



**THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
NEW YORK**

PUBLIC HEARING

**(REGARDING THE 2013 ZONING
MAP AMENDMENT FOR A
NEW WALKWAY-GATEWAY DISTRICT)
MINUTES**

Tuesday, September 3, 2013 6:00 pm

City Hall

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

Jeffrey S. Pyle - 29 North Water Street – We currently have the dinner and tour boat that’s down in Poughkeepsie and most of you are aware, we moved it down here because of the efforts being undertaken by Scenic Hudson, Walkway-Over-the-Hudson, Dutchess County Tourism, City of Poughkeepsie. We currently probably see about 3,000 visitors each year that come from as far away as China, Australia; all over the country. I often joke that we’re a little United Nations down on the riverfront. One of the things that has become patently clear, is that signage is needed to be provided for the general public and the Walkway visibility is a key part of that. So, I strongly support the efforts to rezone for signage and waterfront access and for the Walkway access itself. I understand that there’s people that may be opposed or have strong feelings one way or against this, but I certainly think the City is on the cusp of recreating what was a very vibrant waterfront district, and I do believe that connecting the western coast and eastern coast of the river is extremely important and I think this is a vital part of that. Thank you very much.

Jeff Ancevino - Scenic Hudson - 1 Civic Center Plaza, #200 – Thank you, Chairman Mallory, Mayor Tkazyik, ladies and gentlemen of the Council. I appreciate the opportunity to address you and speak to you about the Walkway-Gateway zoning. I moved to Poughkeepsie 22 years ago today, and started work at Scenic Hudson saw the abandoned railroad bridge, I knew, like many others – Bill Sepe, Fred Schaeffer... what a wonderful opportunity this could be for the City of Poughkeepsie. I think we all agree that with the hard work of many people, including the City of Poughkeepsie, it’s created a good benefit to the City, but there’s more that we can do. Since I made the presentation last week, you don’t need any details about the zoning. I’m here tonight to hear what people have to say about it so we can make adjustments to zoning to make it work for

everyone. We've been doing a lot of outreach – especially here in the last few weeks by speaking to a lot of businesses and property owners along Parker Avenue. I'd like to relate to you, one story. A person with a rather large warehouse told me he was recently in Massachusetts and someone said, "Oh, you're from Poughkeepsie? We just got back from Poughkeepsie. We've been to the Walkway." He said, "What do think?" The man from Massachusetts said, "Well, the Walkway was nice, but the area around it looked like a down-and-out industrial area and we couldn't get a cup of coffee." And I think that that encapsulates the thing that everybody has...goals that everyone has for Poughkeepsie and the area around Walkway. And, that's what we believe this rezoning can do for the area. So, again, we want to hear from the general public. Not only tonight, but anyone can contact me at Scenic Hudson or Chairman Mallory can get in touch with me and we can make whatever changes are needed to make this zoning work for everyone. Thank you very much.

Ken Stickle - 118 Catherine Street – Good evening. I'm not against the rezoning of Parker Avenue. I think it's good. I wasn't happy to hear the words, gas stations thrown out. We need them. I think if we're going to turn around and set up everything in that area, we could ask the people if they want a gas station put in. You'd make it look a certain way, such as a convenience store would look. We should not discourage any type of business from going in there. Nancy Cozean stated the last time she was here, that Poughkeepsie was built on Light Industrial industry. Anybody that wants to come into the City and invest money, as long as I don't see 20 bodegas, 20 haircutting places, 20 nail salons, 20 telephone stores open in all one area, I have no qualms with that. We should encourage businesses to open, such as an art gallery or antique shop. I'd like to see a few different things on Parker Avenue. But, we need to get business coming in to the city one way or another, and the Walkway is a good way. There's talk of a Dunkin Donuts place going in at the corner of North Hamilton and Mill [Streets]. I would have liked to see Dunkin Donuts going in by the Walkway or a Baskin & Robbins. I don't understand why the City didn't try to entice somebody to come in like that. I would like to see the old international harvest truck place turned into a supermarket for the 3rd Ward. That would be a great location for a second supermarket in the City of Poughkeepsie. It has the location, it has the loading dock. These are all the things right by the Walkway. We should be looking at everything in the City, not with what we want, but what we need. As I went down Mansion Street tonight, I saw a vacant lot between Garden Street and Balding Avenue and the grass is tall. We need to clean up Parker Avenue, Eisner Bros. junkyard should have some type of greenery around it. There's a heavy equipment company there that should have had something done with the fencing there. We should be giving the businesses on Parker Avenue a chance to make improvements and give them a tax incentive to do it. The Walkway attracts a million people to the City. Where are they eating? Where are the signs for the Waryas Restaurant on Garden Street? What about the Main Street restaurants? It's not just about the waterfront. The uptown area needs to be marketed as well. If we do attract millions of people to the Walkway, we could become a gold mine, we need to clean the City up. Make the international truck place the site of the next supermarket. It's located in an area of low income families who won't have to pay for a cab to "haul" them back and forth.

Arnie Serotsky - 188 South Grand Avenue – While it would take more than 5 minutes for me to talk about all the things I'd like to see all over the City, I will speak briefly, specifically, about the Zoning Ordinances, the subject of this Public Hearing. I think they are a great initiative. I think they are visionary, and I think that if we don't start the vision then we're aiming too low. There's no disagreement, that any plan is a plan...it's something that we strive for but, along the way will need to be adjusted and tweaked when considering the needs of everybody in the area; in this case, a zoning plan as well as all of the opportunities that come along that we'd seek. I support the suggestions in the zoning plan. I think it would be a great place for the City to start in one neighborhood and I'd love to see consideration given to other neighborhoods in our City with respect to vision and the future. Thank you.

Seth Decroche – 7 Reservoir Street – I'm excited that this is happening. I got an e-mail from Jeff through John Morabito, not even realizing what was taking place in the Parker Avenue zone. I live right off Parker Avenue. I created a site to tell the story of Poughkeepsie and this region of Upstate New York. So, the people that are excited about coming here but don't really know what to do when they're here...where to stay...where to eat. The site's named, "An Upstate of Mind." I work in branding and marketing and what I found is the people require a story. They want to know, just like the gentleman that was talking about the man he met from Massachusetts. People want a story of where they're visiting, and they get that story from the work that you guys are trying to do right now. The branding of this zone is not really just to put in signs or to make it look a certain way. I think what the people here are talking about is incredibly valuable. Not kicking people out, but to first tell the people that are there, the story that we think is this zone. And if you think about telling stories, just go back to the days around the campfire. Everybody adds to the story; it's not just the storyteller. People are talking around the campfire, making it their own. It's a community coming together and if you can get that whole community talking about what the story is of the Parker Avenue zone, they're going to be incredibly excited to be a part of it...to do their part in it, to create their chapter of it, and when people come to the area, they're going to be able to share that story with others. That's the most important thing. I didn't even realize that a million people were coming to the Walkway. I knew there were busloads of people coming in, and I see their faces when they're out jogging and see them getting off the buses and have a look of wondering where they are at that moment. What am I supposed to do here? This is amazing that this was built. It sends a message that Poughkeepsie got it together enough to create the longest pedestrian walkway in the world. We're a world known city now. People come here expecting to see something in addition to that. I know that people are starting to try to "step up their game." I see it in the businesses that are moving in to Main Street into a section that is an area that hasn't been talked about, as the gentleman said. How are we going to stimulate that area? Bring people to it. It'll happen. This is all part of it. But, the fact is, these visionaries that are saying, "Poughkeepsie can step up its game." The fact that we have this walkway...it's an anchor. People come here for that and they want a sense of...people are looking to move here, too. You don't have to worry about leaving to go to New York City, to Boston. People are looking for communities like Poughkeepsie to move to. Even people working in jobs or industries that don't even exist here are looking for communities to work off-

site in. This is a new time. Everybody works on the internet now. This is the place where they can do it. All of these initiatives that we do, it just gets me so incredibly excited. I'm so happy that we're doing it, and I hope that there are things that people can do within the community. Other visionaries can step forward and I know everybody here knows a visionary and can say to them, "I have a talent in getting something done. I can help in my way, how can you help in your way?" I think that something magical can happen. Thank you.

Constantine Kazolias – 47 Noxon Street – I'm a visionary too. Come over to Noxon Street and I'll show you what's really the cancer of the City when you destroy neighborhoods. But, I'm going to stay with the issue The City doesn't have a Planning Department – the county's taking over the Planning. The City doesn't have a Master Plan yet. In that presentation down at the hotel across the street, Kaal Rock Park was left out of the mix at the Grand Hotel presentation. They're talking about the waterfront. Something else which disturbed me was the fact that not one elected official Councilmen was part of the group that involved the 1st, 3rd and 5th Ward. If the Chairman of the Common Council was in the 6th Ward, there'd be no representation into the area which they're requesting to rezone. That's very critical. In other words, they kept out of the "loop." You got a problem up there with Eisner. He's been there for at least maybe 200 years. I know it's at least 100. What are you going to do with that junkyard? The point I'm trying to make is no representation in the area being zoned. You're asking people to rezone the area. Something else that was discussed here by the Master Plan. The jail isn't going to go up to the State Hospital. The jail, by law, the County, by Charter has to be in the County seat and will be on Hamilton Street, so Hamilton Street is in that area that they're asking about rezoning and the Planner didn't address that at the last...when he made his presentation. I just got to say one thing, Brother Stickles brought up one thing...back in the 1990's, I came before the Council to buy the corner piece of property so I could put an Exxon Mobil/Dunkin Donuts up, but the politics at the time – Colette Lafuente, I'll mention her name killed the deal. I have to say this because I don't know how many years I got, and who headed that special meeting was Tom O'Neil. Now, Tom O'Neil is Chairman of the Planning Department and he's voiced opposition to development in the City. He's a detriment to the City as far as I'm concerned. Way back, two decades ago, even today. In other words, I think he's got to go if you want to get development. Let's face it - the rezoning up there is the Walkway. If 3 million people weren't coming across that Walkway, we wouldn't even be discussing it. Let's not just consider part of the city...the Walkway aspect. The rest of the City is hurting, and I'm going to be paying my School Taxes this month and you know what I'm talking about, because we need tax rateables, etc. There's a lot on my plate. I appreciate your time, but the thing has to be done, but the point is, the way it's being done. If you want development in the city, you should include all the wards, not just the 1st, 4th and 5th. I'm waiting for some of these Mexicans from Acapulco, to come up and dive off that bridge. They dive 300 feet.

Chairman Mallory: Alright. Mr. Kazolias, are there any more comments you need to make about the rezoning?

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Mr. Kazolias: Well, that'll be for the tourist business. Don't you think somebody will want to see somebody dive off that bridge and survive? They do all the time in Mexico.

Elizabeth Waldstein-Hart – Executive Director, Walkway-Over-the-Hudson – First of all, I wanted to thank the Council people for taking the time to work for so many months on the zoning and I know Councilman Rich, Councilwoman Perry, Councilwoman Johnson, Councilman Parise, Councilwoman Boyd, Bob Mallory and the Mayor have all been at different discussions to talk about zoning, so, I just appreciate your help. I think we were here last week talking about the bigger picture about what could happen with development and how zoning lays down a plan for future development and allows that to happen in the City. We're no longer a Light Industrial area. There's no longer an active railway and trucking route, so I would urge you to take a look at it and support the hard work of yourselves and so many other people, to get a new zoning in place.

Darrett Roberts – 148 Franklin Street – I was just listening on the zoning and I figure it's a very good idea to have it there. You'll get the businesses there to work for the community and I also think that to get good business there you need good housing there because I've been walking down Parker Avenue awhile and you need good people to live in those houses that make it look nice to bring beautification there and to the Walkway. If you can get grants and can give it to the homeowners, they can then compliment the businesses that you want to come in, and then the people would be proud to stay on Parker Avenue and it would help the businesses bring in more revenue to the City as a whole. I think that would be the best thing for the area. You have to make the area look good so it would be worth it for businesses to come there.

Dated:

I hereby certify that this a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Public Hearing held on Tuesday, September 3, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

City Chamberlain