



City Council Committee on Rules and Ordinances

Meeting Minutes of Monday, December 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, with hybrid remote participation
149 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Watertown, MA 02472

Present: Councilors John Gannon, chair; John Airasian, vice chair; Lisa Feltner, secretary.
Also present: City Manager George Proakis, Deputy City Manager Emily Monae, Councilor Vincent Piccirilli; and Councilor Palomba via zoom.

Chair Gannon called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and asked staff to present the proposed language establishing a Memorialization Committee (attached). The goal is to provide a consistent way and reasons for naming public spaces and objects, including streets, squares, buildings, facilities, benches, trees, etc.

The proposed establishment of a Memorialization Committee, by modifying the existing process under Council Resolution #85 (2019 attached), began in earnest through discussions between the City Manager, Deputy City Manager and Council President in January; it is separate from the process for memorials and dedications for veterans (2016 attached). It is much broader than just the naming of “squares and intersections” and includes public spaces and memorial objects.

The City Council will make the final decision on naming, upon recommendation of the new Memorialization Committee. (Council also votes on veteran memorials). Thus, the committee agreed to move existing resolution language and make amendments to proposed text, as follows:

38.13 Process

(1) The City Council shall have sole authority for the naming of public spaces or memorial objects, including all public right-of-way areas under the control of the City of Watertown.

- a. The City Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations, whose perceptions and values might change.
- b. The City Council intends to be cautious exercising the policy to avoid over-naming public spaces or objects.

(2) Any Watertown resident, *including City Council President*, may propose in writing that a ~~square or intersection~~ *public space or object* be named for a notable non-veteran with specific ties to Watertown.

(3) The proposal shall be submitted to the City Council President, who shall refer it to the Memorialization Committee for review.

proposed (1)-(4) becomes new (4)-(7)

(8) The Memorialization Committee shall provide its recommendation to the City Council President, who may then place it on a City Council Agenda for consideration.

As the process is initiated by vote of City Council, the committee suggested clarifying the City Manager role in the proposed language of 38.10 Purpose “Upon referral to the Committee by the City Manager or the City Council of a matter involving memorialization, ...” because all referrals are approved by City Council through the Council President, and this might be interpreted that the City Manager could refer directly to the Memorialization Committee.

More questions and a discussion of the proposal included the committee recognizing this would be a new ordinance, not a mere change to the existing resolution (Ch 38), thus the text and numbering of sections for a different chapter would reflect the relevant changes in the final draft ordinance, and it would replace Resolution 85 of 2019 in its entirety if accepted by Council. Staff suggested adding this ordinance to Title III Administration, Chapter 36 Committees, as a new subchapter V; this will be confirmed with the city’s attorney KP.

Staff suggested not being overly specific on qualifications of resident members who may be interested in serving on this new Memorialization Committee. It was confirmed that interested residents would be vetted

through the Residents' Advisory Committee consistent with the process for other boards and committees. The administration also stressed that "The Committee is responsible for adopting policies and procedures for making recommendations to the City Council..." A few reasons for honoring individuals are also included, in (2).

The Rules and Ordinances committee feels it is important to note for the record, and staff concurred, that we expect opportunities for public participation in the Memorialization Committee's formulation of their rules of governance, as well in the naming of our public infrastructure, space, facilities, benches, trees, etc.

The implementation of what a memorial looks like would receive guidance and technical assistance from city administration. The Memorialization Committee would be empowered to consider different thresholds in determining worthy dedications; for example, we expect differences between naming of trees or tree donations or small memorial objects compared to naming of a park or recreational facility. These differences would also be reflected in reasonable fees and/or maintenance, as proposed in 38.13 (4).

The committee also agreed to:

- insert a beginning sentence, taken from the resolution for the proposed ordinance 38.10 Purpose, "The City Council believes that the naming of public spaces or infrastructure and objects is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful consideration."

- add review provision (38.14), taken from the existing resolution 38.05 Review text, to conclude the proposed new ordinance with "The City Council shall have sole authority to remove the naming of any public space or object if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served."

The committee was satisfied with the discussed changes to the draft. Motion by Feltner to recommend that City Council accept the ordinance for a first reading to create a Memorialization Committee as amended; staff will provide a clean copy with amendments, with KP review as is standard; seconded by Airasian; approved 3-0.

7:04 p.m. Motion to Adjourn by Feltner, seconded by Airasian, approved 3-0.

Report prepared by Lisa Feltner.

Attached:

Draft text from staff for an ordinance establishing a Memorialization Committee;
Current Council Resolution #85-2019 Naming Policy for non-veterans;
Current Policy of Veterans' Services for naming of dedications and memorials, 2016.

John G. Gannon,
Chair

John M. Airasian,
Vice Chair

Lisa J. Feltner
Secretary



Watertown City Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ORDINANCE #

O-2024-

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE MEMORIALIZATION COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the City Council seeks to create a uniform process for the naming of public spaces, streets, squares, intersection, and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction as well as for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces; and

WHEREAS, in undertaking this process, the City Council seeks to establish a permanent committee to undertake the review of and make recommendations on proposals for such namings and installations; and

WHEREAS, a Memorialization Committee established for this purpose may make recommendations to the City Council for the naming of these spaces and installation of these objects based on established policies and procedures, including consideration of the contribution honored individuals have made to the City as well as their representation of the broad diversity of those who have contributed to the City.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by adding new Subchapter III of Chapter 38, entitled Memorialization Committee, as follows:

§38.09 Establishment

There is hereby established a Memorialization Committee (the "Committee"), consisting of five voting members.

§38.10 Purpose

Upon referral to the Committee by the City Manager or the City Council of a matter involving memorialization, the Committee shall be responsible for making recommendations to the City Council for the naming of public spaces, streets, squares, intersections, and City buildings under the City Manager's jurisdiction. The Committee shall also make recommendations to the City Council regarding the installation of memorial objects in public spaces. The Committee shall not make recommendations for veteran memorials and dedications, which are processed through the Veteran's Services Department and approved by the City Council. Recommendations made by the Committee shall not be binding and shall be subject to consideration by the City Council in their discretion.

§38.11 Membership and Term

- (1) Composition. The composition of the Committee and the appointment authority for the Committee members shall be as follows:
 - a. City Manager or their designee
 - b. Representative member of the City Council as designated by the City Council President
 - c. Three residents of Watertown appointed by the City Manager, subject to City Council confirmation
- (2) Term. The appointed resident members first appointed shall have staggered terms, with one initially serving a one-year term and the remaining two each serving a two-year term. Thereafter, all appointments and reappointments for resident members shall be for a period of two years. Resident members may be reappointed for additional terms.
- (3) Vacancy. Any vacancy in membership shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.
- (4) Qualifications. Resident members appointed by the City Manager shall, when possible, have relevant experience and knowledge related to Watertown's diversity and local history.
- (5) Any resident member who ceases to be a resident of Watertown shall promptly provide written notification of their change in residence to the Committee chair and to the City Clerk. The Committee member may serve as a hold-over until a successor is appointed.

§38.12 Meetings and Officers

- (1) Meetings. The Committee shall meet as necessary. Notice of all meetings shall comply with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18 through 25, as may be amended. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. The committee shall keep a written record of its proceedings.
- (2) Officers. At the first meeting of the Committee, and annually thereafter, the Committee shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson and may elect such other officers, adopt procedural rules and regulations, and establish such subcommittees as it deems appropriate.

§38.13 Process

- (1) The Committee shall adopt policies and procedures for making recommendations to the City Council for the naming of spaces and installation of memorial objects in public spaces.
- (2) To the extent the Committee recommends naming public spaces in honor of specific individuals, the Committee shall consider the following:
 - a. The public interest to be served by honoring the individual.
 - b. The leadership role or distinguished service of the individual, considering the quality of contribution along with the length of service.
 - c. The association the individual has with the proposed naming location.
- (3) The Committee shall seek to honor those who represent the broad diversity of individuals who have contributed to the City.
- (4) The Committee may recommend that the requestors for the installation of memorial objects in public spaces pay a reasonable fee to cover associated costs of the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the object.

AND FURTHER, by amending the Watertown Code of Ordinances, Subchapter I of Section 38, Naming of Squares or Intersections for Non-Veterans, as follows, with the bold language inserted and the strike-through language deleted:

§38.01 Authority of ~~Town~~ **City** Council

The ~~Town~~ **City** Council shall have sole authority for the naming of squares or intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the ~~Town~~ **City** of Watertown.

(A) The ~~Town~~ **City** Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations, whose perceptions and values might change.

(B) The ~~Town~~ **City** Council intends to be cautious exercising the policy to avoid over-naming squares or intersections.

§38.02 Purpose and scope

The ~~Town~~ **City** Council believes that the naming of squares or intersections is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful consideration.

(A) The ~~Town~~ **City** Council, therefore, creates this policy to establish a systematic, consistent and transparent approach for naming squares or intersections in Watertown.

(B) This policy is for non-veterans only, as there is a separate policy for naming of squares or intersections for veterans processed through the Veterans Service Officer.

§38.03 Process

Any Watertown resident may propose in writing that a square or intersection be named for a notable non-veteran with specific ties to Watertown.

(A) The proposal shall be submitted to the ~~Town~~ **City** Council President, and ~~must include documentation to support the rationale for the naming, including a broad level of community backing~~ **who shall refer it to the Memorialization Committee for review.**

~~(B) The Town Council President, upon determining the proposal is complete, shall place it on a Town Council agenda for a vote of referral to the Public Works Committee for review and recommendation.~~

~~(C) The Department of Public Works shall review the proposal and provide the Public Works Committee an analysis as to the appropriateness of signage at the location, taking into account matters such as traffic conditions, sightlines, and planned road construction projects.~~

~~(DB) The Public Works Memorialization Committee shall review the proposal and the Department of Public Works analysis, and, following its adopted policies and procedures, develop a recommendation for the Town City Council.~~

(C) The Memorialization Committee shall provide its recommendations to the City Council President, who may then place the resolution on a City Council agenda for consideration.

(ED) The ~~Town~~ **City** Council ~~will~~ may consider and vote on a resolution to name a square or intersection ~~per~~ taking into consideration the ~~Public Works Committee~~ **Memorialization Committee's** recommendation.

§38.04 Criteria

~~In deciding the appropriateness of any naming proposal, the Town Council shall consider the following:~~

~~(A) The public interest to be served by honoring the individual.~~

~~(B) The leadership role or distinguished service of the individual, considering the quality of contribution along with the length of service.~~

~~(C) The association the individual has with the proposed naming location.~~

§38.054 Review

The ~~Town~~ **City** Council shall have sole authority to remove the naming of any square or intersection if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served.

AND FURTHER, that this Ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Order was adopted by a vote of ___ for, ___ against and ___ present on

_____.

Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk

Mark S. Sideris, Council President



Watertown Town Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President &
District C Councilor

Caroline Bays
Councilor At Large

Anthony Donato,
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland,
District D Councilor

RESOLUTION # 85

2019 – R – 85

NAMING POLICY FOR SQUARES OR INTESECTIONS FOR NON-VETERANS

WHEREAS: The Town of Watertown seeks to have a formal policy for the naming of Squares or Intersections for non-Veterans, as a formal policy for Veteran Memorials and Dedications was adopted by the Town Council on July 12, 2016.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown adopts this Naming Policy for Squares and Intersections for Non-Veterans:

1. **INTRODUCTION** – The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.
 - a) The Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.
 - b) The Town Council intends to be cautious exercising the Policy to avoid over-naming Squares or Intersections.
2. **PURPOSE** – The Town Council believes that the naming of Squares or Intersections is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful consideration.
 - a) The Town Council, therefore, creates this policy to establish a systematic, consistent and transparent approach for naming Squares or Intersections in Watertown.
 - b) This policy is for non-veterans only, as there is a separate policy for naming of Squares or Intersections for veteran processed through the Veterans Service Officer.
3. **PROCESS** – Any Watertown resident may propose in writing that a Square or Intersection be named for a notable non-veteran with specific ties to Watertown.

- a) The proposal shall be submitted to the Town Council President, and must include documentation to support the rationale for the naming including a broad level of community backing.
 - b) The Town Council President, upon determining the proposal is complete, shall place it on a Town Council agenda for a vote of referral to the Public Works Committee for review and recommendation.
 - c) The Department of Public Works shall review the proposal and provide the Public Works Committee an analysis as to the appropriateness of signage at the location taking into account matters such as traffic conditions, sightlines, and planned road construction projects.
 - d) The Public Works Committee shall review the proposal and the Department of Public Works analysis, and develop a recommendation for the Town Council
 - e) The Town Council will vote on a resolution to name a Square or Intersection per the Public Works Committee recommendation.
4. **CRITERIA** – In deciding the appropriateness of any naming proposal, the Town Council shall consider the following:
- a) The public interest to be served by honoring the individual.
 - b) The leadership role or distinguished service of the individual, considering the quality of contribution along with the length of service.
 - c) The association the individual has with the proposed naming location.
5. **REVIEW** – The Town Council shall have sole authority to remove the naming of any Square or Intersection if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 9 for, 0 against, 0 present on October 22, 2019.


Marilyn W. Pronovost, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President
MWP



TOWN OF WATERTOWN

Veterans' Services
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
Phone: 617-972-6416
Fax: 617-972-6403
www.watertown-ma.gov
mcomeiro@watertown-ma.gov

Watertown Veteran Memorials and Dedications

This policy covers the issuance and presentation of Memorials and Dedications in the community to include sidewalk signs, Street dedications, Square dedications, Stones, Plaques, Parks and Buildings.

To be considered for a Veteran Memorial or Dedication, the individual to be honored must meet the following requirements:

- Watertown resident at the time of enlistment into the Armed Forces
 - Veteran Killed in Action (KIA)
- Or**
- Medal of Honor Recipient

The Process for Veterans Memorials and Dedications

- All requests for Veterans' Memorials must be submitted through the Veteran's Services Officer.
- A member of the family must make a written request indicating the name of the Veteran, service, rank and area of designation along with proof that the veteran was a Watertown resident at the time of enlistment, killed in action (KIA), or a Medal of Honor Recipient. Examples include: newspaper clipping, telegram, notice of death, DD-214 stating the veteran was killed in action, etc.
- The Veteran's Services Officer will verify the applicant's eligibility.
- The Veteran's Services Officer will forward the completed request to the Town Council.
- The Town council shall approve or disapprove any Memorial or Dedication by resolution.
- The Town Manager, upon approval by the Town council, shall implement the Memorial or Dedication requested.
- The name is then placed on a permanent list of Memorial dedications tracked by the Veteran's Services Department.
- The Veteran's Services Officer shall be the caretaker of all Veteran Memorials.

Mail the application and all supporting documents to:

ATTN:
Watertown Veterans' Services Department
Memorial and Dedications
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472