



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: April 16, 2024

The Committee convened on Tuesday April 16, 2024 at 5:45 pm in the City Council Office, as a hybrid meeting with remote participation by zoom. Present were Lisa Feltner, chair; John Gannon, vice chair; and Vincent Piccirilli, secretary. Gregory Girard participated by zoom.

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals interviews.

Gregory Girard is seeking reappointment to the ZBA as an Alternate Member, having served since 2022. He has a degree in urban planning. He is happy to continue to serve on the ZBA, playing an important role in the responsible transitioning of Watertown to the future, applying both the rule and the spirit of the Zoning Ordinance to projects that come before them. He is very interested in traffic mitigation, as well as adding conditions to projects that are appropriate for Watertown. He also expressed interest in serving on ZBA as a full member.

Jason Cohen is seeking reappointment to the Planning Board, having served since 2018. He was a member of the ZBA for three years prior to that, and previously served as the Planning Board's appointee to the Community Preservation Committee. As an architect, he appreciates the opportunity to mold the city for the future, and to improve the quality of life. He tempers public input with his professional experience, and tries to balance the needs of all constituencies. He reiterated that the Board does listen to all voices, but cannot agree with everyone when reaching a decision. He feels each project is an opportunity to make a site better than what it was before, understanding that we can only shape the forces of development, we can't direct development.

David Ferris is seeking reappointment to the ZBA, having served since 2009. He is an architect specializing in multi-unit housing. He feels the ZBA has a large knowledge base, an excellent chair, and great staff support. He is happy with the Watertown Square study process and the good public input. He is concerned about becoming too reliant on lab development and what it means for the fabric of the city. He is concerned about the height and step-backs of buildings in relationship to the width of the road, particularly on a 2-lane road like Pleasant St. He also believes that the PSCD and RMUD districts would be better served by having the ZBA involved, although he understands the need to make the process less burdensome on developers to drive economic development. He expressed support for potentially having some kind of design review board for Watertown Square projects.

- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Jason Cohen for reappointment as a full member of the Planning Board to a term expiring February 15, 2027. Voted 3-0.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Gregory Girard for reappointment as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals to a term expiring February 15, 2026. Voted 3-0.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm David Ferris for reappointment as a full member to the Zoning Board of Appeals to a term expiring February 15, 2029. Voted 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli