



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 29, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Common Council Chambers

Welcome to the regularly scheduled Meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is August 29, 2022, and the time is 6:30 pm.

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. ROLL CALL: 5 present, 4 absent at the time attendance was taken:
(Councilmembers Long, Flowers, Menist & Cherry - absent.)**
- II. READING OF ITEMS by the City Chamberlain of any items not listed on the printed agenda.**
- III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
 - 1. Daniel Atonna – 116 College Ave., For the Many**
 - 2. Naomi Brooks – S. Grand Ave. (submitted comments in writing)**

Common Council meeting August 29, 2022

Naomi Brooks, S. Grand Avenue

Good evening. Porchfest was a great success! People strolled the streets, enjoying each other's company and got to hear some wonderful music. Performers were positioned on fantastic porches embellishing some of the remarkable homes that exist

here in our city. Thirteen of the 18 private homes participating in this event are on our local register of historic landmarks.

In July 2021, resolution 21-06 was introduced at a Common Council meeting to further protect our historic resources and to improve the preservation process. In August 2021, there was a public hearing to get feedback on the resolution. On Dec 20, 2021, the resolution passed with every council member in attendance voting in favor of the amendment.

Nine months later, nothing on our website's Comprehensive Code and Charter shows this new law. The main body of the Charter and Code only includes legislation adopted through 2-11-2019. It is three years out of date. A link shows 29 new laws that were adopted from 2-19-2019 through 12-20-2021, but the last one is a Zoning Map Amendment, not this Historic Preservation Code amendment from the same day. It seems to have inconveniently disappeared.

NYS Municipal Home Rule Law Section 27(1) states that adopted local laws should be filed with the state within 20 days. We are on Day 252 of not seeing it on the website, and day 252 of not using the amendments in the preservation process. Why go through all the trouble of carefully examining a local law, introducing modifications, bringing it to the public, and Common Council voting on it, if no one is making sure it is procedurally "on the books"? Please make sure your valuable Council time is not wasted. Please follow up on the codification and implementation part of this law.

The NY Department of State's paper on Adopting Local Laws, published May 1998 and reprinted July 2022, states that local law becomes effective when filed with the Secretary of State, but operative from the date of its approval. How can we reasonably expect it to be operative when it is nowhere to be found, nine months later? If

another amendment approved the same day as this one is included in the "new laws" link on the city website, why isn't this one?

3. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave. (submitted written comments)

Laurie Sandow comments, City of Poughkeepsie Common Council meeting, August 29, 2022, Page 1 of 2

Tonight, like a bunch of kids taking a snow day, the Council and its Chair have reached a new low, converting a council meeting into a caucus, and an open meeting into a closed one. But who's actually being snowed?—that would be the public.

We've all heard that "it takes a village to raise a child". Here in Poughkeepsie it nine councilmembers or less to turn a body legally obligated to public service, into a body that functions as a den of thieves. Time and again, this Council outdoes themselves in smoke and mirrors and empty promises; lawless personal enrichment and self-service; abuse of authority and avoidance of accountability.

Here in Poughkeepsie, councilmembers make themselves less available at times of challenge, rather than moreso, to the point where—even with a quorum present—they're now replacing council meetings with caucus meetings...you know, those caucus meetings that allow completely uninformed councilmembers to hide their ignorance with "no comment", "no questions" and behind so-called "consent agendas".

City Charter Section 2.04(a) states that (quote): "The common council shall conduct its regular meetings at least twice each calendar month..."

City Charter Section 2.02 provides the Common Council the broad power to (quote): "require any elected or appointed City official, employee, board, or commission to furnish reports, information, estimates, or records and/or to command their presence at hearings or inquiries, administer oaths, and compel testimony insofar as the Common Council believes necessary to perform its legislative oversight duties." But where in the Charter is the public's right to compel the same from the Council? The answer is nowhere, and Councilmembers old and new learn that and practice that even before taking office, free of fear that they'll ever be held responsible for lining their pockets while betraying the public.

How many times will councilmembers arrive late and leave early or, like tonight, not attend meetings at all, while being granted “excused” but entirely unexplained absences? How many times will councilmembers grandstand about crime, education, shootings, inclusionary housing, double parking, parking on sidewalks, 24/7 store hours, repair funds for seniors, road paving, evictions, affordability, developer violations, applications or lack of applications to various boards, and so many other issues, yet never move forward on a single one of them?

How many times will councilmembers and their bedfellows deny the work should have been in front of the Council and completed, as both Sarah Salem and Natalie Quinn did at the last meeting regarding the Council’s obligation as Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Lead Agency to review and complete SEQRA Parts 2 and 3? How many Planning Board (PB) and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) meetings have Councilmembers turned their backs on and never attended, to the point where the Council is entirely ignorant about current applications for gated developments and Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) units poised to line Main Street?, or about Development Director Natalie Quinn’s failure to provide minutes for both the August 9, 2022, Historic District and Landmarks Preservation Commission (HDLPC) and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) meetings that were not recorded, or failure to post the Shadows and Grandview walk-on at the most recent Planning Board meeting of August 16, 2022?

Whether power corrupts, or just heightens pre-existing unethical tendencies, the residents of this City are shaking their damn heads at this Council’s dismal failures and abuse of power. The 4th item on tonight’s agenda reads: “adjournment for caucus”. Is this Council breaking for caucus and then resuming the meeting? or adjourning so that they can quickly slip out the back door and neither caucus nor return?

4. Curtis Simpson

IV. ADJOURN FOR CAUCUS

A motion was made by Councilmember Thompson and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 pm.

Dated: August 30, 2022

Revised: September 1, 2022

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, August 29, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmin Nicole Davis
City Chamberlain

