to I had on another street in my ward.

So I tried to find a way of how they can kind of compromise with this. But it just seems like that wasn't really working out. So, we're going to have more of a discussion of what happens on that street. We're going to talk with the parking director a little further, also with the police a little further. And so on that note, what I did is it was passed by this council on the 27th and I received it actually, it came in my office on the fourth, but I didn't see it until the fifth. So what I did is, I vetoed it. So, it basically reversed, you know, it didn't get approved. And I talked to the council... to Councilmember Thompson about it. And so, she was okay with that.

And then so we're going to do is talk with everyone on the street again to discuss what is a better way to handle this parking situation that's going on on the street. And again, I'm hoping that you will find a way of working together a little bit more because it was.. it was a whole street, you know, against the couple here. And I'm hoping that when Councilmember Thompson does go on the street to discuss this with you will come up with a better solution.

I did ask that the larger vehicles not be parked on the other side of the street because of the fact that it was digging into the, you know, the mud and the road that was there, which is city property. And also, too, we didn't want to have, you know, two large vehicles on either side of it. So, that means coordinate a little bit better of how you're parking the car there until we can come up with a better solution.

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So that was taking... that was done and I shared it with the councilmembers immediately within the timeframe that I had - from the time that I received it and to the time that I had to veto it. So, it's not in place at this point, but we will be moving forward to try to figure out a better solution to rectify that.

[From the audience]: I didn't know I was really good friends with everybody.

Mayor Flowers: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I'm not friends with any of you. I mean, I'm not saying that to be negative, but I'm not friends with any of you. I mean, I know a few people that were living on the street there, but I'm not friends with anyone, so I'm not sure where that came from. But it's not even about that. It's about what is the best solution that would identify the problem that's on the street. And that problem is limited parking. So, it's not about convenience or people parking next to their home. That's not what this should be about and that's not what we're going to be addressing. We will address the shortage of parking that's on the street and people will have to make their decision exactly where they're going to park. So, I'm hoping that when they have that meeting with everyone on the street, that you will come up with a better solution, so we'll come up with a better solution and we don't... And I'm hoping that this problem that you're having, going back and forth calling each other names and what, that that will cease. I mean I'm pretty sure you can answer me....

[From the audience]: Don't throw rocks at me and I won't throw them back.

Mayor Flowers: Okay.

[From the audience]: So this is very, very cut and dry, don't throw a rock at me and I won't throw it back.

Mayor Flowers: Okay, well Mr. Paul you can't talk. You can't talk while we're talking, so thank you. But.. well, we're definitely... I'll keep in touch with Councilmember Thompson so we can come up with a better solution.

[From the audience]: Thank you.

Mayor Flowers: You're welcome.

The other thing is, too, is September 16th, which was yesterday, is Mexican Independence Day. So, we did designate yesterday as the day to remember on September 16th of the Independence Day of Mexico. So, just wanted to put that out there. Did go out on our social media actually congratulating our Mexican community.

Also, too, there was "The Fateful Hour" play. It was... it was great. I have to say that down at Upper Landing - I really appreciate Mr. Simons directing that play. And Mister- Judge- Rosenblatt, who wrote the play and included our high school students being involved in it, and which it was really nice to see. It was a very diverse crowd that was there, there was over 200 some people and it was the recreation of the United States Constitution and even the creation of The Bill of Rights and where the City of Poughkeepsie was actually part of that discussion. So it

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was a very historical moment and my grandkids enjoyed being there. So I'm hoping that we'll have more of these kind of events in the City of Poughkeepsie.

I also want to thank our DPW for preparing a site out here for 9/11 and thank the councilmembers and those who were able to attend. And many people didn't realize - and I just found out just actually last year - that the beams that are out there in front of City Hall actually came from the World Trade Center. So, we thank the Kiwanis Club for making that happen. And so, when you go past there and you look at that room, it just continues to remind us of that tragic day, you know, and also what happened around that time and the unity of our country around that time. So, I do want to thank everyone that was involved for a beautiful ceremony that we had on 9/11.

Also, I want to thank our DPW staff and also our police department for addressing the issues that are happening on Main Street. It is a continuous problem. I also want to thank the organizations and agencies that came together to assist in providing services for the individuals that are on Main Street, even in our Pershing Park, Malcolm X Park. You know, it is a continuous problem that we're having, but you know, it's not going to be solved overnight. It wasn't created overnight. So we're working diligently to work with these individuals to give them the help that they need to provide housing if they need housing, because some of these individuals already have a home, but they decide to stay on the street to do what they do. So we are addressing that. Some of these individuals have been become very- not only disrespectful- but has threatened individuals. So, we're taking a more aggressive approach, as I said, because we're not going to tolerate that from anyone.

So I do thank our DPW and again, our police department, who has really been working in these areas and a lot that is across the street from 505 Main, which many of you have complained about, has been cleared out. So the individuals have moved from there. Some people were helped, others decide to migrate other places of the city. So, we're going to continue to address that. So just to let people know what we're doing in that regard.

I want to thank our Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson. He was able to secure funding of \$75,000 so we can upgrade some of our cameras and also our technology for our police department. So, because of that funding, we're able to get new servers that would help with the storage of some of the camera data. And we're also able to upgrade about 18 cameras. So we appreciate him securing that grant funding. And we're looking to apply for more funding for paving and also for a technology upgrade.

And Mr. Walter, I know you're about to leave, but I just want to let you know I did get your video today and I will be discussing it with the chief to go over it. Some things that I saw on the video was a little disturbing, but I want to go over it with the chief along with the officer, so we can look at it very closely about what that gentleman had in his hand. So, we will follow up on it, okay? You're welcome.

Also too, we received a Neighborhood Choice Grant, which I am very excited. The fact that we have a \$500,000 grant that was awarded through HUD and this is actually to create a comprehensive plan to transform a North Side neighborhood that includes two public housing

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complexes. So, it's not only to redevelop those complexes, but it's also to help the neighborhoods surrounding it to find out what amenities that are needed there, how to improve health care, educational opportunities. So it's a planning grant, and we have many committee members that will be involved, including our councilmember, Ernest Henry and also Councilwoman Terricena Brown, that both represent the complexes that will be involved. So, you'll hear more about it. We actually put a press release out today, and so you're going to hear more information regarding it because it's a planning grant that involves the tenants and residents in that area. So we'll have continuous input and we have up to 24 months to come up with this plan, which we can present and be able to apply for a \$50 million grant that would help with the implementation of this plan.

So I'm really looking forward to that because there's a lot of improvements that are being done in that particular area of Poughkeepsie, and we just want to make sure that those no matter where you live, no matter what income level you are, that when you're living in a neighborhood that you will feel proud and be so, you know, really happy that you're living in a neighborhood that's actually has been redeveloping and, you know, not feeling like being discouraged that you live in a public housing complex while everything else around you is actually improving.

So we want to make sure we uplift the whole entire area of the City of Poughkeepsie. So, we'll do this block by block. That's what we're planning to do through the City of Poughkeepsie, this is only the start.

So there's a lot of things here. I think that's it for now.

As far as the zoning is concerned, I do want to let people know that, you know, we're going to, you know, when the council members review it and decide, you know, to approve this, this is not going to be the thing that's set in stone until forever. We are going to be putting measures in place. So that way it is revised and reviewed after, you know, so many years or so. So, it's not 40 or 50 years later on before we make any changes.

Our city is evolving and constantly changing and it needs of our city changes as well. So things right now that are in there, it's not going to be perfect, but it is going to give us a very good blueprint about what direction we want the city to go in.

So at that point, it's not, you know, not everybody's going to be happy, you know, and we can't please everybody in that. We have, you know, a handful of people that might come in and might be upset about one thing, but then we got another handful that want something else.

As far as ADU's are concerned, there's a lot of misinformation that's out there. And we just need to make sure we confirm that the detached ADU's were *removed* and the attached ADU's were still in there. We have a handful of people that don't want the attached ADU's, but then there's quite a few that want it on because they want to change maybe their basement or their attic you know, to an apartment that they're going to live in and maybe have a relative there. I mean, there's many different reasons of why people want it. So, the thing is, is that we really have to look at that. And I know some people don't want it in their neighborhood, but it is something that we will take in consideration of, but please know that there are people out there who want it. So,

I just want to make sure we put that out there as well.

As far as the HDLPC, yes there are changes. I don't know any last-minute changes anybody said, but we're going to look at that. But it is embedded in our zoning. It was part of the document with it, so there are some changes on it and it was put on the website. But I will be looking at it even further on to make sure it was any different changes than what we even discussed. Because the thing is, is at the end of the day, someone says, well, about the mayor choosing and appointing members, it's always been in place. That didn't change. And the people that I did appoint to the HDLPC lately I felt there were good choices because I felt like they were very attuned to what's going on with our historical property.

I mean, I know there's one person right now, here at this moment. So, moving forward, we just want to make sure that is a commission that's working for all and not for their own personal agenda. And that commission, it seems like it's been very political, and I try to put people on it and feel like there's a balance there. And it's not all about, like you said, personal agenda. It's also about making sure that we preserve our historical neighborhoods. You know, it's very valuable. And I've been around the country – not the country - but through certain cities in our country. And, you know, I've been in historical districts where they do Airbnb's and they also have they have two family apartments in there, but you can never tell from the outside of it, you know. So, you know, sometimes people feel it's going to destroy the neighborhoods. I'm not saying totally, but I'm not saying that we should be changing all that either. I just said we should be looking at it as a balance. So that is something that we're definitely going to do.

And just to your point about the zoning, there's a lot of neighborhoods that were changed. Where they were up to four - one to four units. So, we have changed that and brought them back down to two family homes and a lot of it are in our neighborhood. So, we want to push home ownership. That's also embedded in this as well, because that's what I'm pushing for, home ownership. So, you can't do that if you make it four units. So, if you keep it at least 1 or 2 family units and that goes throughout the whole City of Poughkeepsie, because right now there's a whole section of the city that was not touched. So, you know, we're just we're looking at as a whole and the council members are looking at their wards and hopefully, we can come up with his own plan that we all could be happy with. You know, and as we're going forward, we can make changes all the way. So now back to chair.

VIII. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

IX. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

CONSENT AGENDA:

X. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

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1. **R-24-70**, Resolution Approving Sale of Land in Town of Poughkeepsie to Marist College

**RESOLUTION
(R-24-70)**

**INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER WILSON, SHOOK, PATTERSON-
THOMPSON, BROWN, JAMES, AND GRANT**

WHEREAS, the City of Poughkeepsie is joint owner, along with the Town of Poughkeepsie, of certain parcels of land located within the Town of Poughkeepsie, on which is located the Town of Poughkeepsie/City of Poughkeepsie Joint Water Treatment Plant (the “Joint Water Treatment Plant”) and identified as tax grid #s 6062-02-827844 and 6062-02-849852 (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Joint Water Property”); and

WHEREAS, earlier this year, Marist College made application to the Town of Poughkeepsie for a new Running Track and Turf Field Project (the “Project”) to be located on the Marist “north field” and, during the course of the Planning Board application, it was discovered that Marist had encroached upon the Joint Water Property; and

WHEREAS, after discussions between the two municipalities, a review of the potential liabilities, and consultation with Randy Alstadt, Administrator of the Joint Water Treatment Plant, regarding any potential need for the encroached upon lands, it was decided that a sale of so much of the Joint Water Property upon which Marist is encroaching would be in each municipality’s best interest.

WHEREAS, a metes and bounds description of the lands to be sold is shown on the Lot Line Adjustment Plan annexed hereto as Exhibit A (the “Sale Property”) ; and

WHEREAS, the City/Town have offered, and Marist has agreed to purchase, the Sale Property for the price of \$64,342.45.(\$2.95 per square foot based upon property assessments); and

WHEREAS, the Town of Poughkeepsie Planning Board, acting as lead agency, has made a determination of non-significance that the site plan application and the proposed sale is not expected to result in a significant adverse impact on the environment and, therefore, the preparation of a draft environmental impact statement is not necessary.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council hereby makes the following determinations: (a) that there is no existing municipal purpose or need for the Sale Property, and (b) that the sale price and conditions imposed herein represent fair and adequate consideration for the conveyance; and be it further

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RESOLVED, that the City of Poughkeepsie authorizes the sale of the Sale Property as described in Exhibit A, attached hereto and made a part hereof, in the Town of Poughkeepsie for a sum as set forth in the Contract of Sale which is attached hereto and is hereby approved subject to the conditions contained therein; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Mayor is authorized to enter into an the Contract of Sale of the Property, subject to the conditions contained therein; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Mayor, the City Administrator and the 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 Contract of Sale and any documents necessary to convey title pursuant to said contract; and be it further

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER:

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R-24-70 - VOICE VOTE						
☒ Accepted ☐ Defeated ☐ Tabled			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
	Councilmember Henry	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Brown	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember James	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Grant	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Councilmember Deichler	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Majority Leader Patterson Thompson	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Vice Chair Shook	Voter	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Chairman Wilson	Voter	☐	☐	☐	☒

At 7:55 pm a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember Patterson Thompson and seconded by Councilmember Grant.

Dated: September 23, 2024

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024

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