



Watertown City 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

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

Report of the Committee on Economic Development & Planning Meeting Date: September 23, 2024

The Committee convened on Monday September 23, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Office. Present were Lisa Feltner, chair; John Gannon, vice chair; and Vincent Piccirilli, secretary.

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct confirmation interviews for the Historic District Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

James Bensinger is seeking reappointment to the Historic District Commission. He is a retired physics professor who lives in the historic district. Since he moved here 20 years ago, he has seen a lot of improvements in Watertown. The Commission has not been very busy in the past year, but he feels that when the Mount Auburn Street Corridor reconstruction finishes, things will pick up again. He agrees that meeting with staff in the meantime would be helpful to discuss visioning of public amenities for additional improvements in the corridor post-reconstruction. He has been following the sale of the church property at 80 Mt. Auburn St., which is in the district and understands this will be a challenge for the Commission. He enjoys his work on the Commission, feels it has been worthwhile, and he would like to continue serving.

Sarah Baker is seeking appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals as a Full Member to fill the unexpired term of Michael Brangwynne. She holds a master's degree in public policy and has worked in China and Afghanistan for non-governmental organizations. She is currently the co-founder of a radiation detection company in Waltham. When she moved to Watertown three years ago, she immediately wanted to get involved in local government and currently serves on the Blue Ribbon Committee for City Council compensation. She loves living in Watertown and feels it's small enough that your voice matters, and yet it is big enough that exciting things happen. While she is not an architect or a lawyer, she feels her broad experience will help her understand what incentives drive decisions, and she hopes her collaborative approach will help everyone understand the potential impacts on the community with development projects and help build trust in determining mitigation.

➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm James Bensinger for reappointment to the Historic District Commission for a term expiring November 15, 2027. Voted 3-0.

➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Sarah Baker for appointment as a full member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term expiring February 15, 2026. Voted 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli