



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 4, 2021 6:30 p.m.

City Hall

The Council Meeting was conducted using videoconferencing, as permitted by the NYS Open Meetings Law.

Welcome to the regularly scheduled meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is Thursday, February 4, 2021, and the time is 6:30 pm.

Effective immediately and based upon notices and health advisories issued by Federal, State, and Local officials related to the Coronavirus, the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council will not hold in-person meetings. Until further notice, all future City Council meetings (including public hearings) will be held via videoconferencing, as permitted by the NYS Open Meetings Law.

Due to public health and safety concerns, the public will not be permitted to attend at the remote locations where the City Council members will be situated. The public, however, will be able to fully observe the video conference meeting by using the registration link that was posted with our meeting notice and the meeting will be available for viewing at a later date and available on our website.

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. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL- 6 Present 3 Absent (Councilmembers L. Johnson, R. Johnson and Petsas. Councilmember Petsas arrived after "roll call")

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Official Minutes of the Common Council Meeting of February 4, 2021

CCM Minutes 01-19-2021						
			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated <input type="checkbox"/> Tabled	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember McNamara	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chair Salem	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

ADD:

VIII: ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

2. Ordinance O-21-02, amending Section 13-175 of the City of Poughkeepsie Code of Ordinances entitled “Stop Signs; Locations Designated”

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

1. Naomi Brooks
2. Patricia Miller – 26 Vassar St
3. Laurie Sandow – South Grand Ave.

Official Minutes of the Common Council Meeting of February 4, 2021

Laurie Sandow comments, Common Council meeting, February 4, 2021 — Pg. 1 of 3

(Original Common Council meeting date was February 1, 2021, which was cancelled and rescheduled)

I'll open tonight's comments with a quote posted last week by Evan Menist, who said:

"We need to make sure that those who lie to perpetuate their power are held accountable."

I wonder, has Evan Menist ever held Sarah Salem, Sarah Brannen and Ann Finney responsible for lying to the public in order to have me silenced and arrested at a Common Council meeting?

Has Menist held Chris Petsas and Matt McNamara responsible for applauding while the Council's Sergeant-at-Arms—their private police force—escorted me from the room?

Did Evan Menist hold his own self responsible when he, in tandem with Sarah Salem, vouched for and circulated an entirely fabricated and slanderous narrative about why I was arrested?

Has Menist held Chris Petsas responsible for lies that Petsas used to attack this city's Historic District and Landmark Preservation Commission [the "HDLPC"]?

Are there, effectively, lies by omission?—for example, Evan Menist's failure to announce at a Council meeting his new paid position with a Rockland County Senator, a position that may have caused Menist to change his vote from opposition to favorable support of Ken Kearney's 40-year PILOT. Or a conflict of interest by omission from Sarah Brannen who, when this Council voted to hire Gary Beck and scuttled the City's purchase of the Italian Center, never once mentioned that Gary Beck was Brannen's fellow Trustee at the Poughkeepsie Day School.

In January, Sarah Brannen made a virtue-signalling post to Facebook, citing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s quote: **"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."**

Brannen said that quote acted as a guide to her own work in Poughkeepsie. How ironic—

Sarah Brannen, who abuses her power to silence members of the public by making up Council rules; Sarah Brannen who remains silent and non-responsive to Freedom of Information requests; Sarah Brannen who willfully, knowingly, illegally follows Trump's lead, joining certain other councilmembers in silencing the public by blocking access and comments to their own social media posts. I wonder, Evan Menist, do you consider that a lie by omission? by commission?

Will you be making sure to hold Brannen accountable for lies and omissions made to perpetuate her power?

Official Minutes of the Common Council Meeting of February 4, 2021

Laurie Sandow comments, Common Council meeting, February 4, 2021 — Pg. 2 of 3

This Common Council is continuously, willfully lawbreaking—at the last Council meeting alone, every councilmember participated in at least three Open Meetings Law violations: the last-minute Resolution R21-21, added to the agenda after the meeting started, and never posted to the public in advance of the meeting; an Executive Session, initiated without a proper motion; and Council Chair Sarah Salem’s extensive Facebook post about the PBA contract, composed before the Council meeting even began, posted during the Executive Session, and documenting that the Council’s decision to reject the PBA contract was made far in advance of the Council meeting itself. And to those councilmembers saying to themselves or others: “Hey, that wasn’t me”. Yes, it was you; it was completely you. As with the Republicans and their Q-Anon allies—what you don’t repudiate, you enable. Silent councilmembers willfully colluded with and enabled this.

On tonight’s agenda there’s spot rezoning of yet another City parcel at Milton Street. Where’s Natalie Quinn on this issue? Must be out gallivanting with Waldo. How much of this City will be spot rezoned by this Council—all to the benefit of developers and gentrification? How long will Sarah Salem, Sarah Brannen and Evan Menist’s lawbreaking LWRP committee continue to jeopardize all our waterways, including the Fall Kill behind the Milton Street project? How much longer will the Council’s meets-only-in-private LWRP fail to produce a completed document? And how much longer will the City pretend that it can’t produce a Comprehensive Plan as long as the Council’s LWRP keeps stalling? How convenient for each party to be pointing fingers at the other.

Lastly, as to the rules-breaking sales of 61 Academy and 204 Church that took place at the recent January 19, 2021, Council meeting, why did not a single Council member mention that the purchaser of 61 Academy was not even a legal NY State entity until late December 2020? Has Sarah Salem ever answered why the sale of 61 Academy was yanked from the Council’s agenda before lives were lost in the tragic fire, when Salem was still 2nd Ward councilmember? Who are the anonymous new buyers of 61 Academy? Did the City have to pay to recover 204 Church St. from Nesheiwat, whose \$3,000 purchase of that property was supported and advocated by Chris Petsas? The same building Neshiewat tried to flip for \$149,000, and then let fall to ruin. Did the City ever fine Neshiewat for demolition by neglect of that historic property? And now, at the last Council meeting, 204 Church was sold to Baxter for \$1,000. Due diligence anyone? Or has this “transparency council” made that the public’s responsibility, and not the Council’s?

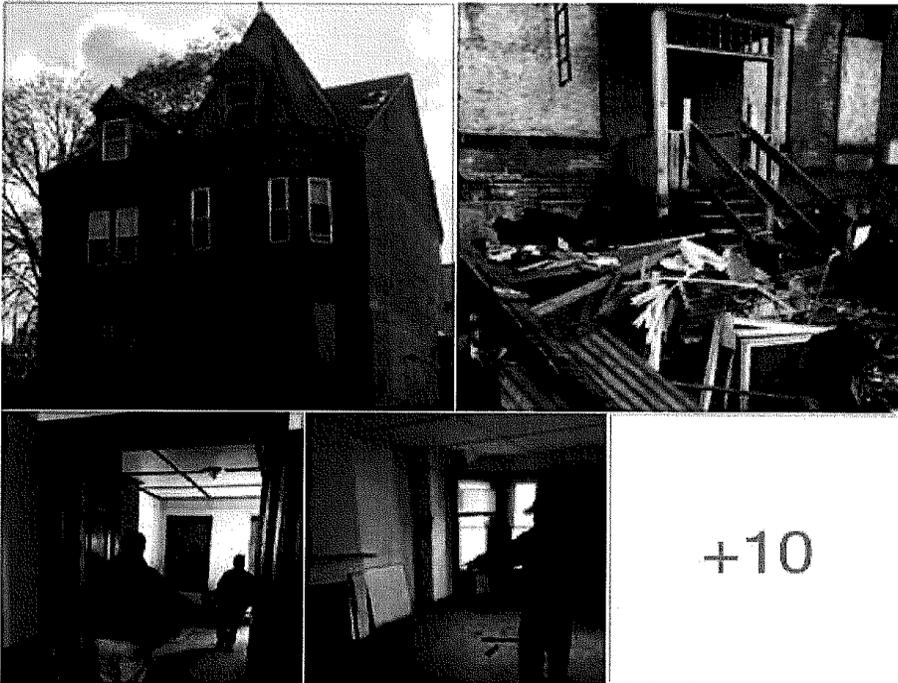
Laurie Sandow comments, Common Council meeting, February 4, 2021 — Pg. 3 of 3



Chris Petsas added 14 new photos.

November 16 at 11:20am · Poughkeepsie, NY ·

Proud to have had my part in saving the historic Arnout Cannon House located at 204 Church Street from the wrecking ball two years ago ... prouder today to walk and tour the property with new owner Issa Nesh who has started renovating the building. He has amazing plans to rehab the building. Thank you to Council President-elect Ann Finney for attending today and learning more about the project !



4. Jeanette Cantwell

5. Ken Stier

V. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

So we're going to kick off chairpersons comment with the fact that yesterday we received an Article 78 from Pelton Partners LLC that seeks to reverse the decision we, the Common Council, made on October 1st to uphold the determination of the historic District Landmarks Preservation Commission's denial of a certificate of appropriateness for Pelton partners, proposed development at thirty six North Clover Street and I on the advice of legal.

We really can't say too much because we will be entering this soon.

I have a few comments: First on the snow - that was quite a storm! It seemed that the snow was never going to end, but it did. And, I think it's safe to say that we saw up to 20 inches in some parts of the city. I know parts of the state received even more snow.

And I want to give a major kudos to the Department of Public Works for their clearing of the snow on the streets through the storm, into the night, through the next day, and as it continued to fall on Tuesday night.

And I was actually incredibly impressed with the detail of the clearing and the plowing on the sidewalks, specifically on Main Street. I understand that there are a number of areas that still need to be cleared for pedestrians and for the safety of car traffic coming around corners and such.

However, I know a number of council members have put their contact information out online. I want to put mine out there, too. If you see a spot that you think needs a better job of being cleared or you think an owner has cleared the sidewalk fully or there's ice left on the ground, take a picture, note the cross street and send that into any of the council members. You can send it to me personally. My email is SSalem@cityofPoughkeepsie.com, and we will pass the information along. But again, I want to say very, very excellent work to the Department of Public Works.

And, I saw a video that was taken by Mayor Rolison on News Channel Four during the storm showing the work of DPW, clearing John Flowers circle down on the end of Main. So that was pretty exciting.

Police reform and Modernization Collaborative report has been released from Mayor Rolison and police chief Pape. It's a preliminary report in response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's executive order 203 on twenty first century police reform. And there is a virtual meeting that's been scheduled for Wednesday, February 10th at six p.m. and that is to access feedback from members of the public on the report. You can access the report and you can register for the virtual meeting by going to www.cityofpoughkeepsie.com/policecollaborativeplan. I think that there's a link on the City of Poughkeepsie.com home page. You can register for the virtual meeting that will be held on February 10th.

And I will personally invite Chief Pape to join us at our upcoming council meeting to formally present the plan with the public feedback that's received after that February 10th meeting date to the Common Council, because the Common Council will have to pass the plan before April of 2021, according to Executive Order 203.

And I know that that preliminary plan was worked on with committee members, Dutchess County Task Force with the Procedural Justice Committee and other members of the community.

So as a preliminary plan, I am really excited to dig in a little bit deeper and to hear the feedback that we receive from members of the public.

I also want to thank the Dutchess County for recognizing me personally for my work through the pandemic with Dutchess Outreach in food access and distribution of emergency meals and grocery packages. It feels good to be recognized. And I thank Mark Molinaro and the county legislature for sending me a certificate and just feeling recognized.

I do have to say I couldn't have done any of that work alone. And there's a whole team at Dutchess Outreach that worked through the pandemic, changed the way that we operated in order to get meals out to individuals who are food insecure and continue to be food insecure. And we didn't stop one single day, so there was no working from home, everybody right on the front lines. And that was thanks to the collaboration that we felt from the government, members of our community and supporters, other organizations that helped us through that time and continue to help us. So, I really want to give a thanks for that.

Coronavirus cases are still occurring in Dutchess County, and just as a reminder, it's good to wear one mask, if not two, now good to remember not to gather in enclosed spaces with more than 10 people. If you are gathered with more than 10 people, make sure you're abiding by those social distancing measures. And again, wearing a mask.

Resources are available on the City of Poughkeepsie website for contact tracing to figure out how to get a test where you were when you should get a test, what to do if you think you've been in contact with somebody with the coronavirus and information on getting vaccinated as well.

I know that there are a number of pop up clinics that are being instituted in New York State, that there's one here in Poughkeepsie. However, I'm pretty sure that those appointments are already full and designated and appointments are going fast for vaccine. So if you're able to pop on the Dutchess County website, you can figure out how you can get in line to get a vaccine if you're eligible. And on the New York State website, they have the eligibility guide so you can figure out when you're eligible. And again, I would sign up for email alerts, for text alerts so you can keep on top of it, because, again, those appointments go within minutes and folks are getting vaccinations outside of the county. They're going wherever they can in order to get vaccinated, understanding that doses are limited and appointments are filling very, very fast.

So even if you're vaccinated, that doesn't mean you have to stop wearing a mask and stop any of those guidelines issued by the CDC. It's important to remember that that's only one point of protection. And there are a number of other things that we have to do to protect our entire community, to uphold our standards of community care to our highest ability.

February is Black History Month and there are plenty of ways to celebrate and learn about black history and culture in our community and our country. And I would contend that there is things to celebrate every single day. Black history is ongoing because black community members are part of our community and part of this country of our story.

Celebrating the African Spirit is a local organization that is running a number of, a host of virtual events this month. And I would hop on their Facebook page or pop on to their website at celebratingtheafricanspirit.org to find out when you can tune in to these events. I'm very excited about a number of them. I can't wait to tune in myself. And there are other events posted for local organizations over in Kingston, across the country.

And again, I know it's also an excellent time to reflect on the history being made by black Americans or the herstory, I should say, at this very moment with the election of our first black vice president, Kamala Harris, a woman and a graduate of a historically black university. And as Georgia sends its first black senator to the capital.

So, black history, again, is ongoing. And, as we endeavor to correct a racist and oppressive behaviors and actions of the past and continue to work for racial justice and ensure that black history and the story of our black community members does not get lost in the pages that reflect the retelling of our country's experience. Because the American experience is diverse and some parts of our history is gruesome at times hard to swallow. However, it's necessary to recount accurately these points of history in order to reform and to move forward to ensure that every single member of our community feels welcome and feels as if their voice matters in our communities.

So let's continue the hard work together.

VI. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

1. Finance Committee Report– Chair Evan Menist

VII. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

1. **A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Cherry to receive and print.**

(R21-22)

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE COMMON COUNCIL
INTRODUCING A LOCAL LAW ENTITLED “THE POUGHKEEPSIE EMERGENCY
TENANT HOUSING, AND INCLUSIONARY CONSTRUCTION STRATEGY ACT OF
2020” AND PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC NOTICE AND HEARING**

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER MENIST

***BE IT RESOLVED*, that an introductory Local Law, entitled “THE POUGHKEEPSIE
EMERGENCY TENANT HOUSING, AND INCLUSIONARY CONSTRUCTION**

STRATEGY ACT OF 2020” be and it hereby is introduced before the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie in the County of Dutchess and State of New York; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of the aforesaid proposed Local Law be laid upon the desk of each council member; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Common Council shall hold a public hearing on said proposed Local Law virtually via videoconferencing, (as permitted by the NYS Open Meetings Law) for the purpose of receiving comment on the proposed Local Law on March 1,2021 at 5:30 p.m.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Clerk publish or cause to be published a public notice in the official newspaper of the City of Poughkeepsie of said public hearing at least ten (10) days prior thereto.

SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER BRANNEN

R21-22			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated <input type="checkbox"/> Tabled	Councilmember Flowers	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember McNamara	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember R. Johnson	Voter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Menist	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Petsas	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember L. Johnson	Voter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Brannen	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chair Salem	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. A motion was made to suspend the rules by Councilmember Flowers and seconded by Councilmember Brannen.
A motion was made to resume the rules of the regular Common Council Meeting by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Flowers.

VIII. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:

1. Ordinance O-21-01, approving a zoning amendment for the rezoning to a vacant nine acre parcel on Milton Street from Medium-Low Density to Planned Residential Density (PRD)

2. Ordinance O-21-02, amending Section 13-175 of the City of Poughkeepsie Code of Ordinances entitled “Stop Signs; Locations Designated”

-NO VOTE TAKEN-

IX. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

1. **FROM COUNCILMEMBER CHERRY AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR NELSON**, a communication regarding the Joint City-School District Shared Employee Communication & Public Outreach: An Inter-Municipal Agreement
2. **FROM COUNCILMEMBER MCNAMARA and CITY ASSESSOR TAYLOR**, a communication on the Senior Citizen Real Property Tax Exemption.
3. **FROM JOSEPH T. GEMMATI**, a notice of intent for JD’s Pub & Brew, Inc., to renew its Liquor License.
4. **FROM ANNETTE CREARY**, a notice of property damage sustained on December 20, 2020.
5. **FROM BRANDON J. BRODERICK**, a notice of personal injury sustained by Leslie Dildly on December 31, 2020.
6. **FROM SALEM M. NESHEIWAT, by his parent and Natural Guardian CYNTHIA NESHEIWAT AND CYNTHIA J. NESHEIWAT, Individually**, a notice of personal injury sustained on December 13, 2020.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

II. NEW BUSINESS:

III. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember Cherry to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 pm.

Dated: February 8, 2021

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Thursday, February 4, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. DeLuca
Acting City Chamberlain

