



## THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

### PUBLIC HEARING

---

*6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING  
PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF CLARENCE LOWN MEMORIAL ROCK GARDEN  
AND 148 CANNON STREET AS LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS*

---

**Monday, June 2, 2014 5:30 p.m.**

**City Hall**

---

**Chairman Mallory** called the meeting to order at 6: 00 p.m.

**Holly Wahlberg 35 Garfield Place** spoke about the Clarence Lown Memorial Rock Garden, in which she nominated at the request of the College Hill Revitalization Committee. She submitted the nomination in November of 2013. She stated that it is with great pleasure that she brings it forward to the council. The work that the College Hill Revitalization Committee has done has been really phenomenal. As you may know they received an Environmental Justice Grant from the DEC to rehabilitate the rock garden. The garden is significant for its connection to Pioneer Rock Gardener Clarence Lown, and he had the great fortune to recognize his achievements during his lifetime, and during his lifetime he was called the father of the American Rock Gardening. He was the first American to prove that rock gardens could be grown in the United States. Rock Gardening is very much an art form, very difficult and most American Gardeners felt it wasn't going to happen in this country. The plants were in the European Alps and the growing conditions seemed so much different, and Lown proved that all wrong. The plants that he nurtured here in Poughkeepsie became the foundation for the New York Botanical Garden, Rock Garden, as well as the Brooklyn Botanical Rock Garden. They actually sent him plants when they couldn't grow them, they sent them to Poughkeepsie for Lown to try to experiment with. His garden became a pilgrimage site for gardeners all across the globe. It was probably the most significant rock garden in the United States. He was interviewed frequently by National Garden Magazine, such as House and Garden, and his skills and achievements were a source of great local pride. When he died in 1931, within only three months of his death, colleagues of his in the gardening community in Poughkeepsie got together immediately and went to his two spinster sisters who lived with him on Forbus Street, and they requested permission to take some of the plants from the rock garden. And that was done by the City of Poughkeepsie Park Superintendant whose name was Frank Berry. And Frank Berry was a gifted horticulturalist. In 1933 they listed in the Poughkeepsie Journal what plants were growing in the Lown Memorial Rock

Official Minutes of Public Hearing of Monday, June 2, 2014

Garden. So we have a wonderful document of exactly what plants Berry selected from Lown's garden, and most of them are self-seeding. So he knew that he didn't need very many, because they would self-seed, and he also picked rocks from the garden, the plants were affixed to the rocks, and he moved them to College Hill. In the 1930's, in the opening days of the Rock Garden, between 2500 and 3000 people made the pilgrimage up to College Hill to photograph and enjoy the rock garden. And today we have an opportunity to celebrate this very special piece of American history that is so associated with the City of Poughkeepsie.

**Ken Stickle 118 Catherine Street** stated that three years ago, he and Councilwoman Anne Perry took a journey up to College Hill Park, and we are the pioneers of cleaning College Hill up, and am very proud of that. Along with Mr. Al Maxsee, Mr. Brooks, Mae Parker Harris, he had three ladies who were all in their young 70's, out helping to move mulch around on a very hot June day. Not one man came up to help him. Does believe that the rock garden should be on the historical list, but also believes the entire park should be on the list. It is a very valuable piece of property in the City of Poughkeepsie and people don't realize that is our Central Park in the City of Poughkeepsie. If you look at that park, it is landscaped just like Central Park. It needs more help, would like to see the city come up and give us more help, but they are on lack of manpower. If we have to take one baby step at a time, turn around to get this park on the historical list, I'm all for it. As far as 148 Cannon Street, and was very disturbed to see a sign put up on the front of it and it said "Warehouse for Rent". He thought that this man was going to man was going to make this into something positive, not into a warehouse to rent. Asked the City Council, don't pass the one foe 148 Cannon Street, don't know of any other warehouse in the city that is a historical landmark.

**Craig Brandli 110 Hooker Avenue** one of the biggest things to celebrate here in the City of Poughkeepsie is history, and we have a lot of it, and it's great that grants were sought, and that a lot of time and effort was put in to restore the Clarence Lown and it's still a work in progress, College Hill Park. It is really great start to the designation process and restore this the way that Lown intended it. It also has the history of Roosevelt, Roosevelt's mother did the designation to it. As far as 148 Cannon Street, get it on the registry so that we can limit the type of industry that goes in there and maintains historic integrity.

**Doug Nobelitti 145 Academy Street** stated that he agrees with the designation of the Clarence Lown Rock Garden designation. All historic assets in the community are extremely valuable, the look of disrepair and rundown that prevent people from wanting to come here and invest. It is like our Central Park, it is the largest park we have in the City of Poughkeepsie. As far as 148 Cannon Street, that is very disturbing and believes that the property was sold at auction for \$14,000.00. It is a cornerstone property and it has problems and needs maintenance and is historically viable. To see this property go into the hands of someone who is going to lease it is going to drag down the neighborhood. We have to consider this when we give properties up for auction.

**Dated:** September 10, 2014

Official Minutes of Public Hearing of Monday, June 2, 2014

I hereby certify that this a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Public Hearing held on Monday, June 2, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanne L. Flynn  
City Chamberlain