



## THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE NEW YORK

### ANNUAL SPECIAL INFORMATION MEETING MINUTES

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<b>Monday, March 19, 2012</b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>City Hall</b>
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**Chairwoman Johnson** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Dorothy Steebler 42 Columbia Street-** I just have a little statement. The city put up signs for handicap parking on public streets in front of my home, hoping this would solve our parking problems. It did not. The police do not respond to calls about illegal parking in the handicap parking spot, nor do they know the rules of handicap parking and permit parking. Columbia Street is a permit parking only street, two hours only. For example, we have cars that park in the handicap spot all day from about 10a.m to about 6:30 p.m. without a permit. There are numerous cars that park on the street without permits. The police fail to come out even after numerous phone calls. Some residents on Columbia Street are retired and they know there are no tickets given out for non-permit parking as well as handicap parking in the two spots that the city provide. So this idea was useless. This is an ongoing problem for about 4 years. So again we are asking for resolution of off street parking at our homes at 42 Columbia Street, in the city of Poughkeepsie. We believe that this is important to our quality of life as senior citizens. I don't know why the police don't want to come back out and issue parking tickets. From what I am told, it is there job. I don't know what the problem is, can somebody tell me?

**City Administrator Long** responded that it is a police enforcement issue and I know that the parking attendants are directed toward certain routes on certain days to go and police certain areas. We will ask the police department to step up their enforcement in your vicinity around the hospital. As you know, we have been trying to work on a solution to have handicap parking out there. Your intention is that there should be a permit parking as well as a handicap parking.

**Dorothy Steebler** responded, well my understanding is that its permit parking up and down the street, including the handicap parking. Don't they have to have a permit beside the handicap placard to park in the handicap spot? No it is either one or the other.

**City Administrator Long** responded that typically a handicap will trump a local parking designation in a little parking district

**Dorothy Steebler** responded, okay then the two handicap spots outside of my house is not helping the situation. If it's one or the other then it doesn't do the job. Okay, thank you.

**William Smith 42 Columbia Street-** This question is addressed to **the Shade Tree Commission. Is anybody here from the Shade Tree Commission?** On January 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year I wrote you a letter. To whom it may concern, I am requesting a removal of a hazardous apple tree in front of 42 Columbia Street. I am handicap and a senior citizen. The tree makes it difficult for me to go from my home to the street and my car. In the spring, the trees drop flower petals that make the side walk slippery. In the fall the curare apples makes it difficult for me to keep the sidewalks clean due to my handicap. Leaving the sidewalk stained and slippery, this affects the life for me as a senior citizen. If I can be of further assistance to you, please contact me at 845-473-2036. A reply to this letter is needed and it is now March 19<sup>th</sup> and I have no reply. Also a copy was sent to the mayor's office on January 2<sup>nd</sup> and I have no reply. Is this customary for citizens of Poughkeepsie not to get replies to their letters? I believe that the letter was transmitted to the proper authorities with the commissioner of public works and then Shade Tree would review the overall request that was made. A copy of this letter was sent to you. I am telling you what transpired through the progression of your letter and I think that this should fall under the commissioner of public works as- January February , March, three months later and nor reply? I mean I pay taxes. If I don't pay my taxes, you are on me in a minute. I have to come to meeting like this here to get a reply to my letters? I pay taxes. When I write a letter to the council or the mayor I expect to get a reply. I want to thank you for your time.

**John Mylod 101 Beechwood Avenue-** this is in response to an article in the Poughkeepsie Journal a couple of days ago regarding Transit Oriented Development or TOD. My question is with respect to a couple of the comments in the article, the Mayor said the area includes a half mile radius around the railroad station and a portion of Venality Boulevard, lower main street and water street. From what I know about the city, living here all my life, the city doesn't own a lot of property down in that area, except parkland. Now there is probably some that I am forgetting, but most of this parkland that the city actually owns that would be suited for transit oriented development. The question is, is the city actually contemplating using parkland for transit oriented development?

**Administrator Mike Long** responded as you may recall back in the late 80's, the study that was done by Dutchess County that talked about redevelopment along the waterfront, was where it first came out with the concepts of transit oriented development and metro North owns a significant amount of property and the city does own some property as well. Some of it is parkland. The initial study was put together that looked at a market analysis that tried to figure out what types of activities would be welcomed and that would be advantageous to be in that location. The second phase of the project is to try and take a harder look at where you could actually do some of the developments. It is kind of a multiphased approach, as you can see with the proposed Dutton Lumbar Company development; it has a lot of the same concepts and principles. So again as a part of our comprehensive plan in redoing the zoning ordinance is to try to take TOD as a component of our zoning ordinance. We are trying to make sure that it is all compatible.

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**John Mylod** responded, I understand the county's plan. I have written about that and discussed that in great lengths years ago. Still, are saying then that parkland is on the table for TOD? city parkland?

**City Administrator Long** responded At this point no specific parcel has been identified. There has been a generic area looked at.

**John Mylod** asked about specific parcels being eliminated? (ie. Parkland)

**City Administrator Long** responded that nothing has been proposed today to be eliminated as parkland.

**John Mylod** added, No, but I am saying how about that as a city principle, eliminating parklands as possible development tracks for TOD? There are many different positions in TOD.

**City Administrator Long** stated that he was going to say we are having a stakeholder's meeting that will probably be next month that talks with some of the private owners. And again, what we are trying to encourage, is a private developer trying to work within their own property and their own boundaries to try to stimulate the economy here, but there may be some additional concepts that may be of (cut off).

**John Mylod** responded that the article talks about stakeholders, but we never who the stakeholders are. Again I want to stress the notion that parkland is parkland and not development land no matter how environmental people talk about TOD and how there is positive aspects of it. The folks in beacon had a similar issue although it wasn't specifically parkland, they were very concerned about TOD and I am very concerned about it if it's going to destroy the remaining parkland that we have in this vicinity of the city. Thank You.

**Arnold Serotsky 188 South Grand Avenue-** I am here to ask a question for information. I would like to know currently and planned in the future, what afterschool, evening, and summer recreation programs are administered and planned? I am thinking things like open gym and basketball leagues by the city for adolescents' afterschool, evening, and summer, adolescent oriented programs. I am not quite sure, is it the superintendant that is the title of recreation? That will help me understand what we have in place and what we might be thinking of in the future. Thank You

**Terry Horner 81 South Hamilton Street-** I have two questions and the first question is to the Sanitation division of Public Works. For six or eight, or maybe even more years, until February of 2011, the city maintained a trash can on the south man corner of South Hamilton and Barkley Streets, which is the corner we live on. That helped keep a neighborhood with high pedestrian traffic a little cleaner, although we had to pretty much do daily pickups. In February of 2011, sanitation personnel extricated that can from the snow bank it was buried in and did not bring it back. In April of 2011, my wife left a voicemail with the department of public works and did not get a call back. On April 21<sup>st</sup> of 2011, I talked to someone in the sanitation department who said it must have been stolen because the city was not retrieving cans, but my wife saw a sanitation truck take the can. So my question is why was the can taken? Why didn't we get it back? And

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may we please get one back? The second question may also be for sanitation it's a recycling question. My wife was attempting to do some research on precisely what is recyclable in the city of Poughkeepsie. Our concern or our question is specifically is to wax coated paperboard milk and juice cartons. We were referred to the New York State DEC sight, which doesn't really answer the question and in the print out we got from the city website, the so-called recycling rules, it says milk and other beverage cartons , but I am just looking for a definitive answer, whether they are because I have some doubts because of the wax. Thank You.

**Holly Wahlberg 35 Garfield Place-** My question relates to the epidemic of garbage through streets and parks and chronic littering that plagues the city of Poughkeepsie and just makes our city seem like a dirty, declining, crime ridden place. I'd like to ask the city manager Mr. Long and the Sanitation Department Head **Mr. DuPilka**, what do you see as some of the most promising and innovative strategies being used to address this problem in other cities around the country and how can we begin applying some of these techniques to the City of Poughkeepsie? *Promising technologies in terms of sanitation?* Sanitation in terms of litter, garbage on our streets and parks in terms of both prevention and enforcement what are some of the most promising, innovative, creative ways to deal with this problem because I don't think the city's techniques are having success.

**Commissioner DuPilka** responded, well at this point in time I think our techniques are very similar to other cities. Primarily it's a staff relationship between man power or person power and technology in terms of equipment. I know that in the past we had an unreliable street sweeper and we have a new one. Since that has been on track we've actually got a whole lot more productivity out of it. I know that the sanitation department does do quite a bit in terms of day to day thing. The problem that we find is that people in general discard a lot of stuff publically and we can't follow everybody down the street and pick up after them. I guess it is like when your parents were taught as young kids that they had to take care of their own issues, unfortunately people aren't taking care of their own issues the way that they should be. We can't pick up everybody's trash in everybody's yard. Through our nuisance committee we have been gone out and hit problem areas, problem properties, if something is a vacant property where trash accumulates then we notify the property owner that they have a certain time to take care of the issue if not the city comes in and cleans it up and fines them for it. Again it is a difficult balance between man power, person power, and what we are able to do on a daily basis. So you are saying you have no creative ways to stop the culture of littering? Well I know that council member Rrich has talked about some things. Two and half, three years ago, we implemented a graffiti program, which I think has been beneficial. We are now talking about a litter program. Again we are in the infancy stages trying to implement that program. We have had several church groups that come to volunteer to work with us in different parks and different areas. We have had 7 or 8 groups last year during the summer that came in and volunteered man power because we are limited in terms of our to go out and do those types of things. We do the best we can. Its not everything in every neighborhood that's for sure.

**Nancy Cozean 115 Hooker Avenue-** This is in regards to the reservoir on College Hill. I understand that city is patching the current reservoir. Do you in the long term see a need for eventually upgrading and restoring or improving the reservoir?

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**City administrator Long** responded, I think that there have been a lot of issues about the reservoir. As you know there was a historic reservoir up on top of college hill. A new reservoir was built next to it. There are several different options that are available whether or not the city replaces a brand new reservoir in that specific existing location. There is also some potential that the existing one could somehow be reconstructed in a different manner. We haven't gotten to the nuts and bolts of actually how big it will be what it will be in terms of dollars and cents. Again, it's going to be a fairly capital and extensive project.

**Nancy Cozean** added, but in any way you are expecting a in a reservoir in some new kind of construction? There will be some repairs made to the existing or in a new one in close proximity to existing one. Or, you are saying in the capital end there has to be some type of new construction? Some day when we can afford to build one.

**Michelle Brown 1 Eastman Terrace-** Thursday afternoon I was on a city bus and I am still trying to understand what happened on that bus for that bus driver to react the way he did. There were three seniors, myself, my son, and the rest were female students on the bus. He was late, first of all, drove past as I held my hand out. This was the shoppers special on Thursday afternoon at 3:25. I was waving him down, he drove past looking at me, went past the light, and finally stopped at the end of the block. I got on, paid for me and my son. My son went to the back and I sat in the senior seat. As we proceeded down the block, he looked through his view mirror and yelled at the females on the bus, telling them to shut up, don't say anything, I told you not to talk on this bus. Not one of those young ladies opened their mouth and he told them that if they opened their mouth that he was going to put them off the bus and if they didn't get off, he would call the cops. I took my phone out of my bag and called the bus company to let them know what he was doing. She told me that she was going to call him and I told her to do me favor and wait for me to get off on main market before she addressed the issue. We got to Mansion Park and four of the young ladies got off and my son proceeded to move up. He told my son to sit down, he's not allowed to move his seat, he's the bus driver don't move your seat. My son said relax and he said don't you tell me to relax I'm the bus driver. I put my hand up for my son to close his mouth and I told the bus driver how are you talking to him about moving his seat? Why is he not allowed to move his seat? He said, he can't move his seat. I'm the bus driver I'm driving this bus. I said that he could move his seat if he wanted to and that he is allowed to move his seat closer to me. In return he told me, ya'll are just raising animals. I said excuse me! I watched you from the time I got off this bus to the time you got on and you are really abusing these kids for no apparent reason. Not one of them spoke back to you or said anything to you and you are addressing them like they are animals. He said I know your son, he rides this bus all the time. My son does not get on the shopper's special. He takes the Southside on Franklin and South every morning I put him on. He takes it coming home and he gets off on Sharon and comes up to my job. I have instructed my son that if he ever sees him on any other bus that he is on, he is to walk because he ahs threatened the kids numerous times by calling the cops. Since this is a personnel related matter, I suggest Ms. Brown meet with Commissioner DuPilka. We will give her his contact information and will be happy to meet with her regarding this personnel matter.

**Richard Wright 19 Rosiland Road-** I am here to express our anxiety and distress over the fact that we've got in our particular neighborhood at least three residences, which have been declared

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non-habitable. I'm here to really make contact with everybody on the council. The fact is, what we hear all the time is we're understaffed as a city, we can't do anything, the mayor has responded, but year after year goes by and nothing is being done. I'm a college teacher and I am not an expert by any means on saving a city, but I can tell you that in my judgment, and I may be wrong but I don't think so, saving Poughkeepsie 101 has to involve really protecting and saving the neighborhoods. It's nice to hear when you read the Poughkeepsie Journal "We are doing things in the City of Poughkeepsie, the waterfront, the waterfront, the waterfront, that's all we ever hear Mr. Mayor. And we we here "we are building a park. We are going to bring a supermarket into the city." Terrific! But we have to protect our neighborhoods and we are not doing that. I am asking you folks to really pay attention. Mr. Mayor I will say something else. I know you want to keep taxes low. I have no problem and my wife and I have no problem with targeted tax increases. What we hear when we bring our complaints to the city officials is that "we are understaffed, undermanned, and we can do nothing and what I am suggesting is that we need to increase taxes in order to staff the necessary city officers in order to do the job, but I'm telling you, you're not going to save the city by opening up a new restaurant on Main Street. You're not going to save the city by some kind of thing going on the waterfront. My question is what are we doing? I'd like to hear the Mayor.

**Mayor Tkazyik** *Madame Chair* the city has taken excessive action in relation to these neighboring properties. I would defer this matter to corporation counsel Ackerman to speak further because the properties in which Mr. Wright speaks of which is part of an ongoing litigation against the city, which I would say sir my administration inherited just for point of fact. However I will hand it over to Mr. Ackerman.

**Corporation Counsel Ackerman** First off I just wanted to let you know that I have communicated with you and your group on several occasion with respect to at least two properties. I'm really not sure about a third one, but there may be a third one. The issue of abandoned and vacant properties is really an epidemic that not only is affecting the city of Poughkeepsie, but it's affecting cities and towns all over the country. In fact, the mayor has reached out to the attorney general, the state of New York, and to the U.S attorney general to encourage monies to come from a settlement that was just worked out with the major lenders. Some of the problem resides in that the closure laws have changed, which make it difficult and sometimes impossible for a mortgage lender to foreclose on a property. So you have property owners that are abandoning property, walking away from them and the mortgage lenders either do not want to take responsibility for the properties or liability or not foreclosing because they can't because of the proper documentation is not in order for them to be able to foreclose. In the city of Poughkeepsie, I believe we have so far identified approximately 300 properties that are throughout the city of Poughkeepsie. There is not one ward that is spared with having an abandoned or vacant property in it and we triage the properties. There is a nuisance committee that reviews all the complaints that come in. They come in from the police department and they come in from all different sources and we look at them and attack the ones that are in the worst conditions and need immediate attention. Recently the fire department has started doing walks of every neighborhood in the city. I believe they started on the north side of Poughkeepsie and will go down every street in the city of Poughkeepsie and identify those properties that are abandoned, those properties that are vacant, and those properties that need immediate attention. They report back to the nuisance committee, which is comprised of the police department, the

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fire department, corporation council's office, the Mayor's office, the City Administrator's office, the Sanitation Department, and the Building Department. We review those all. If appropriate action is needed, the corporation council office is engaged to bring action. We do it all the time. There are approximately thirty or so building code cases that are now filtering through city court. Other ones are filtered in a more demanding manner, which would be through the Supreme Court, through actions to take properties back and to control what happens to those properties. We do that on occasion in some of the worst areas. We've done one on Jewett Avenue, we've done one on Marshall Street, and currently working on a couple of other properties. We aggressively try to do this. The problem is that we need to triage them and the ones that are the biggest safety hazard for the City of Poughkeepsie are the ones that are obviously addressed first. Other ones aren't just not given attention for instance, one of the properties that I am sure you are interested in is visited on a regular bases to see what violations exist and from time to time are abated by the city of Poughkeepsie. So we take them very seriously. A lot of resources are dedicated to addressing this issue. We try to look for alternative and innovative ways of dealing with this property. For instance, the fire department is taking the lead in going door to door to determine the stability and the need of these vacant properties with request to other municipalities for assistance. I know that the Mayor has met recently, within the last couple of months, with Congressman Hinchy's office to try to plead with some help with this, but the problem really starts with the federal governing from the laws with the foreclosures, acts that have just passed that make it difficult, and some of the mortgage lenders that need to take responsibility for their properties.

**City Administrator Long** Also I might add that your particular building's corporation counsel has brought them to court and so they have been putting the pressure on to make sure that the property is cleaned up. I guess I am here to express my frustration of my neighbors. I'm not doubting that you're trying to do the right thing and I believe that. It's just nothing seems to be working or changing and I'm here to express the frustration of not only my wife and myself, but also many of our neighbors. I just want to add that we share in your frustration. Not a day goes by that we don't try to do small steps to alleviate the problems. Personally, I have lived through a situation with abandoned properties and it is a frustrating process. We try to do what we can with the resources that we have and just dealing with this massive crisis has been creating kind of left the for the city to hold a bag on. There are property owners that are victims, but really the municipalities are really the victims of this financial mortgage crisis.

**Rick Harris 59 Pond Hills Street-** Last year I came in front of the public board and I had questions about new procedures and permit filing on gas water heaters and on water meters. My questions were concerning electrical permits being filed and as a plumber why I was responsible for filing these electrical permits. At the time the board couldn't answer the questions because they hadn't made the regulations. They told me that they were going to get back to me and they did not get back to me. When I looked it up I found out that the last three meetings of the plumbing board were canceled and I found out that in January, when they were supposed to be reinstated, the plumbing board was not reinstated. So I have two questions: why were the last three meetings canceled? And why is there not a plumbing board in the city of Poughkeepsie? **Corporation Counsel Ackermann** responded that this is going take a little bit of research on my part. I will just ask that if I can get your contact information I will respond to you in a couple of days.

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**Ken Stickle 118 Catherine Street-** This is a problem that I came to the city council about many times. It's the parking situation on Sundays and anytime the churches have something going on. I would like to know why the city will not go out and ticket somebody who is going to church who is in front of a no parking sign. That is making a hazard for the people that live in that area. I'm not picking on one church, Im picking on all churches. If you feel you need to go to the church, that's fine. I am not a person that is a religious person in the sense of a church. I believe in God so I'm not condemning God, but I am condemning the churches. We give them courtesy parking and now its courtesy to the tax payer's time.

**Mae Parker Harris 16 Allen Place-** I would like to make a request that the city, asking them concentrate on the city school areas, and asking them to make an effort on all the routes that the children have to walk to and from school and around the , to make a special effort to clean the curbs in the streets, and to make the environment nice for the children to come to and from their homes. I think that will help the children to feel better and keeping our city clean because if you don't see paper you are not apt to throw paper and make sure that some garbage cans are on their routes to and from school. It would make a difference in our city I feel. Also I'm still waiting for the Poughkeepsie journal and the city to do an inauguration for the new council members. It's been five months and it still hasn't gotten in the paper. It would be nice to get it in there because that is history for Poughkeepsie. I have children that live out of the city and they keep saying to me who knows Ms. Perry for oner person ma we haven't seen it in the paper. They keep telling me that she is a newly elected council person and we haven't seen it in the paper yet I said well its five months now and until I see it in the Poughkeepsie Journal I will keep coming to common council and announcing it. So when am I going to see it and when is it going to get into the paper?

Dated: June 12, 2012

I hereby certify that this a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Special Informational Meeting held on Monday, March 19, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,  
City Chamberlain