



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: February 7, 2024

The Committee convened on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 5:30 pm in the City Council Office, as a hybrid meeting with remote participation by Zoom. Present was Lisa Feltner, chair; and Vincent Piccirilli, secretary. John Gannon, vice chair, was absent. Staff present was Gerooge Proakis, City Manager.

The purpose of the meeting was # 1 to conduct interviews for the Historic District Commission and Public Arts and Culture Committee; and #2 discuss a proposed amendment to the Planning Board ordinance to add an Associate Member.

The Planning Board ordinance was taken up first. The Manager began by explaining this grew out of discussion he had with Department of Community Development & Planning staff about challenges the 5-member Planning Board has been facing with its recently added role as Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) for the PSCD and RMUD zoning districts. If one member is absent for any meeting on a project, or has a conflict of interest preventing voting on a project, the law requires a unanimous vote of the remaining four members, which is less than ideal for a variety of reasons.

Under state law, the proposed Associate Member will only be a voting member of the Planning Board when acting as the SPGA and one full member is not able to participate.

The Manager worked with KP Law to create the proposed amendment to section 31.64, and also fix an error with section 31.66, and requested the Council moved forward with this. He added that he is slowly working his way through the Code of Ordinances to bring all Boards, Commissions, and Committees up to date. (See attachment A for proposed the ordinance, and attachment B for the current ordinance.)

➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feltner, to recommend that the City Council proceed with a future Public Hearing for the proposed amendment to the Planning Board ordinance to add an associate member, as written. The vote was 2-0.

Interviews were taken up next.

Roberta Miller is a consultant, former Town Councilor, and former Executive Director of the Mosesian Center for the Arts, and is seeking reappointment to the Public Arts and Culture Committee. She is currently the Chair, and has spent her first term doing startup work for the Committee, and creating new infrastructure for art and culture in Watertown.

Erin Webb is a fundraising professional and currently works as Director of Annual Giving and Engagement for the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and is seeking reappointment to the Public Arts and Culture Committee. She is chair of the Outreach Subcommittee, which includes managing the Watertown Arts newsletter, and working on setting up a dedicated Watertown Arts website.

Ms. Miller & Ms. Webb were interviewed together about what the Public Arts and Culture Committee achieved in its first two years, which includes the Community Sculpture Walk, Edible Watertown, Bike Rack Design & Fabrication, and 100 Years of Arshile Gorkey. Partnerships include Yard Art, Watertown Arts Market, the Watertown Cultural District, Cultural Leaders Meetings, and Music in Restaurants. New projects include Porchfest, River of Light, Water Tunes, Indigenous History Tours, and a Dragon Boat Team. (Attachment C has more details).

Elizabeth Hayes is seeking reappointment to the Historic District Commission as the Realtor appointee, and lives on Mt. Auburn Street. She is a real estate broker who works for clients in cities and towns such as Cambridge and Arlington who have Historic Districts. There have not been a lot of projects in the District this past year, but the potential sale and redevelopment of the church at 80 Mt. Auburn St would be a big challenge for the Commission in the coming years. With the upcoming Mt Auburn St reconstruction project, she would like to have a brainstorming session so the Commission could develop ideas on how to raise the visibility of the Historic District.

Jason Wilson is a scientist working in biotech, and is seeking appointment to the Public Arts and Culture Committee. He recently joined the Board of Directors for the Mosesian Center for the Arts, and has a child in Watertown Children's Theater. He is a part owner of Deer Head Inn, a jazz club in Pennsylvania, and part owner of Pacific St Records, a jazz catalogue. He is excited about getting more involved in the arts in Watertown, and feels his background in the music business will be an asset.

➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feltner, to recommend that the City Council confirm the following appointees:

1. Reappoint Roberta Miller as a member of the Public Arts and Culture Committee to a term expiring November 15, 2026
2. Reappoint Erin Webb as a member of the Public Arts and Culture Committee to a term expiring November 15, 2026
3. Reappoint Elizabeth Hayes as the Realtor member of the Historic District Commission to a term expiring November 15, 2026
4. Appoint Jason Wilson as a member of the Public Arts and Culture Committee to a term expiring November 15, 2024

The vote was 2-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli

Attachments:

- A. Proposed amendment to the Planning Board ordinance
- B. Existing ordinance Chapter 31, Subchapter VI Previously Established Bodies
- C. Current and Proposed PACC Projects

CITY LETTERHEAD

**AN ORDINANCE TO ADD AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER TO THE PLANNING BOARD
AND TO REVISE THE CITY CODE TO REFLECT CURRENT LAW AND PRACTICE.**

ORDINANCE #

2024 – O –

WHEREAS, the provisions of the City of Watertown Code of Ordinances relative to the Planning Board reflect a Town bylaw enacted on June 6, 1913, and so predates the City’s transition to a city form of government; and

WHEREAS, laws and regulations applicable to the Planning Board have changed significantly since the Planning Board bylaw was passed; and

WHEREAS, Title III, Chapter 31, §31.64 of the City Code currently provides for the election of the Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, Article IX, §9-6(a)(iv) of the Watertown Home Rule Charter specifies that the Planning Board shall be appointed by the City Manager, subject to approval of the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks to update the Planning Board section of the Code of Ordinances to reflect current law and practice; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks to add an associate member to the Planning Board pursuant to the provisions of the Zoning Act, G.L. c. 40A, §9; and

WHEREAS, Title III, Chapter 31, §31.66 of the Code of Ordinances concerning the Board of Appeals is improperly titled “Planning Board”.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that Title III, Chapter 31, §§31.64 and 31.66 of the Watertown Code of Ordinances, Planning Board, are hereby amended, by deleting said §§31.64 and 31.66 in their entirety and replacing those sections with the language as follows:

§ 31.64 Planning Board.

- (A) The Planning Board of the City of Watertown shall consist of five (5) members and one (1) associate member to be appointed by the City Manager, subject to the approval of the City Council.
- (B) Members and the associate member shall be appointed to three (3) year terms beginning on February 15th of the year of appointment. Members’ terms shall be arranged so that the term of at least one member expires each year.

- (C) The Planning Board shall be empowered to carry out all duties entrusted to it by law and regulation, including, but not limited to, development of a comprehensive plan and administration of the Subdivision Control Law pursuant to G.L. c. 41 as well as actions pursuant to the Zoning Act, G.L. c. 40A. The Planning Board shall also have the powers granted to it by the Home Rule Charter and Code of Ordinances.
- (D) Upon the adoption of any regulation by the Planning Board, the Planning Board shall forthwith notify the Council President and City Manager.
- (E) The associate member shall be entitled to participate in all Planning Board meetings and discussions, but shall have no vote unless the Planning Board chair shall designate the associate member to sit as a member for the sole purpose of acting on a special permit application upon the absence, inability to act, or conflict of interest of any member of the Planning Board or upon a vacancy on the Planning Board.
- (F) No member or associate member of the Planning Board shall represent before such board any party of interest in any matter pending before it.

§ 31.66 Board of Appeals.

[On 3-29-1937, the Town voted to amend the Zoning Bylaw to provide for appeals of Building Inspector decisions. In conjunction with that amendment, the Town voted to authorize the Selectmen to appoint a Board of Appeals of three members and two associate members, with staggered terms of three years.]

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Ordinance was adopted by a vote of ___ for and ___ against on ____, 2024.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President

Brendan McCarthy, Council Clerk

Chapter 31. Boards, Commissions and Departments

SUBCHAPTER VI. Previously Established Bodies

§ 31.62. Board of Assessors.

[At a General Town Meeting in Watertown held 7-17-1694, the inhabitants of said Town voted to choose five Assessors according to law. At a subsequent General Town Meeting held 7-13-1696, the Town voted to reduce the number of Assessors from five to three.]

§ 31.63. Board of Health.

[On 3-8-1886, the first Board of Health was elected, consisting of three members. In 1896, the term of the members was increased to three years. The Board of Health originally had jurisdiction over Town cemeteries, but in 1968 the Cemetery Department was placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works.]

§ 31.64. Planning Board.

[Adopted 6-6-1913 ATM by Art. 14 (Ch. XXIV of the Bylaws)]

- (A) The Planning Board which the Town of Watertown is required to elect under the provisions of Chapter 494 of the Acts of 1913, shall be composed of five citizens of the Town. At the first election of said Board, one member shall be elected for the term of one year, two for the term of two years, and two for the term of three years from the date of the Town Meeting at which they are elected; and at each Annual Town Meeting thereafter, the vacancy occurring by the expiration of the term of office of one member or of two members, as the case may be, shall be filled by election of a successor or successors for the term of three years.
- (B) The purposes, duties and authority of said Board shall be those which are defined in said Chapter 494 and in any acts amendatory thereof which may hereafter be in force.
- (C) Vacancies which may occur in the membership of said Board by death, resignation or removal from the Town shall be filled by vote of the Selectmen and of the remaining members of said Board, acting jointly, until the vacancy is filled by election at the next Annual Town Meeting.

§ 31.65. School Committee.

[The Town, in March 1928, by Art. 2, elected six members to the School Committee. At the 10-22-1930 Town Meeting, by Art. 14, the Town voted to increase the membership from six members to seven members.]

§ 31.66. Planning Board.

[On 3-29-1937, the Town voted to amend the Zoning Bylaw to provide for appeals of Building Inspector decisions. In conjunction with that amendment, the Town voted to authorize the Selectmen to appoint a Board of Appeals of three members and two associate members, with staggered terms of three years.

§ 31.67. Housing Authority.

[Veterans housing. At the 6-9-1947 Town Meeting, by Art. 3, the Town voted to adopt all sections of Chapter 372 of the Acts of 1946, and any amendments thereto, titled "An Act to Provide Housing for Veterans of World War II." The Town also voted that the Emergency Housing Board appointed pursuant to vote at the 6-20-1946 STM be authorized to carry out all provisions of said Act in order to provide either permanent or temporary housing for veterans of World War II.]

[Adoption of Housing Authority. The Town adopted a Housing Authority 4-5-1948 TM by Art. 35, providing:

"1. That the Town of Watertown hereby determines and declares that there is a need for relieving congestion of population and that there is a shortage of safe, sanitary dwellings available for families of low income at rentals which they can afford in the Town of Watertown.

"2. That the Town of Watertown hereby determines that a Housing Authority is needed in the Town of Watertown for the provision of housing for families of low incomes or engaging in a land assembly and redevelopment project.

"3. That the Town of Watertown hereby provides for the organization of a Housing Authority and hereby establishes such a Housing Authority."

[Insurance for Housing Authority employees. At the 4-8-1957 TM, by Art. 58, the Town voted to accept Ch. 149 of the Acts of 1956, "An Act Making Certain Employees of Housing Authorities in Cities and Towns Eligible for Contributory Group General Blanket Insurance."]

§ 31.68. Board of Election Commissioners.

[Chapter 432, Acts of 1970, approved 6-10-1970 and effective 12-31-1970, established a Board of Election Commissioners for the Town of Watertown.]

PACC – CURRENT PROJECTS

COMMUNITY SCULPTURE WALK

Project

Annual Call for Art to select sculptures for display along the Community Path.

Key Dates

Installation: April 29-May 3

Opening Reception with Artist Talks: May 10, 5-6pm

2024-25 Call Opens: September 9

Virtual Information Session: October

Call Closes: 1 week before January PACC Meeting

Selection: January PACC Meeting

Artist Notification: week after selection
Installation: 1st week of May

Opening Reception with Artist Talks: 3rd week of May

EDIBLE WATERTOWN: EDIBLE PLANTS

Project

An annual call for artists with exhibition that uplifts the importance of local flora and their ecosystems to connect people with the environment right outside their door; debunking myths.

Key Dates

Mosesian Center for the Arts: January 26-March 8

Opening Reception: February 8, 5:30-7:30pm

Closing & Auction: March 7, 7-9pm

2024-25 Call for Artists Opens: May 28

Virtual Information Session: June

Call closes: July 14, 11:59pm

Application review: July 22 PACC meeting

Artist notification: last week of July

Artwork due: September 30

Exhibition Cycle: October 2024-March 2025

EDIBLE WATERTOWN: GARDEN PROGRAM

Project

MAPC ACR grant program to build teaching gardens, create educational signs by artists, and engage youth in the impacts of climate change through the arts (ms/hs internship program, 5th grade botanical drawing)

Key Dates

5th grade botanical drawing: Spring
Launch call for Summer Garden

Interns: February 15

Order shed and garden supplies: Spring

Summer Garden

Internship Program: July-August

Grant reimbursement: September

BIKE RACK DESIGN + FABRICATION

Project

Call for Art funded by Public Works for four artistic bike racks.

Key Dates

Launch Call: February 28

Virtual Information Session: March 19

Call closes: April 17, 11:59pm

Application Review: April 22 PACC Meeting

Artist notification: April 23-26

Bike racks delivered to DPW: July 15

Bike racks installed: Summer



100 YEARS OF ARSHILE GORKY

Project

Partnership with MA DCR and Gorky working group. Commission mural on Greenway as part of larger commemoration effort.

Key Dates

Call for Artists opens: March 26:

Virtual Information Session: May 13

Site Visit: May 14

Call closes: July 7, 11:59pm

Application review: July 22 PACC Meeting

Phase 1 notification: July 23-26

Phase 1 proposals due: November 4

Public Feedback meeting: January 13, 2025

Phase 2 selection: January 27, 2025 PACC Meeting

Phase 2 notification: January 28-31, 2025

Mural installation: Spring/Summer 2025

Reception and Artist Talk: September 2025

PACC – CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS + EVENTS

YARDART

Event

YardArt is a community-wide celebration of creativity and fun in front yards, porches and windows all over Watertown.

Key Dates

Event: April 1-30
Walking Tour: April 18, 1-2pm
Bike Tour: TBD

ART WALKS

Event

A monthly walk in partnership with Live Well Watertown's program "Watertown Walks" that focuses on local art and artists.

Key Dates

Third Thursdays,
March - November

WATERTOWN ARTS MARKET

Event

A one-day showcase of artists and cultural orgs by the Watertown Business Coalition in partnership with the city.

Key Dates

Event: August 17
Rain Date: August 18

FAIRE ON THE SQUARE

Event

Largest city event, now in its 20th year.

Key Dates

Event: September 21?

CULTURAL DISTRICT

Partnership

The Watertown Square Cultural District is a public-private partnership that supports inclusive and diverse cultural experiences that showcase the arts and strengthen the local economy.

Key Dates

Monthly Meetings: 2nd Mondays, 4pm
MCC Site Visit: March/April
Designation: August

ARTISANS BAZAAR

Event

Local artisans sell at the Whoville Jubilee, organized by Liz

Key Dates

First Saturday of December, evening

CULTURAL LEADERS MEETINGS

Event

Thrice-annual meetings of 20+ nonprofit and public cultural orgs, hosted by the PACC. Goal of idea sharing and networking.

Key Dates

Meeting in the Fall,
Winter, Spring:
Thursday 10am-Noon

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Event

Weekly free public concerts, organized by Liz

Key Dates

Wednesdays 6:30-8pm, June 26-August 28

MUSIC IN RESTAURANTS

Partnership

A collaboration with the Watertown Business Coalition and Boston University's Metrobridge program. The Metrobridge project researches and analyzes municipal policy to create recommendations that to encourage live music in Watertown.

Key Dates

Project Kickoff:
February 1
Project Complete:
May

PACC – PROPOSED PROJECTS

PORCHFEST

Event

Porchfest events bring local musicians and neighborhoods together to celebrate and create a sense of community.

Key Dates

Vote to adopt:
February 26
Launch call to porches and performers: February 27
Event: May 18, 12-5pm
Rain Date: May 19

RIVER OF LIGHT

Event

Crafting paper lanterns for community and artists, culminating in a procession or parade.

Key Dates

Presentation: March
Vote to adopt: Spring/Summer
Event: Winter 2024-25 or Winter 2025-26

WATER TUNES

Event

Invite everyone to share a piece of music that is meaningful to them and tell us why. Hire a DJ who will create a playlist of the submissions and play them. Have a community party at an outdoor venue at which the music is played and the stories are displayed.

Key Dates

Vote to adopt: Spring
Event: Summer 2024 or 2025

INDIGENOUS HISTORY TOUR

Partnership

A collaboration with the Pigsgusset Initiative and Historical Society of Watertown to unerase indigenous history. The project will culminate in a living document that serves as a guide to indigenous sites and history in Watertown.

Key Dates

Research: ongoing
Projected Storymaps launch: January 2025
Guided Tours: Spring/Summer 2025

DRAGON BOAT TEAM

Partnership

A partnership with the Chinese American Association of Watertown to create and support Watertown's first Dragon Boat Racing Team, who will compete at the Boston Dragon Boat Festival.

Key Dates

2024 Race: June 8-9 (on the waitlist)
2025 Registration: January 2025