



The City of Poughkeepsie New York

Common Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

6:15 PM

Common Council Chambers

I WELCOME:

Welcome to the scheduled Public Hearing of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council for the purpose of receiving comments on The City of Poughkeepsie's Intent to Submit a Grant Application to Round 9 of the Restore NY Grant Program. The time is now 6:18pm

II ROLL CALL:

8 Present, 1 Absent (Councilmember Deichler)

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Jay Bloomfield
Laurie Sandow - S. Grand Ave *
Warren Jones - N. Clover St

*** Submitted Written Comments**



PUBLIC HEARING MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, December 3, 2024
6:15 PM
Common Council Chambers

City of Poughkeepsie Common Council Public Hearing;

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to the Charter and Codes of the City of Poughkeepsie, one Common Council Public Hearing will be held on Monday, December 3, 2024 at 6:15 pm respectively, in the Common Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 62 Civic Center Plaza, Poughkeepsie, NY for the purpose of receiving comments The City of Poughkeepsie's Intent to Submit a Grant Application to Round 9 of the Restore NY Grant Program Welcome

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

**Laurie Sandow comments, December 3, 2024, Common Council Public Hearing
on Restore NY Grant Application**

Re: <https://poughkeepsieny.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1224/files/agenda/2948>

**[Be sure to read the transcript of comments included at the end of this document,
made by City Administrator Joe Donat only after the public had spoken.]**

I'm speaking tonight regarding the so-called Public Hearing on Restore NY Grant Application, with a notice sent to the Poughkeepsie Journal on November 20, not printed by the Journal until November 24, and not posted to the City website until some unknown time on November 26, without any notice to the public, including without notice to CivicPlus subscribers. It is worth noting that November 26 was the same day that Natalie Quinn, a representative for the applicant (identified only as 31 Market LLC) appeared before the Planning Board without making any mention of the grant application or the public hearing being held tonight.

When and where was this public hearing properly included, legally presented, voted on, and date set for a public hearing via any previous Common Council meeting and agenda?

Same question for the Poughkeepsie Urban Renewal Agency ("PURA"), Admiral William F. Halsey Senior Village Inc. "public hearing" that appeared out of nowhere on this Council's November 19 agenda. Did the residents and businesses in immediate proximity to that development all receive mailed notices of the public hearing, as would have been required had this been an application scheduled as a public hearing in front of the Planning Board? Plus, it is worth taking note that when this application did appear on the agenda and in front of the Planning Board on November 26, the owner/applicant was only identified as: 31 Market LLC. Have residents and businesses in proximity to 31–39 Market Street received notices about tonight's public hearing?

Or does our current Mayor, administration and current Council Chair think they are empowered to sneak anything they want onto agendas or into zoning plans, with the expectation that no-one will notice their existence, at least not in time to protest the thoroughly dishonest way that business is being conducted by Mayor and Council alike.

Why did a representative of Chai Developers—who recently rebranded themselves as the Walkway Group—and who are the developers behind 31 Market LLC, just show up tonight to make a presentation under the guise of public comments, proposing 49 housing units, without speaking to their affordability and all other matters? How did the developer’s public comments turn into a back-and-forth, question and answer period for Councilmembers, when the public is denied the same back-and-forth, Q-and-A during their own comments?

From the Planning Board’s November 26 agenda, we see an application that does not once mention the Bardavon, nor does it identify Chai Developers as the Project Developer. That agenda item, as it appeared on the Planning Board agenda, reads:

2. 31-39 MARKET STREET: SITE PLAN

Application for site plan for the conversion of the existing office buildings at 31 and 39 Market Street to a mixed use building with restaurants, box office/lobby space and office space of the first floors, and a total of 49 dwelling units of the upper floors, including construction of two additional stories on the building at 39 Market Street and the combining of the two lots into a single lot of record. Owner/Applicant: 31 Market LLC; Consultant: Natalie Quinn, KARC Planning Consultants; Grid # 6162-77-030072 and 031066; Zoning District: PID-HC; File #2024-061

I mean, it’s very convenient for any organization to insert “Walkway” and/or “Bardavon” into their corporate names, or the names of their projects, or the names of their grant applications, and have people assume that these respected cultural sites are in some way connected to and/or being benefited by a given application. But is that the case with this application? We have no way to know.

Is this single development the totality of the c/PK’s Application to Round 9 of the Restore NY Grant Program? Or is there more? If more, why isn’t the public being provided with the totality of the Restore NY Grant application, and this particular project’s context within the application?

From New York State’s own website <<https://esd.ny.gov/restore-new-york>>:

“The Restore New York Communities Initiative (“Restore NY”) provides municipalities

with financial assistance for the revitalization of commercial and residential properties. The program encourages community development and neighborhood growth through the elimination and redevelopment of blighted structures.”

The representative for Chai Developers said during their presentation tonight—a presentation made under the guise of public comments—that they purchased these buildings in 2022. How long have they kept units vacant? Or is it all the better to claim that they will be eliminating and redeveloping a blighted structure, when they might have been the very cause of blighting?

[It is also worth including here, the comments made by City Administrator Joe Donat at this hearing only after the public spoke.]

Below, find the uncorrected comments, as they appear in the transcript of the December 3, 2024, Common Council Public Hearing on Restore NY Grant Application:

<https://totalwebcasting.com/view/?func=VIEW&id=cop&date=2024-12-03&seq=3>

Council Chair Da’Ron Wilson speaking:

“I would also like to defer to the city administrator just to give some historical reference of how this came about. Please.”

City Administrator Joe Donat speaking:

“Thank you, Chairman.

“So first and foremost, it’s my understanding that.

“Certainly my strong belief that the city followed all obligations so far as. Noticing this public hearing some background leading up to this matter, getting on the docket this evening.

“Shortly after our last council meeting [n.b. if in fact, the last Council meeting, the date was November 19, 2024], I was informed by staff of this grant.

“We were subsequently informed of the looming deadline, which is later this month.

“And because of that, the decision I made, the decision to move forward with the Chamberlain and Corporation Council with getting this item scheduled for a public hearing so that this matter could be further deliberated in public, in public format.

“And we’re here tonight to do it. As we all know, when it comes to scheduling a public hearing and then voting upon resolutions, It’s sometimes it takes a little bit of time. And as such, we wanted to meet this grant deadline, which is at the end of the month.

“If the decision to get the public hearing on the agenda tonight was not made, we would not have been able to meet that deadline.

“And and by all means, I just wish to reiterate for the public and all listening know that the mayor and or the council chair were involved in this decision. It was my decision.

“I made it unilaterally as a result of the best interests of the city being able to move forward with this grant, which will further improve our Main Street corridor.

“And can you continue to double down on the many efforts that we’ve already done this year so far as a business improvement district zoning as well as other investments that the state has made on on our main street over the last six months or so alone.

“So that’s not how this ended up on the agenda this evening.

“I certainly appreciate the comments received and I certainly welcome any other questions from this board regarding this matter.

“Thank you.”

Appended for the record, as was included in the last-minute posting of the agenda packet for tonight’s public hearing:

<https://poughkeepsieny.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1224/files>

City of Poughkeepsie Intent to Apply—Restore NY

Applicant: City of Poughkeepsie

Contact#1: Joseph Donat, City Administrator

Contact #2-Elected Official: Yvonne Flowers, Mayor

Project Section:

Is this a special project: No

Name of Project: Bardavon Adaptive Reuse Project

Estimate of Project Cost: \$18,000,000

Estimate of Restore NY Request: \$2,000,000

Number of Properties: 2

Name of Project Developer: Chai Developers

Project Description:

The Bardavon Office Building project at 31-39 Market Street will feature the transformational adaptive reuse of a local landmark in Downtown Poughkeepsie, centrally located across from the Dutchess County Administrative Complex on Market St. The building is well known as the face of the historic Bardavon 1869 Opera House, which is the oldest continuously operating theater in New York State. The building has been mostly vacant and is no longer attractive to potential office tenants. The decision was therefore made to pursue a transformation and to convert those four stories to residential apartments while renovating the entire building. The project will fully rehabilitate the building and provide a much-needed upgrade to its mechanical systems, structural stability, as well as a full cosmetic makeover. The developer will be working with the National Park Service and NYS SHPO to ensure that all renovations are restorative and pay homage to the history and character of the building. In that spirit, the developer is acquiring the next-door building, 39 Market St, and annexing it to the Bardavon Building, so that proper circulation can be achieved without diminishing the character of the primary structure. This will also afford the opportunity to bring back vacant and dilapidated retail space to Market St once renovations are complete. The developer has applied to the City of Poughkeepsie planning board for this project and is in the process of regulatory review. The \$18 million project is designed with over 35,000 sq feet of usable space, which will include the addition of 49 housing units, bringing much needed apartments to a street currently desolate of housing, as well as rehabilitate the entire ground floor retail space, inclusive of the activation of retail which has sat vacant for many years.

Property One: 31 Market Street

Property Two: 39 Market Street

Total Square Footage: 35,000 square feet

Total Number of Units: 49

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**Restore
New York**

Application Checklist- Restore NY Communities Initiative

Municipal Name		
Item	Yes	N/A
5 years operating pro formas		
Application fee payable to Empire State Development Corporation		
Property Assessment List		
Project Site Map		
Individual Property Packet for all properties		
Up to 2 Façade Photos for all properties		
Letters from local planning/zoning officials stating project compliance		
Written commitment(s) for project financing		
3 rd Party Project Estimates		
Credentials of individuals and/or lead entities involved in project		
Non-municipal entity Project Proposal		
SEQR Environmental Assessment Form (EAF)		
SEQR Negative Declaration		
EIS Findings Statement		
SHPO Review Materials		
Proof of Publication of Property Assessment List		
Proof of Publication of Public Hearing Notice		
A true and complete copy of the Municipal Resolution		



Property Assessment List	
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Municipal Name	
Project Name	

List and sequentially number all properties submitted for this project. Properties with both a demolition/deconstruction phase AND a rehabilitation/ reconstruction phase must use separate lines to define EACH project phase. **This list must be published in a local daily newspaper for three consecutive days and be the subject of a public hearing.**

[illegible]

Property Assessment List

Municipal Name: **The City of Poughkeepsie**

Project Name: **The Bardavon Office Building**

			R-Residential	RH-Rehabilitation	V-Vacant
				RC-Reconstruction	S-Surplus
				DC-Deconstruction	C-Condemned
				DM-Demolition	A-Abandoned
#	Site Name /Address	Sq.Ft	C-Commercial		
1	31-37 Market St	27,157	R/C	RH	Vacant
2	39 Market St	12,157	R/C	RH	Vacant

IV ADJOURNMENT:

At 6:36pm, a motion to Close the Public Hearing was made by Council Member- 3rd Ward Brown and seconded by Council Member- 6th Ward Grant.

Motion to Close the Public Hearing	
Yes/Aye:	Council Member- 1st Ward Henry, Councilmember - 2nd Ward Menist, Council Member- 3rd Ward Brown, Council Member- 5th Ward James, Council Member- 6th Ward Grant, Council Member- 7th Ward Patterson Thompson, Council Member- 4th Ward Shook, Council Member At-Large Wilson
No/Nay:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Council Member- 8th Ward Deichler
Result:	Passed

Dated: December 6, 2024

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Common Council Public Hearing held on December 3, 2024.

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