



Watertown City Council

Administration Building
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Committee on Parks and Recreation Meeting Report Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 5:15 PM City Council Office

The Committee convened on Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 5:15 pm in the City Council Office. Present were Councilors Anthony Palomba, Chair, Lisa J. Feltner, Vice Chair, and Caroline Bays, Secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to interview candidates for the Conservation Commission.

Councilor Palomba called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

Marilyn Salvas - Ms. Salvas was interested in serving the community in some way and when she became aware of the city's need to fill vacancies on committees she decided to volunteer. The Conservation Commission appealed to her because she feels committed to ensuring residents have access to the best parks and a clean Charles River. She has been very active in Watertown, especially in arts and nature. She has regularly volunteered for Charles River clean up days as well as at the Commander's Mansion. She also has been active selling her photography at the Arts' and Farmers' markets. She was a treasurer for the Community Gardens and is currently their membership coordinator.

Councilor Palomba noted that she had a number of different interests and wondered if she had a chance to look at what the Conservation Commission does. She watched all of the meetings held over the last year and she knows the Conservation Commission will have a role in developing Walker Pond. She would like to see something like the community gardens there, although she knows the land is extremely polluted and that it will be a challenge to make it available for recreation. She has experience with polluted water having participated in analyzing water from the Charles River and identifying sources of pollution. She also has had a long history of environmental activism which includes protecting Sawins Pond from pollutants.

Action Item: Councilor Feltner made a motion to recommend that the City Council confirm Marilyn Salvas for appointment to the Conservation Commission for a term expiring February 15, 2028. Councilor Bays seconded. The motion passed 3-0

Josh Coefer - Mr. Coefer has applied to other Commissions because he knows the city needs volunteers for committees and he wants to be involved with the city. After reading about the opening in the Watertown News, he applied to the Conservation Commission

because he felt that this was a good fit for his skills and experience. Councilor Feltner and Councilor Palomba agreed and both felt his scientific background would be an asset to the Commission. Mr. Coefer has watched some of the meetings online and attended a few meetings as well. Councilor Palomba asked, given the importance of this Commission, if he had any ideas about what the Commission could do. Mr Coefer responded that he wants to uphold the core mission of the Commission.

Action Item: Councilor Feltner made a motion to recommend that the City Council confirm Josh Coefer for appointment to the Conservation Commission for a term expiring February 15, 2028. Councilor Bays seconded. The motion passed 3-0

Rachel Danford - Ms. Danford filled in for a candidate two years ago and she said the Commission focuses a lot more on wetland preservation than she expected. She is involved in the Whitney Hill management and interested in the possibility of working with the schools. Wetland regulation is very complicated and she is learning a lot. Her favorite project has been working on a tool kit for students to study wetlands which is being used in the schools now. She is also director of Free Forest School which is a free, year round program for young children. The children do an outdoor nature activity once a week. It has become very popular. She has started another program called Cooler Communities which provides information about energy efficiency at fairs. She wants to continue working with children and she also wants to learn more about wetlands herself.

Action Item: Councilor Feltner made a motion to recommend that the City Council confirm Rachel Danford for reappointment to the Conservation Commission for a term expiring February 15, 2028. Councilor Bays seconded. The motion passed 3-0

The Committee adjourned at 6:00 by unanimous vote.

Report prepared by Caroline Bays

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba,
Chair

Lisa J. Feltner
Vice Chair

Caroline Bays,
Secretary