



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, October 18, 2021 5:30 p.m.

Virtual / Zoom

Welcome to the scheduled meeting of the Public Hearing in the City of Poughkeepsie. The date is October 18, 2021 and the time is 5:30 pm.

THIS HEARING IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING COMMENTS ON THE Public Hearing Regarding the Proposed Local Law establishing Good Cause Eviction Legislation.

Councilmember-At-Large Salem called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

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

1. Laura Forman, 66 Washington St.
2. Laurie Sandow, S. Grand Ave.
3. Teresa Munchick, 16 Grand Ave.
4. Katherine Raynor, Forbus St.
5. Moses Muguluisi, 89 Randall St., Florida, NY
6. Mignon Delapuenta, 160 Academy St
7. Kafui Attoh, 18 Balding Ave.
8. Thomas Ruane, 92 College Ave
9. Brahvan Ranga, Political Coordinator, For the Many
10. Melissa Hoffman, Lexington Ave.

Submitted Written Comments:

1. Laurie Sandow, Grand Ave.

I begin by noting that, according to Chair Salem, nearly 70 people signed up to speak at the October 4 public hearing, and though I registered close to the deadline, I was somehow called to be the 15th speaker. Either the speaker deadline is not being enforced, or the order of speakers is being manipulated, or both. Similarly, the Chair mis-serves the public by segmenting portions of this hearing, depriving the public of a single, continuous event, and keeping people on hold waiting to hear their name called, without a clue if or when their name will be called. Tonight's continuation of the public hearing proves that point, as many of those signed up to speak on October 4 are not in attendance to speak tonight. Furthermore, I also note the Chair's tolerance for spineless helicopter organizers who live far outside the city, yet provide 29 N. Hamilton as their address.

As to my comments: I am currently speaking in opposition to Salem and Menist's "Good Cause Eviction" resolution. Why? Not because I lack concern for tenants—quite the opposite. But because the existing proposal will NOT protect tenants, does not begin to stabilize or cure the city's housing and rental situation, sets the baseline for future increases at already inflated levels, and is principally a drawn-out election season stunt. The primary accomplishment of this law will be to increase, NOT decrease, litigation between landlord and tenant, at the expense, and to the detriment, of both parties. Court outcomes are predictable considering that the cost of goods, services, water, sanitation and property taxes have all seen recent drastic increases.

Let's look at sponsors Menist and Salem's history. One January 2020 article (that is, 21 months ago) quoted Evan Menist as joining Salem's desire to address affordable housing. "We need to come up with affordable housing solutions for all of our residents," [Menist] said." But have Menist, Salem and this Council actually created affordable housing solutions in the last 21 months? No, they have not.

An August 2021 article read: “But Menist believes the legislation would ‘incentivize’ investment because landlords wouldn’t be able to increase rents above 5% without making upgrades to their property to show the rent hike was justified.”

What does “incentivize” and “justified” mean in plain English and in real-time? It means that, for example, a developer comes along, buys Luckey Platt for \$3 million, renovates in violation of the existing tenants’ Warranty of Habitability, and then “offers” renewal leases at rates that existing tenants cannot afford...incentivizing and justifying those existing tenants right out the door. And not a peep from Menist, representative of that ward, who remained entirely silent while all this was happening.

Here’s another example from tomorrow night’s Planning Board agenda: a proposed addition at Admiral Halsey that Menist has enthusiastically endorsed, for an owner, Omni New York, who’s been listed more than once on New York City’s 10 Worst Landlords and Worst Evictors lists. That’s the same Omni New York whose track record shows drastically worsened conditions since their purchase of Admiral Halsey.

In other words, what do these histories translate to?

- 1) that talk is cheap, but no matter how cheap, or no matter how urgent, affordable housing has NOT been on the Council agenda;
- 2) that the baseline for any 5% increase will be a market rent that’s already inflated and unaffordable to many city residents;
- 3) that (quote) “incentivizing” investment means that properties will continue to exchange hands at the ballooning prices in a hot real estate market, laying the groundwork for litigation that is almost certain to result in rulings justifying landlord rent increases; and
- 4) That *every* LL—good, bad, or indifferent—will be incentivized to increase their rents *every* year, so that they do not fall behind the market curve, and
- 5) That rent increases will be codified at rates in excess of average cost-of-living increases of the last 10 years.

Rather than create affordable housing solutions, Menist, Salem and others are actually on the record voting in support of zoning and developments that do NOT protect or require housing that's affordable to city residents, and also on the record supporting developer applications for non-affordable housing developments that avoid the scrutiny and approval of the City's Industrial Development Agency (IDA) by partnering with non-profits selling Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC's) to developers who, in turn, resell them to investors.

There is so much that this so-called Good Cause Eviction law does not and will not do. It does not stabilize rents, many of which have already risen to unsustainable levels for rent-burdened city residents. It does nothing to address rampant violations of tenant protections, violations that go largely unrecorded and unpunished in this City; it does nothing about out-of-town or out-of-state landlords who themselves, or through their management companies, do not maintain their properties; it does nothing about the property owners who've blighted the city by keeping their buildings vacant for years on end; it does not establish anything resembling resources like a free Court Help Desk for tenants and landlords alike. It does not deter safety, living condition violations and neglected maintenance in existing senior and subsidized housing. In brief, not only does it NOT automatically deter rent increase abuses without litigation, it practically guarantees litigation.

I urge this Council to vote "no" on proposed Resolution R-21-71, and to instead develop real solutions to the rampant displacement, gentrification, and market escalations that—in the absence of a City Comprehensive Plan—are aimed at creating an unaffordable monoculture, and destroying the diversity and vitality of this City.

Official Minutes of the Public Hearing of October 18, 2021 Public Hearing Regarding the Proposed
Local Law establishing Good Cause Eviction Legislation

At 6:13 pm the Public Hearing was adjourned.

Dated: October 29, 2021

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Public
Hearing held on October 18, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmin N. Davis
City Chamberlain