

Official Minutes of the Public Hearing of August 30, 2021 Public Hearing Regarding the Proposal of the Local Law regarding the Historic Resources and Improve on the Historic Preservation Administrative Process.



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE
NEW YORK

PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, August 30, 2021 5:30 p.m.

Changepoint Theatre

Welcome to the scheduled meeting of the Public Hearing in the City of Poughkeepsie. The date is August 30, 2021 and the time is 5:53 pm.

THIS HEARING IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING COMMENTS ON THE Public Hearing Regarding the Proposal of the Local Law regarding the Historic Resources and Improve on the Historic Preservation Administrative Process.

Councilmember-At-Large Salem called the meeting to order at 5:53 p.m.

Chair Salem: If you're making a public comment, please limit your comments to 5 minutes if you can. State your name, state your address, state your pronouns. And if you're speaking on behalf of an organization, please also make that known. Before we get started with public comment, I'm going to let Councilmember Brannen who is the lead sponsor on this legislation say a few remarks.

Councilmember Brannen: Thank you, Chair. I want to thank everyone who came to this meeting to speak tonight. I know there are a few of you have been really following closely with this issue of historic preservation in the city. I'd like to especially thank the members of the HDLPC, several of whom are here tonight, including the Chair, Gary Privratsky, who I know is going to speak in a few minutes and offer a presentation with some background information to help explain this legislation and why it's so important for the City of Poughkeepsie. This started in 2019, when then Commissioner Holly Wahlberg, on behalf of the HDLPC and the city, undertook an inventory of the city's historic resources. This kind of inventory of the city's historic resources had not been done since 1977, and the findings of that review were very, very striking. We've lost a lot of historic assets in our city. Just to share a couple of the findings from that report, those properties that were exceptional, meaning very historically significant and very unique, 29 percent of those have been lost citywide. Those that are considered excellent, 39 percent of those were lost. And those that were considered good, 44 percent of those have been lost. Ward by Ward, for my fellow council members here, I'll share some of the information by Ward. The Ward that was hardest hit was the 5th Ward, with 69 percent of historic resources lost since that time. Also in the 3rd Ward, 53 percent have been lost. In the 7th Ward, 52 percent have been lost. In the 1st Ward, 48 percent have been lost. In the 2nd

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Ward, 39 percent have been lost. In the 6th ward, 37 percent have been lost. In the 8th Ward, 27 percent have been lost. And in the 4th ward, 16 percent have been lost. And the number varies by how many each ward started with. Some might have lost a greater number, even though the portion is smaller. But nonetheless citywide, this has been a really important issue and a pretty significant problem because the City of Poughkeepsie is so unique because of its history and because of the history that you can see in the city. And if we want to develop a sense of pride in our city and in this place, and we all can feel like we are part of this shared history and shared story about some of the really amazing things that have happened here over the past hundreds and hundreds of years. Having the physical environment reflect that shared history is really important.

I decided to start working on this legislation with the HDLPC and also with the support of Corporation Counsel Paul Ackermann to do a few different kinds of things. First is to streamline the administrative process. The city underwent a Pace Land Use Law Study. And one of the recommendations was that historic review should occur before Planning Board review. And that is a benefit to potential developers because it cuts down on the guesswork and they don't have to spend a lot of money in order to go through a Planning Board review before they know that they've passed muster with the Historic Commission. That was a recommendation coming out of that Pace Land Use Study, and that's in this bill. Additionally, there are protections against demolition by neglect, and it also offers some provisions for helping property owners prevent demolition by neglect and working with the HDLPC and the city Building Department head as a resource to try and head it off before the properties are lost. All this is to say this is a really important piece of legislation that I think is going to protect our assets here in the city. Why are they so important? Not just because of the social and cultural benefit that they provide for our city, but also because there's an economic and there's also an environmental benefit. The economic benefit is that when cities preserve their historic assets, people want to come and visit that place because there's something unique that they can learn and they can see. It also raises property values. Last week we heard from the assessor that our property value has declined citywide pretty significantly over the past 12 years. I know those of us who just got an increased assessment might be thinking, well, that doesn't seem right, but it's true. Over the past 12 years, that long trajectory, we've lost a lot of value in this city. This is one way that we can protect that real estate value for this city as a whole and then pay for all of the services that we all enjoy. And then lastly, we're all thinking about climate change and tearing down buildings and constructing new buildings from non-renewable resources is not as climate friendly as rehabilitating existing buildings. We know that this has been a trend for some years, not just in our city, but elsewhere as well. People like living in and near historic places. I want to thank everybody who helped work on this bill. I want to turn it over to Gary Privratsky, and he's going to share a Power Point.

I'd like to make a motion to suspend the rules, so he can share a Power Point.

Motion to extend the rules.

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Chair Salem: Do I have a second on that?

Councilmember R. Johnson: Second.

Presentation from Gary Privratsky, chair of the HDLPC, 83 Worrall Ave.

Councilmember Brannen: I'd like to make a motion to resume the rules.

Chair Salem: Motion to resume the rules. Do I have a second?

Councilmember Flowers: Second.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Five (5) minutes per person public comment.

- 1. Antonia Mauro – 8th ward**
- 2. Nicholas Lewis – Garfield Place**
- 3. Doug Nobiletti – 145 Academy St.**
- 4. Brendan Mae – 2 Barclay St.**
- 5. Mary Reynolds – Academy St.**
- 6. Ken Stickle – Catharine St.**

At 6:46 PM the Public Hearing was adjourned.

Dated: September 8, 2021

I hereby certify that this true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Common Council Public Hearing held on August 30, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jasmin N. Davis
City Chamberlain**