



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 Public Safety Meeting Date: May 7, 2024

The Committee convened on Tuesday May 7, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber as a hybrid meeting with remote participation by zoom. Present were John Airasian, chair; Emily Izzo, vice chair; and Vincent Piccirilli, secretary, and City Manager George Proakis. Also present were Dennis Holland, Dean Martino, Fire Chief Ryan Nicholson, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee member Thomas Floros. Present by zoom were Angie Kounelis, Josh Rosmarin, and Elodia Thomas.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a proposed amendment to the Traffic Commission Ordinance (current ordinance is attachment A, proposed amendment is attachment B).

Mr. Proakis discussed the amendment that he proposed, with a presentation explaining the four key changes (attachment C):

1. Allows the Commission to select their chair, instead of the Police Chief being specified by ordinance.
2. Provides administrative flexibility for the Commission's administrative support system, instead of the Commission appointing its own secretary.
3. Adds two more resident members to the Commission, for a total of 4.
4. Assigns one of the new positions to be a member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee.

Key points of the discussion that followed:

- a. The Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee is an anomaly in that they are appointed by the Manager, but not confirmed by the City Council, providing no Council oversight.
- b. The Traffic Commission votes to implement traffic laws, subject to approval by the Manager, so under this proposed amendment, a Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee member would become a voting member of a body that implements laws, without confirmation of the City Council.
- c. KP Law and the Department of Community Development and Planning helped draft the proposed amendment, without considering that this new Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee member under §70.02 (G) should be confirmed by the City Council.

Next the chair opened public comments:

- Dean Martino did not support having a Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee member added, saying they are a special interest group, and leave it to experts on traffic.
- Dennis Holland did not support having a Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee member added, saying they are a special interest group, and said leave the Traffic Commission as is.
- Thomas Floros submitted an email, which has the full text of his comments, and asked that the proposed amendment be approved, to help improve road safety for all users.

- Angie Kounelis submitted an email, which has the full text of her comments. She does not support adding a member of an advocacy group to the Traffic Commission.
- Josh Rosmarin spoke in favor of adding a Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee member, saying it's in line with our Comprehensive Plan, and our Vision Zero goal.
- Elodia Thomas spoke against the change. She said the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee can weigh in on traffic changes through the Transportation Planner who is their liaison. In addition, she said they only represent bicycle issues, not pedestrian issues.
- Dean Martino spoke about the growing concerns with electric scooters, and can they be regulated.

Councilor Piccirilli read emails that were received (attachment D):

- Hannah Rakoff was for the proposed amendment.
- Jamie Burke was for the proposed amendment.
- Angie Kounelis was against the proposed amendment.
- Linda Scott was against the proposed amendment (received after comments closed, not read).

After the public comments were closed, the Committee discussed the four elements of the proposed amendment.

1. §70.04(A) Selection of Chair: It is rare to have an ordinance specify the chair, and under state law public bodies can select their own chair. In most cities the DPW Superintendent is the chair. The Committee unanimously agreed that this change made sense as proposed.
2. §70.04(B) & (C) Administrative Support: The current ordinance has the Commission select its own secretary. The Committee unanimously agreed that this change made sense as proposed.
3. §70.02 (F), (G), (H) Increasing the number of resident members to 4: Councilor Piccirilli said this was consistent with our Complete Streets policy, and the discussion has been going on a long time about increasing resident representation on the Commission. Councilor Airasian said the Commission was working well as is, but understands the city is growing and has no issue adding additional residents. Councilor Izzo said having more residents would allow having a broader range of interests represented on the Commission. The Committee unanimously agreed that it made sense to increase it to four residents, but the composition needs to be discussed with the next change.
4. §70.02 (G) Designate one member to be a member of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee:
 - Councilor Piccirilli was uncomfortable with the way this was worded, and suggested that (G) be reworded to be appointed by the Manager and confirmed by the City Council, or alternatively, (F), (G) and (H) be collapsed into one paragraph that appoints 4 residents that represent all road users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and commercial users.
 - Councilor Izzo prefers to leave (H) as is, delete (G), and change (F) to appoint 3 residents with a range of interests about traffic issues.
 - Councilor Airasian agreed with Councilor Izzo's proposal, and prefers not to have a Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee member called out in the ordinance, and to keep (H) the business representative.
 - The Committee concurred with Councilor Izzo's and Airasian's approach.
 - Mr. Proakis stated that if these changes were made, there is nothing that would prevent a member of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee from applying for a position on the Traffic Commission, however the Residents Advisory Committee would make a recommendation if they thought it was appropriate to be appointed. He will check with KP Law to confirm proposed changes are acceptable.

- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Izzo, to recommend to the City Council that the proposed amendment to the Traffic Commission ordinance be brought forward for a first reading with the following changes:
1. Change §70.02 (F) to “Three residents of the City, representing a broad range of road users including pedestrians, transit users, bicyclists and motorists, appointed by the City Manager and confirmed by the City Council for staggered terms of two years each.”
 2. Delete §70.02 (G)
 3. Change §70.02 (H) to (G) and reword as “One resident representative of City business/industry appointed by the City Manager and confirmed by the City Council for a two-year term.
- Voted 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Note: The proposed amendment to the Traffic Commission Ordinance as amended by the Committee was reviewed by KP Law and is attachment E.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli

Attachments:

- A. Current Traffic Commission Ordinance Chapter 70 May 24, 2011
- B. Proposed Traffic Commission Ordinance Amendment January 23, 2024
- C. Proakis Traffic Commission Presentation
- D. Emails from the public
- E. Proposed amendment to the Traffic Commission Ordinance as amended

Chapter 70**TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

§ 70.01.	Established.	§ 70.05.	Duties and responsibilities.
§ 70.02.	Membership.	§ 70.06.	Procedures.
§ 70.03.	Compensation.	§ 70.07.	Meetings.
§ 70.04.	Officers.		

§ 70.01. Established. [1982 Code, Ch. XI, § 1; amended Ord. 15, passed 3-13-2001]

A City Traffic Commission is hereby established.

§ 70.02. Membership. [1982 Code, Ch. XI, § 2; amended Ord. 15, passed 3-13-2001 ; amended Ord. O-2011-26, passed 5-24-2011]

The Traffic Commission shall be composed of members as follows:

- (A) Chief of the Police Department.
- (B) Chief of the Fire Department.
- (C) Superintendent of Public Works.
- (D) City Engineer.
- (E) Director of Community Development and Planning or his or her designee.
- (F) Two citizens at large both of whom shall be residents of the City, and one a representative of City industry. These members are appointed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council for staggered terms of two years each.

§ 70.03. Compensation. [1982 Code, Ch. XI, § 3; amended Ord. 15, passed 3-13-2001]

The members of the Traffic Commission shall receive no compensation for their service as commissioners, but all expenses incurred shall be paid by the City out of an appropriation for those services.

§ 70.04. Officers. [1982 Code, Ch. XI, §§ 4 — 5; amended Ord. 15, passed 3-13-2001]

- (A) Chairperson. The Chief of Police shall act as the Chairperson of the Traffic Commission.
- (B) Secretary. The Traffic Commission shall designate a Secretary. The Secretary shall arrange meetings, supply records, obtain data, prepare reports and attend to the other duties as shall be decided by the Traffic Commission.

§ 70.05. Duties and responsibilities. [1982 Code, Ch. XI, § 6; amended Ord. 15, passed 3-13-2001 ;

amended Ord. O-2011-26, passed 5-24-2011]

The Traffic Commission shall suggest and advise the City Manager in ways and means to regulate traffic in the City with a view towards reducing accidents, relieving traffic congestion and increasing safety for cars and alternative modes of transportation. The Commission shall study and make recommendations on road design projects and any proposed addition or deletion of crosswalks, stop signs, traffic signals, signage, parking meters, or parking spaces; and on any proposed traffic calming measures or traffic directional changes.

§ 70.06. Procedures. [1982 Code, Ch. XI, § 7; amended Ord. 15, passed 3-13-2001]

All traffic rules and orders, complaints or suggestions relative to traffic conditions in the City shall first be submitted through the Secretary of the Traffic Commission to that Commission for study and recommendations before being acted on by the City Manager.

§ 70.07. Meetings. [Amended Ord. 15, passed 3-13-2001]

The Traffic Commission shall meet periodically as needed. When an agenda item for a meeting of the Traffic Commission is brought forward by a City resident or directly concerns a City resident, the Traffic Commission shall make every effort to meet after 6:00 p.m. when it deems appropriate due to the nature of the issue or upon request by the petitioners or citizens.

CITY LETTERHEAD

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE MEMBERSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRAFFIC COMMISSION.

ORDINANCE #

2024 – O –

WHEREAS, the City seeks to further define and clarify the membership, leadership, and responsibilities of the Traffic Commission.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of City of Watertown that Title VII, Chapter 70, §§70.02, 70.04, and 70.05 of the Watertown Code of Ordinances, relative to the membership, officers and duties and responsibilities of the Traffic Commission, are hereby amended by deleting said §§70.02, 70.04, and 70.05 in their entirety and replacing those sections with the language as follows:

§ 70.02 Membership.

The Traffic Commission shall be composed of members as follows:

- (A) The Chief of the Police Department or their designee;
- (B) The Chief of the Fire Department or their designee;
- (C) The Superintendent of Public Works;
- (D) The City Engineer;
- (E) The Director of the Department of Community Development & Planning or their designee;
- (F) Two residents of the City, appointed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council for staggered terms of two years each;
- (G) One resident of the City who is a member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, appointed by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and approved by the City Manager for a two-year term; and
- (H) One representative of City business/industry appointed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council for a two-year term.

§ 70.04 Officers.

- (A) *Chair*. The Traffic Commission shall select one of its members to serve as the chair of the Commission.
- (B) *Secretary*. The City Manager shall designate a staff person to serve as the secretary of the Commission in a non-voting capacity. The Secretary shall arrange meetings, supply records, obtain data, prepare reports and attend to the other duties as shall be decided by the Commission.
- (C) *Police Liaison*. The Police Chief shall designate a staff person to serve as a liaison to the Commission in a non-voting capacity. The staff liaison shall provide recommendations to the Commission based upon best practices in community policing.

§ 70.05. Duties and Responsibilities.

The Traffic Commission shall suggest and advise the City Manager in ways and means to regulate traffic in the City with a view towards implementing the City's comprehensive plan and complete streets strategies, reducing crashes, addressing traffic congestion, and increasing safety for motor vehicle drivers and passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists and users of alternative modes of transportation. The Commission shall study and make recommendations on road design projects and any proposed addition or deletion of crosswalks, stop signs, traffic signals, signage, parking meters or parking spaces, as well as on any proposed traffic calming measures or traffic directional changes.

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



City of Watertown Traffic Commission Ordinance: Introduction May 7, 2024

Traffic Commission Ordinance

The proposed ordinance contemplates four different changes to the composition of the Traffic Commission.

While the four items work together, each of them has their own individual benefits.

A word about the Administrative Code

A few items to note:

- At the start of this fiscal year, the Honorable City Council committed funds in the City Manager's budget to undertake a permanent, organized Administrative Code
- The Administrative Code sits between the City Charter and the other ordinances, and establishes how city government is organized
- This will include all city boards and commissions put in one organized location in our city ordinance, making it easier to understand the purpose of the board, membership, appointment process, etc.

A few items to note . . .

- I advanced the Traffic Commission ordinance to the City Council ahead of the Administrative Code, as there is more substance to this change, and it deserves separate conversations
- This proposal originated from my own efforts to align the Traffic Commission with our operational priorities and the comprehensive plan
- The information in this presentation is intended to supplement the proposed ordinance, providing more perspective on this strategy

Traffic Commission Ordinance: Four Items

- Allows the Commission to select their chair
- Provides administrative flexibility the Commission's administrative support system
- Adds two more members to the Commission
- Assigns one of the new positions to be a liaison from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

Selection of the Chair

- The proposal allows the police chief to serve on the Commission without requiring that they chair the Commission
- The chief position is a very busy position with many responsibilities
- Boards and Commissions can often benefit from a change in chair on occasion
- Public members cannot currently serve as chair, but this would allow them to do so

Flexibility in Administrative Support

- Currently, a sergeant in the police department works to both staff the Commission and provide technical recommendations
- The proposal allows for flexibility to split these roles, while specifically ensuring that police department's technical recommendations are provided to the Commission

Addition of Two Members

Current Membership:

- Police Chief
- Fire Chief
- Assistant City Manager for CDP
- DPW Superintendent
- City Engineer
- Business representative
- Resident representative

Addition of Two Members

- Currently, the Traffic Commission is unique in that a supermajority of the members are appointed in their roles as City employees
- Two members of the public currently serve on the Commission. Both are appointed by the City Manager, and one is specified as a representative of the business community
- More voices from the public will ensure that a higher proportion of the members of the Commission are Watertown residents.

Ped/Bike Representative to the Commission

- As proposed, one of the two new members would be a representative from the Bike/Ped Committee, chosen by the Committee from amongst their membership
- This position would serve to further represent the perspective of vulnerable road users in Watertown
- This strategy is consistent with the implementation of a substantial portion of the Comprehensive Plan that focuses on implementation of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Comprehensive Plan

- 4A: “Implement the mobility-related plans including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan”
- 4B: “Adopt multimodal policy goals and metrics, including for specific street types”
- 4C: “Develop a Vision Zero policy at the municipal level”
- 4J: “Prioritize and implement pedestrian and bicycle network improvements.”
- 4K: “Improve safety and comfort levels for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially in the squares and along major corridors”

Traffic Commission Ordinance: Four Items

- Allows the Commission to select their chair
- Provides administrative flexibility the Commission's administrative support system
- Adds two more members to the Commission
- Assigns one of the new positions to be a liaison from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee



Thank You

Comment for Public Safety Committee meeting tonight, May 7

hannah.rakoff@yahoo.com <hannah.rakoff@yahoo.com>

Tue 5/7/2024 6:04 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councilor Piccirilli (Vinnie),

I strongly support the proposed amendment to the ordinance governing the Traffic Commission. It is time to bring more voices, as well as representation of more modes of travel, onto this important commission. Allowing the Commission to elect its own chair also correctly represents the fact that not only is traffic not solely a police matter, but the police chief's time should not necessarily be required to be spent on that administrative task.

I urge the committee to advance this ordinance to the full Council for final vote.

Hannah Rakoff
87 Spruce Street

Resident in favor of Amendment to Traffic Commission Ordinance

Jamie Burke <jmeburke@gmail.com>

Tue 5/7/2024 5:41 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councilors Piccirilli, Izzo, and Airasian,

I'm Jamie Burke, and I live at 18 Pine St in Watertown. I'm the current chair of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, but I'm writing today as a resident to express my support for the amendments to the Traffic Commission Ordinance--specifically, the change to add a member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee to the Traffic Commission.

All too often, I think people try to make a distinction between those on bikes, drivers, and pedestrians—but the truth is that there isn't one. No matter our mode of transit, we're all people who want to get to where we're going safely. Roads and rules that are designed with all of us in mind make all of us safer, too. Adding a member of the Bike-Ped Committee to the Traffic Commission can help bring the expertise of someone who is well-versed in multi-modal transit issues to the Commission and help ensure that road design and enforcement make our streets safer for everyone.

I also believe that this change is essential to both reaching the City's recent commitment to Vision Zero in the latest Comprehensive Plan, as well as its Climate goals to reduce car dependence in Watertown. Moving this amendment forward will be a major step in demonstrating the City's true commitment to those goals and will show that Watertown is a city that prioritizes the safety and needs of all of its residents equally.

Best,
Jamie Burke

Traffic Commission Ordinance

Angeline Kounelis <akounelis12@gmail.com>

Mon 5/6/2024 8:01 PM

To: John Airasian <jairasian@watertown-ma.gov>; Izzo, Emily <eizzo@watertown-ma.gov>; Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>
Cc: City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>

 2 attachments (227 KB)

3d312552-189a-44ac-a16d-3ccbb02eafda (1).pdf; May 7, 2024 Committee on Public Safety Meeting Agenda (1) (1) (1).pdf;

Dear Committee on Public Safety:

Attn: City Councilors John M. Airasian, Chair; Emily Izzo, Vice Chair; and Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Sec.

RE: Tuesday, 05/07/2024 Meeting at 6:00 P.M.

Discussion - Amendment to the Traffic Commission Ordinance

Herein, I reiterate my statement, with attachments, as read into the record at the First Public Forum of the 01/23/2024 City Council Meeting. On 01/22/2024, my opinions were also discussed with Councilor Caroline Bays.

I offer additional comments and emphasis as follows:

1. Membership of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is comprised of like-minded individuals in joint efforts to support bicyclists. I see no commitment to protect me, as an elder pedestrian, by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee.

Members

Nine members; appointed by City Manager

"The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee works to promote non-motorized transportation in Watertown. The primary activities of the Committee are advocacy for the interests of bicyclists and pedestrians in road construction projects; sponsorship and organization of special bicycling events; advocacy for improved bicycle parking facilities; promotion of commuting alternatives; and providing relevant materials, both online and printed, for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists."

2. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee already has a great deal of "influence". Make note of the fact that the Committee has a Staff Liaison within the DCDP; overseen by Steve Magoon, who currently serves on the Traffic Commission

Staff Liaison

Zeke Mermell, Transportation Planner, Community Development and Planning

3. At the 02/05/2024 Bike/Ped Committee Meeting, Zeke Mermell stated that City Mgr. George Proakis sent a "memo" to the Bike/Ped Committee to suggest a voting position at the Traffic Commission table.

To view the discussion, as recorded by WCA-TV, advance to the -28:14 to -18:12 hour markers in the link, as follows:

<http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/show/2998?site=3>

4. Excerpts of statements by Mr. Mermell at the 02/05/2024 meeting, used to recruit a member to serve, are as follows:

- a. "Advocate for issues that you care about"
- b. "A voice and voting member...at such a table that makes major decisions"
- c. "City initiative...big priority"
- d. "Link to [Bike/Ped] Comm."
- e. "Votes to pick [Traffic Commission] Chair"

I do not support the appointment of any member, of an advocacy Committee, to serve on a Board or Commission, that impacts my quality of life and safety. Requirements for candidates to serve on regulatory Boards and Commissions have been based on their expertise; not those of a special interest group. The proposed Ordinance is precedent waiting to happen.

In my opinion: the cart was placed before the horse. The Administrative Branch wrote an Ordinance, and contacted the Bike/Ped Committee, as a fast track for an imminent vote. Where was the transparency and open public process?

Best,

Angie

Angeline Maria B. Kounelis
Retired District A, East End, City Councilor
Landline: 617-926-2352
Mobile: 617-538-9252

Sent from my Smartphone - Apologies for brevity and/or typos

From: **Angeline Kounelis** <akounelis12@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 22, 2024, 8:00 PM
Subject: Re: Traffic Commission Ordinance
To: Bays, Caroline <cbays@watertown-ma.gov>
Cc: City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>, Proakis, George <gproakis@watertown-ma.gov>, citymgr <citymgr@watertown-ma.gov>

Hi Caroline,

Thank you for your followup. Always good to be challenged. Had there been an open, public process; all queries would have been discussed.

I do not support the appointment of any member, of an advocacy Committee, to serve on a Board or Commission that impacts my quality of life and safety. Whether it be: The Traffic Commission; Board of Health; ZBA; Planning Board; etc.; etc.

When a pedestrian steps off of a curb, they should not be placed in harms way to be severely injured by a speeding bicyclist; as almost happened to me in Cambridge. All within the new protected bike lanes that must be traversed by pedestrians to access the street; and vice versa, the sidewalk.

Membership of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is comprised of like- minded individuals in joint efforts to support bicyclists. I see no commitment to protect me, as an elder pedestrian, by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee.

You may recall that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee lobbied the DCR for the closing of Little Greenough Blvd. to motorists. All with a total disregard for access to the parking area by the elderly and folks with disabilities who needed to drive to the site; for their own passive recreation.

Members

Nine members; appointed by City Manager

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee works to promote non-motorized transportation in Watertown. The primary activities of the Committee are advocacy for the interests of bicyclists and pedestrians in road construction projects; sponsorship and organization of special bicycling events; advocacy for improved bicycle parking facilities; promotion of commuting alternatives; and providing relevant materials, both online and printed, for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

As a resident of this City; I reserve the right to offer opinion. Thank you.

Best,

Angie

Angeline Maria B. Kounelis
Retired District A, East End, City Councilor
Landline: 617-926-2352
Mobile: 617-538-9252

Sent from my Smartphone - Apologies for brevity and/or typos

On Mon, Jan 22, 2024, 5:51 PM Bays, Caroline <cbays@watertown-ma.gov> wrote:

Thank you for your email, Angie. I am slightly confused, though by what you mean by membership organization. The members of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is appointed by the city manager and is an official city committee. - Caroline

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Angeline Kounelis** <akounelis12@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jan 22, 2024, 4:30 PM

Subject: Traffic Commission Ordinance

To: <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

Cc: City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>, Proakis, George <gproakis@watertown-ma.gov>, citymgr <citymgr@watertown-ma.gov>

FIRST PUBLIC FORUM SUBMISSION FOR 01/23/24

Greetings:

Review of Motions, Ordinances, Orders and Resolutions, for the City Council Meeting on 01/23/2024, has caused me concern. Specifically, Agenda Item: 8B Amendment to the Traffic Commission Ordinance.

In my opinion: Giving a weighted vote to a special interest group, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, to serve on the Traffic Commission, sets precedent for all Boards and Commissions. Except for the Licensing Board, requirements for candidates to serve on regulatory Boards and Commissions have been based on their expertise; not a particular cause or policy.

By virtue of the fact that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is a *membership organization*, their advocacy compromises the unbiased decisions of the Traffic Commission. It is already within the inherent purview of the Traffic Commission to increase public safety on roadways for everyone.

Where was the open, public process to review and discuss the Ordinance? As presented: there is no "draft" proposal. Only a fast track for an imminent vote.

Also to note: Currently, the Traffic Commission is comprised of seven members, as follows:

Members

Seven members: two citizens-at-large (one representing city industry), appointed by the City Manager and confirmed by the City Council; Chief of Police; Chief of Fire; Superintendent of DPW; City Engineer; Director Community Development and Planning

Kindly review items F., G. and H., within the presented Ordinance. Is the Traffic Commission proposed to increase to nine members? Or, should G. and H. be bullet points under F.? Why is the Bicycle and Pedestrian member (G) not approved by the City Council? Who submitted the Ordinance without prior City Council Committee deliberation and public input?

(F) Two residents of the City, appointed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council

for staggered terms of two years each;

(G) One resident of the City who is a member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee,

appointed by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and approved by the City Manager for

a two-year term; and

(H) One representative of City business/industry appointed by the City Manager and approved

by the City Council for a two-year term.

Residents of Watertown should not be thrust by the wayside. Where is the transparency? We do pay attention. Thank you.

Best,

Angie

Angeline Maria B. Kounelis
Retired District A, East End, City Councilor
Landline: 617-926-2352
Mobile: 617-538-9252

Sent from my Smartphone - Apologies for brevity and/or typos

Bike Ped

Linda Scott <liscott33@gmail.com>

Tue 5/7/2024 7:05 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

Hello All,

I apologize for being so late to the party!

I just have a few comments:

1. It took eight years to get a response on the Highland Avenue children's crosswalk issue. I saw no one from "Bike Ped" helping out with this.
2. I see no one from bike/ped working on the Hosmer issue.
3. The Bike/ped meetings that I have attended have had nothing to do with pedestrians...maybe a "bow" to them on occasion.
4. I hope that this committee will give special attention to these matters.

Thank You!

Linda Scott
55 Olcott

Traffic Commission Ordinance - Public Comment

Thomas Floros <tmfloros@gmail.com>

Tue 5/7/2024 9:05 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

Hi Vinny,

I am writing to express my support for the traffic commission ordinance in Watertown. As a resident who frequently drives, bikes, and walks throughout our community, I believe that the proposed changes will enhance safety and address the duties and responsibilities of the Traffic Commission effectively.

Here are my key points:

- Chair Selection: Allowing the Traffic Commission to select its chair is a positive step that can alleviate some responsibility from the Police Chief, potentially making it easier for them.
- Bike & Pedestrian Representation: Including a member from the Bike & Pedestrian committee on the Traffic Commission is crucial. Their perspective will contribute to Watertown's Comprehensive Plan, especially as we focus on Complete Streets strategies and safety improvements.
- Safety First: Our utmost responsibility should be improving safety for all road users—drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists alike. By diversifying the perspectives on the Traffic Commission, we can better address safety concerns of all.

I encourage the Public Safety Sub-Committee to consider these points as they deliberate on the ordinance. Let's work together to create a safer community and more efficient transportation system for Watertown.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Tom

--

Thomas Floros
(203)739-5744



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
www.watertown-ma.gov

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE MEMBERSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRAFFIC COMMISSION.

ORDINANCE #

2024 – O –

WHEREAS, the City seeks to further define and clarify the membership, leadership, and responsibilities of the Traffic Commission.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of City of Watertown that Title VII, Chapter 70, §§70.02, 70.04, and 70.05 of the Watertown Code of Ordinances, relative to the membership, officers and duties and responsibilities of the Traffic Commission, are hereby amended by deleting said §§70.02, 70.04, and 70.05 in their entirety and replacing those sections with the language as follows:

§ 70.02 Membership.

The Traffic Commission shall be composed of members as follows:

- (A) The Chief of the Police Department or their designee;
- (B) The Chief of the Fire Department or their designee;
- (C) The Superintendent of Public Works;
- (D) The City Engineer;
- (E) The Director of the Department of Community Development & Planning or their designee;
- (F) Three residents of the City, representing a broad range of road users including pedestrians, transit users, bicyclists and motorists, appointed by the City Manager and confirmed by the City Council for staggered terms of two years each,; and,
- (G) One resident representative of City business/industry appointed by the City Manager and confirmed by the City Council for a two-year term.

§ 70.04 Officers.

- (A) *Chair*. The Traffic Commission shall select one of its members to serve as the chair of the Commission.
- (B) *Secretary*. The City Manager shall designate a staff person to serve as the secretary of the Commission in a non-voting capacity. The Secretary shall arrange meetings, supply records, obtain data, prepare reports and attend to the other duties as shall be decided by the Commission.

(C) *Police Liaison.* The Police Chief shall designate a staff person to serve as a liaison to the Commission in a non-voting capacity. The staff liaison shall provide recommendations to the Commission based upon best practices in community policing.

§ 70.05. Duties and Responsibilities.

The Traffic Commission shall suggest and advise the City Manager in ways and means to regulate traffic in the City with a view towards implementing the City's comprehensive plan and complete streets strategies, reducing crashes, addressing traffic congestion, and increasing safety for motor vehicle drivers and passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists and users of alternative modes of transportation. The Commission shall study and make recommendations on road design projects and any proposed addition or deletion of crosswalks, stop signs, traffic signals, signage, parking meters or parking spaces, as well as on any proposed traffic calming measures or traffic directional changes.

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

898059.3/WATR/0103