



# THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

## COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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**Monday, July 12, 2021 6:30 p.m.**

**City Hall**

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**Welcome to the regularly scheduled meeting of the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council the date is July 12, 2021, and the time is 6:33 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. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**ROLL CALL - Seven present, two absent at time of roll call (Councilmember Cherry, Councilmember R. Johnson)**

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

**NONE**

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

- 1. Kari Rieser – Topanga Shop Owner**
- 2. Ken Stickle – Catharine St.**
- 3. Brian Robinson – Montgomery St.**

**4. Laurie Sandow – S. Grand Ave.**

Tonight is the Common Council's last meeting before its summer break. Are there meaningful resolutions on tonight's agenda? An agenda that took a week to produce with practically zero content? Is homelessness on the agenda? Violence in the city? And though on June 7th, 2021—more than a month ago—Council Chair Salem insisted they'd be assembling a meeting to address violence, a Freedom of Information request produced replies from Police, Fire, Engineering, Assessor and Building Departments, all saying they had nothing in their files supporting Salem's claim. As to Council replies, there were only two. Yvonne Flowers wrote that she could not recall receiving any documentation; and Sarah Brannen sent a cryptic reply saying she had no FOILable records that were responsive. Brannen's been asked to clarify, but to date she has not. From every other councilmember?—lawbreaking non-responsiveness and dead silence. Following Salem's pattern of ignoring an Academy Street property until it became a fire tragedy, this Council has determined that City violence is not urgent enough to tackle until the end of August, when the Council returns from summer recess. And I, for one, have determined that I will lay at the feet of the Council every summer death, tragedy, incidence of violence and ongoing failure of homeless services. Enough with the recent grandstanding by certain councilmembers about why these issues are not on the agenda—either name names, or stop your baloney. Is it Council Chair Salem who's keeping these items off the agenda? or is Councilmembers themselves who fail to seek them? Because council members who complain about missing agenda items, yet refuse to name names, and who themselves make no attempt to walk on a resolution, are doing nothing more than BS'ing the people of this City. What IS on tonight's agenda? A repeat last-minute appeal of support for grant funding from an owner whose vacant property has been blighting Main Street for years on end, and a nomination to fill a Water Board seat, replacing Sarah Salem who failed to attend six meetings in a row. But collecting a paycheck while skipping out of meetings is a Common Council specialty—witness Evan Menist's unexplained absence from the last Council meeting, as well as Chris Petsas' and Natasha Cherry's unexplained early exits from the same last meeting. Also witness tonight's absences by Natasha Cherry and Randall Johnson. Another secretive Poughkeepsie specialty is also NOT on tonight's agenda—the PK4Keeps Comprehensive Planning and Zoning steering committee. A committee—

just like the Charter Revision committee that preceded it—whose meetings are NOT recorded; a committee distinctly devoid of representation from key sectors of the city; created in secret, functioning in secret, without disclosure of selection process, without public witnesses, without taped recordings, minutes and attendance records, and whose 21 members comprise three new city residents, of all absurdities, as well as six or more non-profits, and two councilmembers—Sarah Salem and Evan Menist—with fingers in every pie. The same two councilmembers who are known for supporting a racist rezoning resolution prohibiting bodegas, supporting the exclusive Innovation District, and for undermining the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), and balkanizing the waterfront in behalf of a wealthy, gated community. It’s always “amusing” that this City and its councilmembers believe their power derives from withholding information, rather than creating transparency and freely circulating information. I demand that all PK4Keeps meetings be announced to the public, open to the public, and recorded for posterity.

**5. Michael de Cordova – 278 Main St.**

**IV. CHAIRPERSON’S COMMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

So we move now to chairpersons’ comments, I want to give just a brief update on a few things going on. First, we are updating the comprehensive plan. It hasn't been updated since 1998, so more than 20 years. And with that, we're updating the zoning ordinance, which hasn't been updated in more than 40 years. This is a very exciting project with plenty of opportunity for public participation. There's an outreach strategy that will involve steering committee members having kitchen table conversations and then reporting back to the consultants, as well as public forums and surveying. The surveys are actually now available online. You can find them at PK for Keeps dot org. That's the number four. So it's PK the number for keeps dot org. And that July survey, which is just the first survey that they're sending out to the public, is available on there. And it asks questions like what you want to see as a vision for your city over the next, however many years, things that you think should be priorities moving forward. So, for instance, if you think affordability is something that we might lose here in the city of Poughkeepsie or inclusive development and growth, then you could name that as a priority. If you think that a priority should be mitigating homelessness and addiction and recovery, you know, solutions, or if you think a priority of ours should be public safety or if you think a priority of ours should be walkable, bike-able cities, or if you think a priority of ours should be green space in open space, get to that survey and let the folks know that that's what you're looking for in the vision of the comprehensive plan. And those are just a few examples, whatever it is that you think we should be looking at as a vision moving forward and things that you think we could help benefit from. As far as a zoning update, please hop on to that website. It's PK for keeps dot org and fill the survey out and then stay tuned for more public forums and invitations to kitchen table conversations.

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We've extended the deadline for folks interested in serving on the redistricting commission to Friday, August twenty seven. So if you're interested in submitting a cover letter and a resume to serve on that commission, please do you have until Friday, August twenty 7th and you can email me SSalem at City, Poughkeepsie, Dotcom, folks that have already applied and been interviewed. Your candidacy is still being considered. However, we need to widen the pool of candidates in order to compile this commission. We haven't yet received the census data, so there's really no work to be done yet. However, that data should be coming in probably in the fall or so. So we'll be seeing it soon. And so there will be work for you all on the city's redistricting commission not to be confused with the disbanded county commission August twenty fifth. We're having a special meeting at six p.m. It's going to be at Change Point Church, which is almost diagonal from City Hall, where we'll convene members of the community, local officials and subject matter experts to seek solutions on the growing issues of gun violence, homelessness and crime in the city of Poughkeepsie, and to hear ways to mitigate them and work together in doing so. So again, this meeting will be a Change Point Church. It starts at 6:00 p.m. It's a Wednesday, August twenty fifth. And, you know, these issues have been, as has been cited and mentioned many times by my colleagues, the administration and the police force on the rise over the past year and through the coronavirus pandemic with several young people in the city of Poughkeepsie who shot numerous shooting incidents across the city, still occurring as frequently and as recently as yesterday. And then, you know, the steep increase of number of folks who are considered un-housed in our community, which is getting to be a major issue. And these are really complicated and complex issues. And so the solutions will be just as complex, not necessarily as complicated, but they will take a group effort. So I know at the last meeting, council member Cherry suggested we reach out to county folks to try to coordinate meetings together, understanding that this isn't just a city of Poughkeepsie problem services, you know, human services do exist at a higher rate here in the city of Poughkeepsie, and that's why there are more people that come here to get those services and get those supports. However, this is a county wide issue and we have to start considering ways to broaden the network of support and then with that, come up with solutions from a diverse network of people. So, again, this meeting is really important. I'm going to send invites to our police force, to community organizations that work both in public safety reform, grassroots efforts, homelessness, you know, home rehabilitation and addiction recovery and support services because, you know, and mental health services, it's all kind of entangled into these kinds of issues and food security issues as well. You know, over the past year or so, all of those issues that had already existed just not only persisted, but became worse because of the coronavirus pandemic. So it's time that we address that and we can't have any more young kids being shot at and killed or getting their hands on guns. And then we need to we need to figure out the homelessness issue that we're encountering now. I want to put it on everyone's radar that our next council meeting is Monday, August twenty third. So we have a little bit of a stretch there until the next meeting. Again, that's on Monday, August twenty third. And that meeting in our special meeting, that's on the twenty fifth and then the following council meeting that's on the 30th, which is again a Monday. We'll all be held at a Change Point Church, and that is because HBO is going to be using the chambers to do some shooting. And in their use there, they're kind of almost, I don't know, Marc, what they're renovating or they're kind of ripping up the dais to replace it and put a set down. So it's going to take a little bit of work to get it back together and for us to come back and meet here. And this had been planned prior to the executive orders being rescinded by the governor. So we had thought part of it would be done during the council's four week

break and then the remaining part would be done while we're still using video conferencing software. However, that's not the case. And so we adapt and we go with, you know, we move and make those kinds of changes and Change Point Church has so graciously allowed for us to use their facility. Which is a really great facility, and it has all of the above capacity and Councilmember Johnson just mentioned parking. The financial plaza deck is a good parking option over there. There's a Garden Street lot. Yeah, I mean, they're late at night and right there, yeah, yeah, I parked my car there. There's other kinds of surface area parking lots and if anyone's looking for parking, I can point you in the direction of where you might be able to park your car. It would be nice to know that you mention not to have lights and cameras in that deck eventually knowing that that's an additional cost to the city. But I think a lot more people would feel safer parking in there. And that concludes my comments.

**V. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:**

**VI. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:**

**A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember L. Johnson to receive and print.**

- 1. Resolution R-21-59, Support for 278 Main St. to make application to the New York Main Street program CFA Grant**

**RESOLUTION  
(R-21-59)**

**INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER MENIST:**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Poughkeepsie recognizes and supports the importance of revitalizing the Main Street corridor for the economic and social well-being of its residents, businesses, and visitors; and

**WHEREAS**, the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) is making available funds to assist New York communities in Main Street/Downtown revitalization efforts under its New York Main Street Grant Program- Downtown Anchor Project; and

**WHEREAS**, Kirchner Realty, Inc. and Nubian Directions II, Inc. have partnered to submit a grant application for \$500,000, which would be used toward the redevelopment of the former Up To Date Building located at 278 Main Street; and

**WHEREAS**, such funds are available for façade improvements, building renovations, and streetscape improvements subject to approvals and permits issued by the City of Poughkeepsie as may be required; and,

**WHEREAS**, the city believes the grant application, if awarded, would have a positive impact on the community and meet the grant program criteria; and,

**WHEREAS**, any local match would be provided by the applicant and there is no monetary obligation placed on the City of Poughkeepsie; and,

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie wholeheartedly supports and endorses the application of Kirchner Realty Inc. & Nubian Direction II, Inc. to the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal for a grant under the New York Main Street Program- Downtown Anchor Project.

**SECONDED BY** \_\_\_\_\_ **BRANNEN** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>R-21-59</b>			<b>Yes/Aye</b>	<b>No/Nay</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<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 McClinton	Votes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 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"/>

**2. Resolution R-21-60**, appointing Councilmember McClinton to serve on the Joint Water Board

**A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember L. Johnson to receive and print.**

**RESOLUTION  
(R-21-60)**

**INTRODUCED BY** \_\_\_\_\_ **CHAIR SALEM** \_\_\_\_\_ :

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**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the Inter-Municipal Agreement between the City of Poughkeepsie and the Town of Poughkeepsie dated August 3, 1995, the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie is authorized to make appointments of City residents to serve on the Joint Water Board; and

**WHEREAS**, by resolution of the Common Council dated May 2, 1996, two (2) members of the Joint Water Board shall be appointed by the Common Council with one (1) member being a member of the legislative branch and (1) member shall be appointed by the Mayor; and

**WHEREAS**, Board Member Sarah Salem vacated their appointment by submission of their resignation on June 15, 2021, thereby creating a vacancy which may be filled for the unexpired term; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interest of the City of Poughkeepsie and its citizens that the Joint Water Board should have a full complement of members in order to properly conduct the business required of the Board; and

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Common Council of the City of Poughkeepsie hereby appoints the following individual to the Joint Water Board for the remainder of Salem’s term as indicated below:

Councilmember Sakima McClinton (Expires: 12/31/2021)

**SECONDED BY** BRANNEN.

R-21-60			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 McClinton	Votes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Councilmember Cherry	Voter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 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"/>

**VII. ORDINANCES AND LOCAL LAWS:**

**VIII. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. **POUGHKEEPSIE NRI: 2021 UPDATES**, Norris Meigs and Jennifer Rubbo of the Vassar Environmental Cooperative
2. **A COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ADMINISTRATOR NELSON**, on Malcom X Green Infrastructure Grant

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**X. NEW BUSINESS**

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Councilmember Brannen and seconded by Councilmember L. Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 9:07pm.

**Dated: July 20, 2021**

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Meeting held on Monday, July 12, 2021.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Jasmin Nicole Davis**  
**City Chamberlain**

