Watertown City Council
Committee on Public Works
Councilor Piccirilli, Chair, Councilor Feltner, Vice Chair, Councilor Palomba, Secretary
Committee Report of April 18, 2023 Meeting

The Committee on Public Works met on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 in the City Council Chambers at 7:00 PM. It was a hybrid meeting so residents could attend the meeting on Zoom. The meeting was recorded by Watertown Community Access Television. Also, comments could be directed through email to vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov. It was noted that WBZ Television was also recording the meeting.

Notation from the Secretary: There are many attachments to these minutes. They appear in the order that they are mentioned in the minutes.

The purpose of the meeting was to "**Make a Recommendation on the Petition for the Name of the Columbus Delta**". (Petition Attachment A)

Attendance: In addition to the three members of the Committee, the following Councilors attended either in-person or on zoom – Council President Sideris, Councilor Gardner, Council Gannon, Councilor Airisian, and Councilor Izzo. There were approximately 35 individuals in the audience, of whom approximately 27 were residents of Watertown. There were also about 17 individuals on zoom of whom approximately 11 were residents (Sign-in sheets Attachment B)

Notation from the Secretary: This meeting lasted three hours and fifteen minutes and there were many residents (and one former resident) who spoke and many who spoke more than once. The Committee members also engaged in conversation with each other. The Secretary has chosen not to attribute comments to individuals, but rather to provide a summary of the key comments and opinions shared by those attending and the Committee members. Please visit WCA-TV to view the complete meeting at http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/show/2445?channel=3.

Councilor Piccirilli distributed to the Committee members two sets of questions, **Part 1 – Fact-finding** (8 questions) and **Part 2 Review Criteria** (13 questions). (Questions Attachment C) He said he would like to use the questions as the format for the meeting.

Councilor Piccirilli call the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. He stated the purpose of the meeting and introduced the members of the Committee. He then announced that the meeting is not a Public Hearing, but rather it is a committee meeting at which the public may attend but may only speak at the discretion of the chair. He also stated that the Committee would be hearing from Watertown residents only, and asked speakers to be respectful and not interrupt each other. He noted that he will present information for discussion by the Committee members and then, at his discretion, members of the public will be invited to speak. He acknowledged that this was an important issue for many by presenting a list of individuals who had sent the Committee on Public Works emails since the June 21, 2022 Public Hearing in front of the City Council. There were 52 emails with the overwhelming (43) from Watertown residents. (The list of emails Attachment D)

Councilor Piccirilli then proceeded to present a series of documents that provided information about how the delta was named the Columbus Delta (Attachment E), the Watertown Council 155 of the Knights of Columbus (Attachment F) the 1882 founding origin of the name Columbus on the monument (Attachment G), and the history and current status of the Knights of Columbus (Attachment H).

The articles establish the following:

1) At a Special Town Meeting on December 12, 1939, with 141 of the 185 members of the Town Meeting present, the members, by margin of 85 in favor and 59 opposed "Voted: That the "delta in Watertown Square be named Columbus Delta".

2) That the Watertown Council No 155 of the Knights of Columbus donated a monument to the Town that included the Knights of Columbus emblem and the following inscription:
COLUMBUS DELTA
HE GAINED A WORK
HE GAVE THAT WORLD
ITS GRANDEST LESSON
ON! SAIL ON!

DEDICATED OCT. 12, 1940
BY WATERTOWN COUNCIL No 155.

3) That though it appeared the Watertown Council No 155 has not been active as demonstrated by the lack of response to an email sent by the Committee Chair to invite them to the Committee meeting, it was announced that the Council has again begun meeting monthly and has approximately 80 members.

4) That the Knights of Columbus was not founded as an Italian-American organization. It was founded by an Irish Catholic priest, Michael J. McGivney of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, CT. His intention was to offer men a lay organization that served "one's Church, community and family with virtue". The organization "took Christopher Columbus - recognized as a Catholic and celebrated as the discoverer of America – as their patron". The organization was formally established on February 6, 1882 and incorporated on March 29 of the same year.

Councilor Piccirilli also shared two articles about the concept of the "Doctrine of Discovery", which legitimized the colonial-era seizure of Native lands. The doctrine was "introduced into United States municipal law by U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall in 1823". In his formulation of the doctrine, "discovery of territory previously unknown to Europeans gave the discovering nation title to that territory against all other European nations". The articles also noted that recently the Vatican, responding to Indigenous peoples, rejected the "Doctrine of Discovery". (Attachments I and J)

The presentation of the two sets of questions and the documents laid the foundation for a nearly two hour discussion. Below is a summary of the key points made by those opposing the petition and those in favor of it, as well as comments made by Committee members.

Statements of support included the following.

1) The history of the Knights of Columbus supports the claim that the naming of the delta had more to do with recognizing a Catholic patron than with honoring an Italian-American.

2) Naming the delta the Columbus Delta does not acknowledge the indigenous people who occupied the land prior to colonization.

3) Christopher Columbus never "discovered" the United States. Also, he represented Spain, not Italy, during his three expeditions.

4) The name of the delta should recognize the diversity of those who have come to Watertown in the past and who are still coming to Watertown today and the contributions these diverse groups have made to Watertown.

5) Some see the name of the delta and the monument as a response to the discriminations against Italian-Americans. However, we must recognize this situation as an issue of fairness. There are many who have been discriminated in the past and continue to be discriminated against today. The name should recognize that reality.

6) The vast majority of historians accept the fact that Christopher Columbus committed acts of atrocity against indigenous peoples during his expeditions to the point that he was removed from his position by the Spanish government.

Statements in opposition included the following.

1) The Sons of Italy and the Knights of Columbus view Christopher Columbus as an honored and respected member of the Catholic Church.

2) There is evidence presented by historians such as Carol Delaney and others that debunk the claims that Columbus committed atrocities. They particular debunk the work of Professor Howard Zinn.

3) We must judge historical figures by recognizing the context and circumstances in which they lived. We must respect history and not attempt to re-write it.

4) If there are those who want to change the name of the delta, they should put it on the ballot and not let the view of 150 or so residents determine the future of the delta and the monument.

5) The fact that there are streets, cities, schools, etc. named after Christopher Columbus demonstrates that he is perceived to have made important contributions to the country.

There were also some suggestions about how to proceed if the Committee and the Council removed the name. These included turning to the Historical Society and the Arts Council for suggestions, and keeping the monument, but changing the inscription to be more inclusive of the diversity of Watertown.

It should be noted that while many of the questions presented in the two lists developed by the Chair were directly or indirectly commented on by residents, some questions were not addressed. For example, what the impact of the recent Supreme Court's decision in Shurtieff v. City of Boston might have on the present name of the delta and a possible future name was not discussed.

After hearing from residents, the Committee discussed the next steps. There was not consensus that the delta was a well-known gathering place in Watertown like Saltonstall Park and other public locations. Similarly there was some disagreement about whether you could change the name without having to address the issue of the monument. Eventually the Committee agreed that if the name is changed the issue of what to do about the monument must be determined. It could be removed or it might be resurfaced with a new inscription and name.

The meeting concluded without a formal Action Item to be voted on by the full City Council. However, the Committee voted unanimously on a "sense of the Committee" for the un-naming of the Columbus Delta. The Committee will schedule another meeting and invite members of the Administration to attend as they might have suggestions regarding how to address the issue of the monument.

Councilor Palomba made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilor Feltner and passed 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:17 PM.

The minutes were prepared by Councilor Palomba

Attachments:

A. Petition
B. Sign-in sheets
C. Questions for the Committee
D. List of emails received
E. How was the Columbus Delta named
F. Watertown Council 155 of the Knights of Columbus
G. Foundation of our Fraternal Organization 1882 Knights of Columbus
H. Knights of Columbus – Wikipedia
I. Discovery Doctrine – Wikipedia
J. Responding to Indigenous peoples, Vatican rejects 'Doctrine of Discovery' - The Boston Globe - March 30, 2023

Attachment A

September, 2021

Public Petition To The Members of the Watertown Town Council,

RECEIVED BY
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
WATERTOWN, MASS
2021 DEC -2 PM 4:12

We, the undersigned, petition the Town Council to begin a process of reconsidering the name of the delta in Watertown Square, presently called the Columbus Delta. Our hope is that this process will generate a new name that is more inclusive of all members of our community and the history of the place we now call home.

Eighty years ago, members of Town Meeting named the delta. Today, it is the public meeting place where hundreds of diverse neighbors often gather for a variety of reasons. Resolution # 85, Naming Policy For Squares Or Intersections For Non-veterans, adopted on October 22, 2019 by the Town Council, states that:

"the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

As per the stated resolution, "The Town Council shall have sole authority to remove the naming of any Square or Intersection if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served."

It is our wish as citizens and neighbors for the delta to be renamed so it becomes more welcoming of all members of our community and better reflects the history of the place we now call home. As such, we ask the Watertown Town Council to initiate the process for a change in the naming of the delta in Watertown Square.

If you would like to add your name to this petition, please enter your information below.

PRINT YOUR NAME	YOUR SIGNATURE	STREET ADDRESS	Email (optional)
Ee-Yenn Lin		47 Grant Ave	
Hubert Ho		47 Grant Ave	
JEROLD WHITMORE		105 RUSSELL AVE	
THOMAS P. MELONE		115 Russell Ave	
DEBORAH L. MELONE		115 RUSSELL AVE.	
Abby Murphy		119 Russell Ave	abby.s.murphy@gmail.com
Andrew Izsák		17 Otis St.	
B. Hausberry		145 Russell Ave.	
David Leon		145 Russell	
Joseph Ferreira		152 Russell Ave	
Lissa Ferreira		152 Russell Ave	
Colleen Daly		136 Russell Ave	
Kenneth Hung		93 Russell Ave	
Eric Mailhis		85 Russell Ave	
Laura Kehoe		85 Russell Ave.	

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CITY OF WATERTOWN

Office of the City Clerk
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

Janet M. Murphy
City Clerk/Chief Election Officer

Telephone (617) 972-6486
Fax (617) 972-6595

7 December 2021

Mr. Mark Sideris
City Council President
City of Watertown, MA

Mr. President –

On December 2, 2021, this office received a Petition to the City Council requesting that City begin the process of giving consideration to the renaming of the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square.

This letter is to inform you that I have finished certifying the signatures on the Petition. I was able to certify a total of **154 signatures** as being legal voters here in Watertown. The Petition was filed in this office by Mishy Lesser.

Please inform Dr. Lesser that the certification of her petition has been completed.

If you require any additional information, please let me know.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet M. Murphy
City Clerk

Attachment B

Meeting of the Committee on Public Works
Tuesday, April 18, 2023
Sign In Sheet
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

NAME	ADDRESS
Jennifer Wolfram	23 Clyde Rd Watertown
Chris Higgins	125 Morse st watertown
Nicole Higgins	125 Morse Street Watertown
Guy A. Carbone	Woodfall Rd Belmont (C/O 08 10A)
JAMES D. STEFANO	JEFFERSON AVE. WATERTOWN
ALFONSO B VISCONTI	129 Fessenden St Newton MA 02460

Sign-In sheet April 18, 2023

Public Works committee

NAME	ADDRESS	
Anthony DiSo	23 Desmond Ave Wat Sqn	
Kim Distefano	130 Sycamore St Belmont,	
Paul-Andre Martocchia	15 Fayette	
AnnMarie Pettiglio	10 Holly St, Watertown	Against name change
Patricia Martocchia	15 Fayette Watertown	
BRUCE COLTIN	67 MARION RD	
Dennis Holland	28 KNACK ST	
Linda Berardinelli	65 PRENTISS, Watertown	
DAVID A RUSSO	86 LOVELL Rd WATERTOWN	
Wilfred J. CLIFFORD	93 Riverside St	
George Gardner	138 Pelham Island Rd	
Virginia Gardner	138 Pelham Island Rd	
Joseph Rotella	157 Common ST.	
Christopher Ives	42 Oliver St.	
Kathy Vasen	44 Joseph Rd.	
Sal Tolipano	120 SPRUCE St,	
MARIO Petriaca	160 Linwood Ave	
Jacqui Gross	210 Watertown St #10	
Mayor's Councilor		
Marilyn Petitto Devaney	98 Westminster Ave	
Charlotte D'Angelo	85 Acton ST.	

Sign-In Sheet - April 18, 2023

Public Works Committee

NAME	ADDRESS
Laurena Recco	233 Westminster Ave Watertown
Patricia Mastrocola	15 Fayette St.
JOSEPH RIZZA	7 HENSHAW TERR WEST NEWTON 02465
IRENE SANTORO	1 CENTER ST. WATERTOWN.
Sandra DiTesa	23 Desmond Ave. W.
Tom Beggan	4 P. Igrim Road Watertown
Sues Chiodo	31 TEMPLETON PKWY WATERTOWN
Virginia Gardner	138 Pelham Island
CHARLES IACOPPO	108 Edenfield Ave Town
STEVE DE ANGELIS	WALTHAM
Ed Marcus	47 Morse
Loreta Seone	85 Miriam Rd. Waltham
Dora Seone	85 Miriam Rd. Waltham

Meeting for the Committee on Public Works
Tuesday, April 18, 2023
Present on Zoom

Councilors:
John Gannon
John Airasian
Emily Izzo

Attendees:
Gerri Cimino
Aravinda Ananda
Archy LaSalle
Dr. Mishy Lesser
Rachal Kay
Angie Kournelis
Elaine Millo
Tara Moses
Lisa Capoccia
M.J. Munroe
Fred Banin
Donald McDonald
John Bartley
Erik Jepsin
Terry Sauro
Dennis Duff
Tommy Damigella

There a few others on zoom who only listed their first name or only listed their initials

Attachment C

Questions for the Committee

Part 1 Fact-finding

How was the Columbus Delta named?

What is the Watertown Council 155?

Who are the of the Knights of Columbus?

Was the Columbus Delta named by Italian-Americans to honor their Italian heritage?

Who is Christopher Columbus and why is he important?

Why is the legacy of Christopher Columbus being reexamined now?

What is the Doctrine of Discovery?

Any other background info to consider?

Part 2 Review Criteria

Per Resolution 2019-R-85, §5 REVIEW: The Town Council shall have sole authority to remove the naming of any Square or Intersection if, with the passage of time, it determines the public interest is no longer being served.

Do we consider the Watertown Delta the primary public gathering spot for Watertown residents to exercise their right of free speech under the First Amendment?

In light of the US Supreme Court decision in Shurtleff v. City of Boston, is the public interest continuing to be served by having the Delta named for Christopher Columbus, the patron of the Knights of Columbus, a religious organization?

In light of the US Supreme Court decision in Shurtleff v. City of Boston, is the public interest continuing to be served by having a monument in the Delta with the name and emblem of a specific religious organization?

With the passage of time, is the public interest continuing to be served by honoring the leadership and service of Christopher Columbus, considering the re-evaluation of his role in the New World?

With the passage of time, is the public interest continuing to be served by honoring Christopher Columbus, now that the Vatican formally repudiated the "Doctrine of Discovery," which Columbus used to justify his exploitation of Indigenous people?

Is the public interest continuing to be served by honoring Christopher Columbus, even though he has no association with Watertown, and who never set foot in North America?

Did the 1939 naming of the Columbus Delta demonstrate a broad level of community backing?

Does the petition to re-name the Columbus Delta demonstrate a broad level of community backing?

1. read a lists of emails received since the Public Hearing
2. note attached petition with 154 names of certified voters
3. take a poll of Watertown residents in attendees

Should the City Council consider just the un-naming of the Delta at this time?

Is the term the Columbus Delta in common usage by residents in Watertown?

As the name Columbus Delta does not appear on any street maps, or any street addresses, will removing the name cause any confusion or costs to residents, businesses, or the general public?

Any other questions?

Attachment D

List of emails received by the Public Works Committee since the June 21. 2022 Public Hearing thru April 19, 2023

Date	Name	Address (Watertown unless noted)	Support	Against
22-06-27	Jacqui Gross	Belmont St	X	
22-06-28	Jennifer Wolfrum	Clyde Rd	X	
22-07-03	Nathaniel Harrison	Franklin St	X	
22-07-23	Diana Barlow	Spring St	X	
22-07-23	Robert Varnum	Boylston St	X	
22-07-23	Sarah Bansen & Dan Grossman	Hawthorne St	X	
22-07-24	Elizabeth Del Porto	Hawthorne St	X	
22-07-24	Susan Moore	Clyde Rd	X	
22-07-25	Jeri Bayer	Hillside Rd	X	
22-07-25	Sylvia Missal	Robbins Rd	X	
22-07-26	Michael Schade	Barnard Ave	X	
22-07-29	Carol Delaney	**Cambridge MA**		X
22-08-02	Sarah Zoen	Partridge St	X	
22-09-25	Aravinda Ananda	Common St	X	
23-04-10	Mishy Lesser	Oliver St	X	
23-04-11	Sarah Demb	Mt Auburn St	X	
23-04-12	Sarah Bansen	Hawthorne St	X	
23-04-13	Christopher Ives	Oliver St	X	
23-04-13	Nathaniel Harrison	Franklin St	X	
23-04-14	Jacqui Gross	Belmont St	X	
23-04-14	Sylvia Missal	Robbins Rd	X	
23-04-15	Bevin Croft	Wilmot St	X	
23-04-16	Inbal Alon	Puritan Rd	X	
23-04-16	Janet Buck	Boylston St	X	
23-04-16	Michael Schade	Barnard Ave	X	
23-04-16	Patti Cassidy	Chester St		X
23-04-16	Sarah Hamburg	Bates Rd	X	
23-04-17	Archy LaSalle	Hillcrest Cir	X	
23-04-17	Bonnie Waltch	Robbins Rd	X	
23-04-17	Eileen Ryan	Pearl St	X	
23-04-17	Eric Kemp-Benedict	Whitney St	X	
23-04-17	Jennifer Wolfrum	Clyde Rd	X	
23-04-17	Sharon Bauer	Pearl St	X	
23-04-17	Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin	Russell Ave	X	
23-04-17	Tyler Kemp-Benedict	Whitney St	X	
23-04-18	Alan Dechter	**Newton MA**		X
23-04-18	Alberto Russo	**NO ADDRESS PROVIDED**		X
23-04-18	Amleto Martocchia	Franklin St		X
23-04-18	Ann Marie Pettiglio	Holly St		X
23-04-18	Anthony Socci	**NO ADDRESS PROVIDED**		X
23-04-18	Aravinda Ananda	Common St	X	
23-04-18	Barbara and Jeremy Ruskin	Spring St	X	
23-04-18	Bob Hamel	**Bristol RI**		X
23-04-18	Carmelina DAlleva	**Burlington MA**		X
23-04-18	Chuck Dickinson	Church Ln	X	

List of emails received by the Public Works Committee since the June 21. 2022 Public Hearing thru April 19, 2023

Date	Name	Address (Watertown unless noted)	Support	Against
23-04-18	David Meshoulam	Oliver St	X	
23-04-18	Dennis Duff	Spruce St	X	
23-04-18	Elaine Mello	Main St		X
23-04-18	Elizabeth Del Porto	Hawthorne St	X	
23-04-18	Elizabeth Oppenheim	Watertown St	X	
23-04-18	Joan Gumbleton	Falmouth Rd		X
23-04-18	Joan Martin	Main St	X	
23-04-18	John Casamassima	**NO ADDRESS PROVIDED**		X
23-04-18	John Del Ponte	**Tewksbury MA**		X
23-04-18	Joseph Rizza	**Newton MA**		X
23-04-18	Joseph Rotella	Common St	X	
23-04-18	Lisa Capoccia	Carroll St	X	
23-04-18	Marissa Babin	**Malden MA**		X
23-04-18	Mark Pettiglio	Holly St		X
23-04-18	Meghan O'Connell	Boylston St		X
23-04-18	Richard O'Connor	Channing Rd		X
23-04-18	Robert Varnum	Boylston St	X	
23-04-18	Vana Pistoftzian	Forest St	X	
23-04-18	Will Twombly	Marion Rd	X	
23-04-19	Lucille Del Ponte	**Tewksbury MA**		X

Follow up on 6/21 Petition Hearing

Jacqui Gross <jslgross@gmail.com>

Mon 6/27/2022 9:26 PM

To: **City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>**

Dear City Councilors,

I am most appreciative that you held this hearing to consider the request to rename the Columbus Delta. I was able to attend, though I did not give testimony. I am very much in favor of the reasons for changing the name. I understood that some of the speakers were expressing their sadness around the proposed elimination of the current name, however in listening to their reasons, it seems that their arguments did not address the injustices that necessitates the name change. There are many other more appropriate ways to acknowledge and honor their Italian connection. All of us whose roots are from other countries are proud of our heritage. I appreciate the various squares and sites in Watertown that honor heroes and those who have done deeds that have made the city better. In the case of Columbus, however, the change is necessary because Columbus never came to Watertown, he promoted cruelty to Indigenous People here, and we have not , as a nation, faced our history, nor dealt with the erasure of their cultural contributions to our community. I was very surprised at the negative, angry reactions to this request. I was very disappointed to hear the anger behind many of the speakers who oppose this petition. I was dismayed by the personal attacks and unkind categorization of the supporters of the petition. I support a respectful dialog, thoughtful listening, and careful, equal attention to the feelings and thoughts of all participants.
Thank you for your attention.

Jacqui Gross
210 Belmont St. #10
Watertown, MA

Thank you for the hearing on our petition

Jennifer Wolfrum <jenniferwolfrum13@gmail.com>

Tue 6/28/2022 8:32 PM

To: **City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>;**Pigsgusset Initiative Mailing List <pigsgusset-initiative-mailing-list@googlegroups.com>

Dear Council Members,
The members of the Pigsgusset Initiative, a working group of Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment, would like to thank all of you for holding the hearing (6/21/22) to consider the petition that we submitted requesting that the name of the Columbus Delta be reconsidered. We greatly appreciate your vote to move our request forward to the Public Works Committee for review and recommendations, and we look forward to that discussion.

It was recently brought to our attention that you did not see the signatures of the nearly 180 Watertown residents who signed the petition, so, for your information, we are attaching copies of the signed pages of the petition. (click HERE for copies of the petition).

We want to reiterate that we see our request as an issue of fairness and inclusion. As last Tuesday's hearing illustrated, people hold many strong feelings about Christopher Columbus, both positive and negative. We cannot resolve the controversies surrounding him and the history that occurred over 400 years ago, but we can focus on what the Delta means to the many diverse groups who hold ceremonies and vigils in that space in the 21st century. Our goal is to find a new name with which a broader swath of our community can identify. In this move toward greater inclusion, we also want to be sure to recognize and include the Indigenous people who lived on these lands for thousands of years before colonial settlers arrived.

Our hope is that a new name, inclusive of the wide range of Watertown residents, can be recommended to the full Council as an action item from the Public Works Committee. Please let us know if you need any further information from us at this point and how we can best support you in this process.

Sincerely,

Members of the Pigsgusset Initiative:

Mishy Lesser, 42 Oliver Street, Watertown
Christopher Ives, 42 Oliver Street, Watertown
Isabel Tappan-deFrees , 52 Columbus Ave, Waltham, MA
Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin, 96 Russell Avenue, Watertown
Holly Cachimuel, 301 Lexington Street, Watertown
Jacqui Gross, 210 Belmont Street, #10, Watertown
Sarah Hebert-Johnson, 1 Storey Place, Jamaica Plain, MA
Joseph Rotella, 157 Common Street, Watertown
Aravinda Ananda, 157 Common Street, Watertown
Jennifer Wolfrum, 23 Clyde Rd, Watertown
Eileen Ryan, 48 Pearl Street, Watertown
Arun Sannuti, 6 Amherst Rd., Watertown

Jennifer Wolfrum
she, her, hers
Living and working on the unceded land of the Pequosette Band of the Massachusett Tribe

"Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in, what I call, "good trouble, necessary trouble". John Lewis

Re-naming the Delta

harrysson@aol.com <harrysson@aol.com>

Sun 7/3/2022 8:26 AM

To: Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

July 3 2022

Dear Councillors Feltner, Piccirilli and Palomba,

I'm writing to ask that as members of the public works committee you give a favorable reading to a citizens' petition calling for the plot of land in the center of our city, now known as the Columbus Delta, to be re-named. The petition was referred to your attention following a public hearing before the full Council on June 21.

The land in question was so named 82 years ago at a time when Christopher Columbus was widely hailed as having "discovered" the American continent. He was credited with extraordinary courage, vision and navigational skills, and his voyages across the Atlantic were seen as having launched an era of exploration, global trade and overall scientific advancement.

But in the intervening decades public awareness and appreciation of Columbus's conduct in the Americas has expanded and deepened and he has been accused of overseeing the persecution and enslavement of the indigenous people who came under his subjugation.

Removing his name from the Delta would simply acknowledge our evolving understanding of Columbus as well as a realization that so controversial and problematic an individual should no longer have his name associated with what is the geographical and spiritual heart of our city.

The name change would also constitute a modest step toward recognizing and honoring the story of those who were here first, the Pequossette band of the Massachusett tribe -- particularly if the new designation evoked Watertown's indigenous heritage. The original inhabitants called this place "the meadows at the widening of the river." It's intriguing to think that the Delta might be the "meadows" they had in mind.

The petition, as I read it, does not call for the destruction of the stone marker on the Delta. The stone could simply be relocated, making way for a new monument and a new understanding of who we are and what we owe.

I thank you very much for your attention and consideration.

Nathaniel Harrison
106 A Franklin Street
Watertown
617-852-2919

Watertown Delta Petition for renaming

diana barlow <dianab12@hotmail.com>

Sat 7/23/2022 9:22 PM

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

Dear Council Member Piccirilli:

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. While I realize that many people feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I personally feel that times have changed. Is the public interest truly being served by keeping a name that doesn't really reflect anything about Watertown and its unique people and community?

Watertown Council Resolution #85 states "The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." Part A further states "the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

Times have changed since the current name of the Delta was proposed by the Italian-American community of Watertown. While in its day, it was a big step for Italian-Americans to be seen as full citizens and contributors to this country, today, they no longer face that same kind of prejudice. Wouldn't it be better to have the Delta named in a way that recognized not only the current people, but also the long history of communities and peoples who have resided here and called this land home?

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Respectfully,

Diana Barlow
62 Spring St.
Watertown, MA 02472

Watertown Sq Delta name change

Rvarnum1964 <rvarnum1964@gmail.com>

Sat 7/23/2022 7:21 PM

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

Dear Vince,

I hope this letter finds you and the family doing well. I have included the letter below which is requesting the change of the naming of the Delta. I encourage the Councilors to work towards this effort.

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. While I realize that many people feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I personally feel that times have changed. Is the public interest truly being served by keeping a name that doesn't really reflect anything about Watertown and its unique people and community?

Watertown Council Resolution #85 states "The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." Part A further states "the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

Times have changed since the current name of the Delta was proposed by the Italian-American community of Watertown. While in its day, it was a big step for Italian-Americans to be seen as full citizens and contributors to this country, today, they no longer face that same kind of prejudice. Wouldn't it be better to have the Delta named in a way that recognized not only the current people, but also the long history of communities and peoples who have resided here and called this land home?

Thank you,

Robert R Varnum
121 Boylston Street
Watertown, Ma 02472
617-823-3687

Robert Varnum
617-823-3687

Watertown Delta name change

Sarah Bansen <sarah.bansen@gmail.com>

Sat 7/23/2022 4:38 PM

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

Dear Vinnie,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. While I realize that many people feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I personally feel that times have changed. Is the public interest truly being served by keeping a name that doesn't really reflect anything about Watertown and its unique people and community?

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Times have changed since the current name of the Delta was proposed by the Italian-American community of Watertown. While in its day, it was a big step for Italian-Americans to be seen as full citizens and contributors to this country, today, they no longer face that same kind of prejudice. Wouldn't it be better to have the Delta named in a way that recognized not only the current people, but also the long history of communities and peoples who have resided here and called this land home?

Thank you,

Sarah Bansen and Dan Grossman
25 Hawthorne St

Please read

Elizabeth DelPorto <edelporto@me.com>

Sun 7/24/2022 9:12 PM

To: Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Council Members Palomba, Piccirilli, and Feltner

I am writing to you as an Italian-American to express my **strongest support in changing the name** of the Delta in Watertown Square. It has always been deeply embarrassing to me that so many places in the United States are named for Christopher Columbus. I physically cringe every time I pass our Delta or indeed any other Columbus-honoring landmark. When thinking about the rich history of the country of my ancestors, that we continue to honor a perpetrator of genocide is shameful, and shames all Italian-Americans. Would you countenance a Benito Mussolini Delta? I think not, and his crimes against humanity pale in comparison to Columbus's crimes.

While I realize that many people feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I personally feel that times have changed. Is the public interest truly being served by keeping a name that doesn't really reflect anything about Watertown and its unique people and community?

Watertown Council Resolution #85 states "The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." Part A further states "the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

Times have changed since the current name of the Delta was proposed by the Italian-American community of Watertown. While in its day, it was a big step for Italian-Americans to be seen as full citizens and contributors to this country, today, we no longer face that same kind of prejudice. Wouldn't it be better to have the Delta named in a way that recognized not only the current people, but also the long history of communities and peoples who have resided here and called this land home? I say a resounding yes!

Thank you,

Elizabeth Ross Del Porto

Please rename Columbus Delta

Susan Moore <susanmoore1@gmail.com>

Sun 7/24/2022 6:32 PM

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

Dear Council Member Piccirilli,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. While I realize that many people feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I personally feel that times have changed. Is the public interest truly being served by keeping a name that doesn't really reflect anything about Watertown and its unique people and community?

Watertown Council Resolution #85 states "The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." Part A further states "the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

Times have changed since the current name of the Delta was proposed by the Italian-American community of Watertown. While in its day, it was a big step for Italian-Americans to be seen as full citizens and contributors to this country, today, they no longer face that same kind of prejudice. Wouldn't it be better to have the Delta named in a way that recognized not only the current people, but also the long history of communities and peoples who have resided here and called this land home?

Thank you,

Susan Moore
7 Clyde Road
Watertown

Renaming the Delta

Jeri BAYER <jwbayer@comcast.net>

Mon 7/25/2022 9:25 AM

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

Dear Council Member Piccirilli,
I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. I feel very strongly about this in light of the demythologizing of Columbus and the affront that public property named for Columbus is to all who are grief stricken by what he did as an individual to the indigenous people he encountered in America as well as by the centuries-long genocide that he initiated.. I understand that many in the Italian American community value the Columbus name because it has been upheld as symbolic of Italian contributions to American culture. And while Italian contributions have been significant, Columbus is far from being an appropriate or accurate symbol of them.

Given that you are a member of the sub-committee assigned to the renaming question, I ask that you recommend that the name Columbus be removed. Part A of Watertown Council Resolution #85 states the Town/City Council understands that naming a place "may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change." I think that perceptions and values have, indeed, changed. The history of our city will be much better reflected by the name of a person, people, or value far different than Columbus.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.
Jeri Bayer
120 Hillside Rd., #2
Watertown

Renaming of Columbus Delta

Sylvia Missal <smissal66@gmail.com>

Mon 7/25/2022 6:54 PM

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

Dear Vince,
I am writing to you in support of the initiative to change the name of the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square to a name that is both more inclusive, and more reflective of our local history. I have always thought there were better ways to honor the contributions of Italian-Americans than to name places for Christopher Columbus who sailed to the New World not to establish a settlement, but to plunder.

Town Council has "sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." I ask that you act to make a change. I'm sure with deliberation and input from the community, the Council can find a name that reflects who we are as a community and respects all who have lived here over time.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sylvia Missal
108 Robbins Rd

617 926-0061

Rename the Watertown Sq. Delta

Michael Schade <mikeschade@icloud.com>

Tue 7/26/2022 1:09 PM

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

Dear Vinnie,

It's time to change the name of the Watertown Square Delta.

Instead of continuing to honor Christopher Columbus who condoned atrocities in the name of Jesus Christ against the indigenous peoples he "found" in the Western Hemisphere, I strongly advocate renaming the Delta in such a way that it recognizes not only the current inhabitants, but also the long history of communities and peoples who have resided here and called this land home.

Sincerely yours,

Mike

Michael Schade
71 Barnard Ave.
Watertown, MA 02472

Re: Columbus statue

Carol L Delaney <cdelaney@stanford.edu>

Fri 7/29/2022 12:45 PM

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

So what has happened with the Columbus statue? I hope you have tried to educate the people about the man.. He was a good guy. friends with the natives, learned their language etc... It was the horrid people sent over later who did the horrid deeds. carol Recommend my book, Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem, based on years of research about the man. thank you. carol delaney

---

From: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>
Sent: Sunday, June 19, 2022 6:22 AM
To: Carol L Delaney <cdelaney@stanford.edu>
Subject: Re: Columbus statue

Ms. Delaney:

Thank you for writing with your concerns about the petition. I will give this careful consideration.

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.
City Council Vice President/District C Councilor

From: Carol L Delaney <cdelaney@stanford.edu>
Sent: Sunday, June 19, 2022 7:26 AM
To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>
Subject: Columbus statue

Dear Mayor: I have learned that your city is planning to remove a statue of Columbus. Please do not. He is not at all the man many people seem to think he was. I have done years of research for my acclaimed book, Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem. Suggest that people read that before removing the statue. He was friends with the natives, never enslaved anyone - that was done by horrid men later sent over by Queen Isabella. Columbus learned the native language and adopted the son of one chief as his godson who then travelled with him on other voyages. He did take 6 natives back with him on the first voyage, more wanted to go. These were presented at court - two decided to remain at court, the others returned with Columbus on the next voyage. Hope this will help to keep the statue. All best, Carol Delaney

Delta in Watertown Square

Sarah Z <sarahzoen@gmail.com>

Tue 8/2/2022 9:33 AM

To: Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. While I realize that many people feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I personally feel that times have changed. Is the public interest truly being served by keeping a name that doesn't really reflect anything about Watertown and its unique people and community?

Watertown Council Resolution #85 states "The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." Part A further states "the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

Times have changed since the current name of the Delta was proposed by the Italian-American community of Watertown. While in its day, it was a big step for Italian-Americans to be seen as full citizens and contributors to this country, today, they no longer face that same kind of prejudice. Wouldn't it be better to have the Delta named in a way that recognized not only the current people, but also the long history of communities and peoples who have resided here and called this land home?

Thank you,
Sarah Zoen

46 Partridge St.
Watertown

In support of renaming the Columbus Delta

Aravinda Ananda <aravinda.ananda@gmail.com>

Sun 9/25/2022 4:08 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councilors Piccirilli, Palomba, and Feltner,

While it is my understanding that the committee meeting to review renaming the Columbus Delta has not yet been scheduled (unless there is a recent development I hadn't yet heard of), I write to you now in support of that endeavor.

Thank you for taking time to review the possibility of renaming the Columbus Delta to be something more inclusive and respectful towards the first peoples of this land that today many of us call home. I write to you now to express some of the reasons why I think it is so important that you move forward with renaming the Delta.

Across the country, communities including municipalities are making the move from honoring Columbus through a holiday to honoring the indigenous peoples of these lands. While your task is not about recognizing Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples day, I bring it up because of the responsibility many communities are taking to stop perpetuating the harm of honoring and celebrating someone who was so influential in the genocide of first peoples of these lands.

People indigenous to these lands have faced wave after wave of colonization, dispossession, and cultural genocide. To continue to honor Columbus through naming public spaces after him contributes to ongoing invalidation and erasure of indigenous peoples. Perhaps some of you come from heritages where you can understand how deeply painful it would be for someone who contributed to genocide of your ancestors to be celebrated as a hero. Can you imagine yourself as an indigenous person walking by the Columbus Delta and seeing the monument to Columbus that says Columbus gave the world its grandest lesson? While there is no doubt that Columbus' expeditions were courageous, the impact he unleashed on the people of this continent is horrific. In this day and age, it really is time to review and amend honors that are given to people who have contributed to so much harm.

While I understand that many of the monuments, the federal holiday and other efforts to celebrate Christopher Columbus came out of a historical period when Italian immigrants themselves were facing painful and dangerous discrimination upon arriving in the United States, the context is different now. Even if it were not, there are other ways to honor and celebrate Italian American contributions to this society in ways that are not so harmful to other groups. While I am not myself Italian American, I am married to an Italian American and our child is of part Italian American ancestry. I want our child to be proud of their heritage, and understand the adversity that has been faced, and honoring Columbus does nothing to accomplish that for me.

While it may seem trivial to some, place names, monuments, and other honorifics of historical figures who unleashed great harm on various populations are an ongoing source of terror for people impacted by that historical and ongoing harm. Exploring how to rename the Columbus Delta, a central place in our community, to something that does not contribute to ongoing harm in such a painful way is important work that can help make our community a more welcoming and inclusive space. Thank you for considering and acting on this matter with the gravity it deserves. I know you have many tasks as Councilors and I thank you for your service to our community.

Sincerely,
Aravinda Ananda
157 Common Street
Watertown, MA 02472

4/18 Public Works Committee Meeting on the Delta

Mishy Lesser <mishy@upstanderproject.org>

Mon 4/10/2023 6:05 PM

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

April 11, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. We first wrote to the City Council about this in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

In your wisdom, you passed Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019, which states “The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.” Part A further states “the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.”

Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country’s history. Thankfully, it is in the past. Wouldn’t it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn’t the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mishy Lesser

Gratefully,

Mishy Lesser, Ed. D.
Upstander Project Learning Director
Upstander Academy Co-Director
Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies Affiliate
www.upstanderproject.org
Upstander Project is located in the
Territory of the Massachusett People
Whose land are you on?
Join Our Community

(she/her/hers)

support for re-naming the Delta in Watertown Square

Sarah Demb <sarah.demb@gmail.com>

Tue 4/11/2023 3:35 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

To: Vincent Piccirilli, Public Works Committee Chair
Lisa Feltner, Public Works Committee Vice Chair
Tony Palomba: apalomba@watertown-ma.gov , Public Works Committee Secretary

April 13, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli and esteemed members,

I am writing to you as an individual member of the Pigsgusset Initiative and as one of your constituents, in support of changing the name of the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square. The Initiative first wrote to the City Council about this proposal in August 2020.

The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather on the way to enjoy our parks and library; and also to make our voices heard about a variety of issues; so it is a space for all of us. Increasingly, many of us are aware not only of our settler roots and status, but of the great human cost of that European (and others) settlement in areas that collectively belonged to and inhabited by the indigenous peoples from whom our state takes its name (the Massachusett, and neighboring Wampanoag and Nipmuc peoples).

Despite its mythos of peaceful land transfer, Watertown is one of the many (and earliest) "mini-ground zeros" of first contact between European settlers and the local indigenous peoples of time immemorial (over 10,000 years according to Archaeological excavations). Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests and imperialist goals, the Vatican has now repudiated the *Doctrine of Discovery*, used by Cristoforo Colombo (Columbus) and his Spanish lieges to justify the slaughter of the Taino people in the Caribbean, and which was subsequently echoed throughout the Americas in the spread of colonization by France and Great Britain.

Please consider to what extent the public interest continues to be served by keeping a name that supports this bloody history and fails to respect our remaining indigenous neighbors or reflect our uniquely diverse community? The Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019 states “The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.” Part A further states “the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.”

Times have changed. Happily, Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States, and moreover, it is no longer a compliment to them to revere or honor Columbus. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country's history, as is the near genocide of indigenous peoples across the United States which began on our East Coast so long ago. Their remaining descendants (including the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Mashpee Wampanoag) are the people who continue to experience the persecution and indignity of colonization and assimilation policies.

The center of our City, now so welcoming to all residents and the diversity of groups and individuals who continue to arrive as new citizens, refugees, economic migrants, and the temporary residents who come to attend nearby universities should better reflect its true heritage and continuing legacy. The Delta should be renamed (perhaps to Pigsgusset to honor the land's long pre-settler history and those who made it possible for us to live here, and to acknowledge their sacrifice).

Finally, shouldn't the monument, which was erected in 1940 and belongs to a private religious organization open only to men (the Watertown Knights of Columbus, council #155, with support from the Watertown Sons and Daughters of Italy), be returned to it? It sits uneasily in our public, secular, and egalitarian square.

Thank you for considering renaming the Columbus Delta.

Best, Sarah Demb

Mount Auburn St
Watertown, MA

Delta

Sarah Bansen <sarah.bansen@gmail.com>

Wed 4/12/2023 7:15 AM

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

April 13, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. We first wrote to the City Council about this in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

In your wisdom, you passed Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019, which states “The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.” Part A further states “the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.”

Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country’s history. Thankfully, it is in the past. Wouldn’t it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn’t the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Bansen
25 Hawthorne St
Watertown MA 02472

renaming the Delta

Ives, Christopher <cives@stonehill.edu>

Thu 4/13/2023 2:57 PM

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

Dear Vinnie,

Thank you for all of your ongoing service as a member of the City Council here in Watertown. Today I am writing to urge you, the Chair of the Committee on Public Works, to support changing the name of the Delta.

I realize that Italian-Americans faced great prejudice and violence in the early 20th century, and I understand how the naming of the Delta back in 1940 helped them to affirm their identity and legitimate place in our society.

Now, seventy years later, I think it is fair to others here to find a new name for the Delta that is inclusive of the wonderful diversity of our city, especially given the importance of the Delta for *all* residents of Watertown as a place to relax, grieve together, and share views.

To argue against changing the name is to argue that one sub-group of our community, who have had a chance to affirm their identity for over seventy years there on the Delta, is entitled to in effect maintain in perpetuity exclusive naming rights to the central public space in our community. That is clearly not fair.

Out of fairness to all residents of Watertown, we need a new, inclusive name, whether simply “the Delta,” or “the Plaza,” or something similar.

I hope on Tuesday night you will vote to send a recommendation to the full City Council that the Delta be renamed.

Gratefully,

Chris Ives

42 Oliver Street
Watertown, MA 02472
617-721-0931

Re-naming the Delta

harrysson@aol.com <harrysson@aol.com>

Thu 4/13/2023 9:00 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councillors Piccirilli, Feltner and Palomba,

Ahead of the public works committee meeting this Tuesday April 18 I would like to briefly reiterate my support for a decision in principle to re-name the Columbus Delta. I wrote you on this matter in July and want to thank you for your responses. There is no need to acknowledge this communication, however.

As I mentioned, I see the Delta as the geographical and spiritual heart of the city. For that reason, I believe the Delta should bear a name that aligns with the community's historical experience.

I frankly don't see the connection between Watertown and Christopher Columbus.

My personal preference would be for the Delta to be given a name that reflects and celebrates the region's Indigenous history.

I realize that choosing a replacement name is not before the committee at the moment. But I believe that a vote in principle to re-name the property could be seen as a reaffirmation of who we are, who we have been and what we now owe.

Thanks very much for your attention and good work.

Nathaniel Harrison
106 A Franklin Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
617-852-2919

Support for changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square

Jacqui Gross <jslgross@gmail.com>

Fri 4/14/2023 7:03 AM

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

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Vinnie Piccirilli,
It is my hope in writing this letter that you will vote in favor of the petition originally submitted to the Town Clerk for verification in May, 2021, then re-submitted in December, 2021 to request the name change for the Columbus Delta. I attended the hearing to discuss this at the City Council Meeting on June 21,2022. I plan to attend the Public Works hearing On April 18, 2023.

This is an important time for Watertown Leaders to take a stand and be on the correct side of History in terms of Issues of Diversity, acknowledgement of Indigenous People, their erasure and factual portrayal of Watertown's history. Columbus never set foot on American soil. This land was home to Indigenous People, way before the colonists arrived, took over and pushed out the original people. People from all over the world have settled here in Watertown and continue to make this their homes. It is not disrespectful to those of Italian heritage to give a new name to the common area of the Delta, one that would be more inclusive of our community, one that might even acknowledge the Indigenous People and represent the diverse community we are now. If we are truly a melting pot, then honor all of us who live here now and will live here in the future. To keep the current name, promotes a false narrative and highlights the erasure of what actually happened on this land! Please look at the issue with an open heart and mind . We cannot change injustices and inhumanity of the past. However, it is important to acknowledge our history, as well as to honor all people living in Watertown currently!
Thank you for your attention to this issue.
Jacqui Gross
210 Belmont St #10

April 14, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I appreciate the Council's willingness to give serious consideration to the request from many Watertown residents to change the name of the Columbus Delta. I am writing in support of such a change. I would hope to see a name for this town center that better reflects the vibrant and diverse Watertown of the 21st century, while also paying homage to the people and cultures that lived on this land for centuries before the arrival of Europeans.

In 2019, the Council passed Resolution #85 which states "The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." Part A further states "the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change," This resolution lays out a process for responsible name change.

Changing the name from Columbus Delta in no way dismisses or disrespects Italian-Americans. Today, Italian-Americans are a robust part of our marvelous mix of hyphenated Americans. They are represented across all aspects of our culture— in the arts, law, politics, medicine, the sciences—and are honored in many ways. From a modern perspective, they are not well-represented by a figure who never in fact set foot in what is today the United States, and who exploited the resources and abused the indigenous people in the new world, as was typical of European colonialism of that time.

As I understand it, the Columbus monument belongs to a private religious organization. It should be returned to them. It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sylvia Missal
108 Robbins Rd.
Watertown

Smissal66@gmail.com
617 784-6762

changing the name of the Delta

Bevin Croft <bevincroft@gmail.com>

Sat 4/15/2023 11:48 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Hello Vinnie, Lisa, Tony,

I'm glad the Public Works subcommittee is considering a name change for the Delta in Watertown Square.

As some of you know, I work with people from tribal communities in my day job, and through that work I've witnessed the damaging impact of historical and continued disenfranchisement and discrimination against Native people in this country. Research has documented a direct line between historical trauma and current health outcomes, which are shockingly poor for American Indian populations. One of many datapoints I can share: The suicide rate for Native youth is 2.5 times higher than the national average.

How we think about history and honor historical figures matters, and indigenous people are paying attention. If we change the name of the Delta, we are joining other jurisdictions doing the same in sending a message to these communities that they matter, that we acknowledge our country's shameful history of genocide and oppression, and that we are committed to changing the course of history.

I sincerely hope you support this change.

Bevin

Name change

Inbal Alon <inbal.alon@gmail.com>

Sun 4/16/2023 6:28 PM

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

April 13, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. We first wrote to the City Council about this in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the "Doctrine of Discovery," which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

In your wisdom, you passed Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019, which states "The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown." Part A further states "the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country's history. Thankfully, it is in the past. Wouldn't it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn't the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,
Inbal Alon

The Delta

Janet Buck <janetbuck211@gmail.com>

Sun 4/16/2023 12:20 PM

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

April 16, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. This issue was first raised in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

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Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country’s history. Thankfully, it is in the past. Wouldn’t it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn’t the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

Janet Buck

Rename Delta in Watertown Square

Michael Schade <mikeschade@icloud.com>

Sun 4/16/2023 8:41 AM

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

Dear Vinnie,

I urge you to rename the Delta in Watertown Square to honor the indigenous people who originally lived along the river in the place we now call Watertown. I think it is very important that we, along with our school children and future generations, recognize the history of who lived on the land in this place and honor it in city naming conventions.

Thank you.

Mike Schade

Changing the name of Columbus Square

patti cassidy <tapit12002@yahoo.com>

Sun 4/16/2023 12:03 PM

To: Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Watertown Councilors-

I learned today that the City Council's Committee on Public Works will be considering a proposal to change the name of The Columbus Delta this week.

I would like to urge you to keep the area's name the same.

Naming things after Columbus was initially done to acknowledge the man in the 19th and 20th centuries- but now it is so much more. It has become a nod to the Italian influence in our towns and neighborhoods. There is a whole culture that uses the name of Columbus as a touchstone and I feel that they should be respected.

As **Antonio Mastantuono, president of the Watertown Sons & Daughters of Italy said in 2020. "Instead of tearing down history we must celebrate it. We must educate each other, Italian and non-Italian alike. Italians have brought so much to America from the arts, science, culture, food, music and more. None of this culture would be possible if it wasn't for Christopher Columbus."**

I think that erasing historical references is counterproductive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Patti Cassidy
8 Chester St.

Proposal to rename the Watertown Square Delta

Sarah Hamburg <srhf92@hampshire.edu>

Sun 4/16/2023 3:07 PM

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

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing in support of the proposal to change the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. While I know that many have already written in support of the name change, I hope that I can add my own perspective as a ten-year resident of Watertown, and also as the granddaughter and niece of Holocaust survivors. At first glance, it might seem that the latter piece of information does not have a bearing on the name of a piece of land in Watertown Square. But from my family's own history, I know both what it means to carry the intergenerational legacy of genocide, and what it means to confront active genocide denial — including denial of the history of perpetrators of genocide — in this present moment.

My family lived in Hungary prior to being deported to concentration camps. Today, my aunt and uncle — having survived both the Holocaust and the communist rule that followed — have to confront a Hungarian government that has banned accurate Holocaust education in schools, and installed public monuments named after Hungarian collaborators in the Holocaust. While it might seem far away from here, Orban's government has become a model for many in the US, who also wish to censor accurate education about US genocide against Indigenous peoples on this continent, and about slavery.

Christopher Columbus actively participated in, and led, genocide against Indigenous peoples. His actions were so brutal and violent that even his European contemporaries were horrified. Today, the question of whether we should have a public square named for him goes beyond questions of inclusion, or offense. This is a community largely made up of immigrant families who fled genocide — whether that was in Armenia, or elsewhere. And it's also a community that includes descendants of people who survived genocide right here on this land. Now, in this pivotal moment, will we come together as a community that is honest about our shared history, or will we be a fractured community that chooses to participate in denial (despite our own experiences) and continues to celebrate a perpetrator of genocide?

I believe it is long past time to change the name.

With deep gratitude for your time and attention,
Sarah Hamburg

Delta Name Change Request

Archy LaSalle <archylasalle@gmail.com>

Mon 4/17/2023 8:19 PM

To: Palomba, Anthony <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;lfeltner@watertownn-ma.gov <lfeltner@watertownn-ma.gov>

Ciao Councilor Piccirilli, Palomba and Feltner,
My name is Archy LaSalle I'm an Artist, Educator and Vice Chairperson of the Public Art And Culture Committee here in Watertown, MA aka Pigugesset to many citizens, myself included, for 18 years. I have also been conducting business here for 49 years.
Due to a family illness I will not be in attendance at tomorrow night's Public Safety Committee meeting. I am writing in support of changing the name of what is known as the "Columbus Delta" to a name that reflects and honors the indigenous people of this area and their culture such as "The People's Delta". I feel that name is also inclusive and reflects very well on our Community.

How can we educate our children properly and correctly without addressing and rectifying our past history? As we move forward, especially our elected officials and community leaders, we must be invested in and aware of our neighbors and the diverse cultures that we all come from by being more inclusive in governing when passing laws and an ordinance; they must reflect that vision when possible.
JOY for all,
Archy
--
https://www.archylasalle.com/
617.835.8802

Please consider changing name of Columbus Delta

Bonnie Waltch <bwaltch@comcast.net>

Mon 4/17/2023 10:11 AM

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

April 17, 2023

Dear Vinnie,

I'm writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. We first wrote to the City Council about this in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

In your wisdom, you passed Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019, which states “The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.” Part A further states “the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.”

Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country’s history. Thankfully, it is in the past. Wouldn’t it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn’t the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bonnie Waltch
100 Robbins Rd.
Watertown, MA 02472

Hearing to Rename the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square

Eileen Ryan <eileenelizabethryan@gmail.com>

Mon 4/17/2023 10:33 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Vinnie, Tony, and Lisa,

Words matter, history matters, and the truth matters. For these three reasons and the fact that Watertown Square is our common land, I support renaming the "Columbus Delta." Christopher Columbus never set foot in North America, he was not officially Italian, and he was a known perpetrator of brutality and genocide. The history of the United States is full of violence, discrimination and domination. Naming anything after Columbus only honors that violent history. It's time to stop honoring Columbus. As an Irish-American, I grew up learning about N.I.N.A. an acronym for No Irish Need Apply that was frequently seen in job advertisements in the 19th and early 20th Centuries. I understand why Italian-Americans looked for someone to honor but unfortunately there was little general knowledge at the time of the brutal acts committed by Christopher Columbus. Now is the time to acknowledge the true history that began with Columbus and led to the brutal exploitation and genocide of Indigenous peoples and their lands throughout the Americas. Let's find a better name for our shared common land.

Thank you,

Eileen Ryan
48 Pearl Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Letter in support of changing the name of the Delta [from personal email]

ekempbenedict@gmail.com <ekempbenedict@gmail.com>

Mon 4/17/2023 4:52 PM

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

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square from Columbus Delta. I ask this while fully acknowledging the extreme prejudice and violence that Italian-Americans have faced in the past. I do not wish for that to be buried or minimized. However, among the many cultural riches that Italian-Americans have brought to our country, Columbus does not figure. He never stepped foot in the territory of the United States, much less in Watertown.

In sharp contrast, the descendants of people who have lived in this area for thousands of years are still here, and to me, Columbus has become a symbol of the most brutal treatment of the first peoples. I am not alone in this. Indigenous Peoples Day is now a recognized federal holiday and is celebrated in at least 25 Massachusetts cities and towns.

I will note that Part A of the 2019 Watertown Council Resolution #85 reads, “the Town Council understands that [naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way] may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.” I would argue that in my generation perceptions and values regarding Columbus began to change, and those changes accelerated in the generations that follow mine. I ask that the city where I live will recognize that change and choose a name for the Delta that better reflects what we value today.

Thank you,
Eric Kemp-Benedict
44 Whitney Street

Letter re Petition

Jennifer Wolfrum <jenniferwolfrum13@gmail.com>

Mon 4/17/2023 8:41 AM

To: Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

April 17, 2023

Dear Councilors Feltner, Palomba and Piccirilli,

I am writing in support of the petition requesting that the name of the Columbus Delta be changed. Since I have written other letters in support and have testified before the full City Council, I think that you are aware of my perspective. For this letter, I would like to ask each of you to consider the following:

1. We, members of the Pigsgusset Initiative, a working group of Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment, have submitted **over 170** signatures of Watertown residents who are also requesting this change. And, we had to resubmit a second round of signatures after we were told that online signatures were not acceptable. (You might remember that we started this petition in 2020 during the early stages of Covid and the lockdown when nothing was happening in person). Since we submitted over 170 signatures **each time**, I think that I can safely say that well over 200 Watertown residents actively supported this change. We ask you to keep these numbers in mind when making your decision.
2. This petition process has been going on for 3 years; here is a basic timeline with some key dates. I don't know if this is an average timeframe for when citizens submit petitions to the City Council and how long it takes to get a resolution. I sincerely hope that we are getting close to a decision.
3. At the June 2022 City Council meeting there were a number of people who testified against the name change. Many of these people were **not** Watertown residents. I respectfully request that you ask anyone who wants to testify at the Committee hearing on 4/18 to first state where they live. We hope you will not let anyone speak until they have done this and unless they live here.

I appreciate all of the work that the three of you are doing on behalf of the citizens of Watertown. I do understand that you have many interests and requests that you need to juggle. For me, a Watertown resident, I want to live in a community that is welcoming and inclusive of all people. I enjoy the diversity of the people who live in Watertown and think that it is very important to have the heart of Watertown, the Delta, where many groups gather, be a welcoming place for all. It is time to move forward, change the name of the Columbus Delta and remove the marker that celebrates a false and hurtful historical narrative. Thank you for considering our petition that represents many Watertown residents.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wolfrum
23 Clyde Road, Area B
she, her, hers
Living and working on the unceded land of the Pequossette Band of the Massachusett Tribe

"Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in, what I call, "good trouble, necessary trouble". John Lewis

Tomorrow's Public Works Committee hearing

Sharon Bauer <sharonkaybauer@gmail.com>

Mon 4/17/2023 8:31 PM

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

April 17, 2023

Dear Vinnie,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Public Works Committee to support changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square.

At the hearing last June, I spoke of how the symbols that we choose to express our identity as a community – whether the City of Watertown or the United States of America – necessarily change over time. I am old enough to have memorized the poem "On! Sail on!" when I was in grade school. It seemed inspiring to me then, but we wouldn't teach it now, knowing of Columbus' horrific brutality to indigenous people, plus the inconvenient fact that he never set foot on what is now the United States. In music class we sang "My Old Kentucky Home," with the line "'Tis summer, the darkies are gay." No way that would be acceptable now. More recently, when our sons attended Watertown High School, the school mascot was a caricature of a bloodthirsty Red Raiders warrior. Happily that is true no longer. Examples abound.

In the same way, naming one of our shared spaces for Watertown gatherings after Christopher Columbus – including with the aforesaid outdated poem – is no longer acceptable. If we were going to honor the one immigrant group that has most shaped Watertown's culture, it would surely be the Armenians. No one group, however, can be lifted up to the exclusion of the others in our city that continues to welcome immigrants from all over the world.

What name or symbol could encompass thousands of years of the Massachusett people plus the distinction of being the first inland English settlement plus all the waves of immigration that have followed? It is a challenging question that deserves thoughtful consideration from a cross-section of our current residents. I look forward to hearing creative suggestions at tomorrow's meeting.

In the spirit of civic unity,

Sharon Bauer
62 Pearl Street

P.S. I have a special interest in seeing something constructive come out of this issue, given that the extreme stress of last June's hearing, with the angry shouting from the Knights of Columbus hecklers who had been recruited from outside of Watertown, put such a strain on my heart that I ended up at the Mount Auburn Hospital ER with a heart attack! I give great thanks to my neighbors who recognized that I was not myself as we left the hearing and called an ambulance. When I saw my cardiologist for a check-up last month, he wanted to know whatever came of the controversy about the Columbus Delta. I hope to report back to him that it was all for the good.

Delta name change request

Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin <seht128@gmail.com>

Mon 4/17/2023 3:47 PM

To: Palomba, Anthony <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councilors Piccirilli, Palomba and Feltner,

I am unfortunately unable to attend tomorrow night's Public Safety Committee Meeting, but I write to ask you to please support the changing of the name of Watertown's Columbus Delta. I have heard the concerns of some Italian Americans who have mistakenly interpreted this as an attempt to diminish the standing of Italians in our city. Nothing could be further from the truth! My Jewish grandparents who fled pogroms in Russia/Poland arrived in Boston and established an Italian import/export grocery store in the heart of the North End. My family's new-found love of and respect for Italian culture, and the close friendships they established there became the foundation of their successful life in America. That love and respect still resonates generations later in our family.

Unfortunately, some Italian immigrants grossly misdirect the love of their country's precious heritage by supporting the glorification of Christopher Columbus. I, too, grew up singing in elementary school, "Columbus sailed the ocean blue in fourteen hundred ninety two..," with its mythological view of the wonderful "Discovery of America." But we can no longer deny the now well-documented, profoundly brutal treatment of native peoples by Columbus.

Just as confederate monuments are now being recognized as unacceptable glorifications of slavery, I believe it is imperative for us Watertowners to stop glorifying the genocide we know took place. Let us join in educating our residents to these new understandings, rename our Delta, and truly celebrate the values we hold dear.

With sincere thanks,

Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin

support for renaming the Delta

Tyler Kemp-Benedict <tyler@tylerkb.com>

Mon 4/17/2023 4:48 PM

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

April 17, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am pleased that the Public Works Committee is taking up the referral to consider changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. Though I'm not able to attend the meeting on April 18, I want to express my strong support for changing the name.

The current name - "Columbus Delta," according to the stone monument next to Main Street - is historically irrelevant to this particular location, and the current understanding of its meaning is not a positive or honorable reflection on the inhabitants of Watertown, regardless of the original intent.

Columbus' name was attached to our Delta and to many other public locations and monuments at a time when Italian Americans suffered from widespread discrimination and even a version of racism. (Whiteness is an ever-evolving social construct that eventually becomes available to some ethnic groups, though never to certain others.)

A simplified and sanitized story has long been told about what Columbus did and stood for - a story that was intended to reflect honor on people of Italian heritage. But in the decades since the Delta was named, disturbing truths about our local and national history have become more widely known - truths about Columbus' own atrocities; about many kinds of devastation visited on the pre-colonial inhabitants of the Americas and their descendants following his "discovery," and about how the people who had lived for centuries in what is now Watertown were dispossessed after European colonists began to settle here.

By now, Columbus' name on the monument in the Delta cannot be universally - or even generally - understood in a positive light. Columbus has no particular historical connection to Watertown; he never stepped foot on this continent, much less on any place in what is now the city you and I call home. I am confident we can find better ways to celebrate everyone in our community, including people with Italian heritage.

I wholeheartedly support the effort to select a new name for the Delta that, consistent with our contemporary understanding of history, celebrates and honors the inhabitants of this place in an inclusive way.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tyler Kemp-Benedict
44 Whitney St
tyler@tylerkb.com
617-590-5541
she/her/hers

Renaming the Columbus delta

Alan <alan.dechter@yahoo.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 3:16 PM

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

Dear councilman,

The name Columbus Delta should be kept as Columbus Delta.

Thank you,

Alan Dechter

617-416-2755
Alan.dechter@yahoo.com

DO NOT RENAME THE COLUMBUS DELTA!

A R <albertorusso@yahoo.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 2:46 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Council members,

One biased historian created a slanted narrative years ago which redefined and tainted Columbus' legacy, what he meant to maritime exploration in his time, and what he means to Italian-Americans now.

Columbus held NO slaves, and can not be blamed for the subsequent actions of Spanish and English colonial forces. The idea of erasing Colombus' legacy is insulting to so many hardworking Italians-Americans in our community, past and present, who helped make this nation what it is.

Consider the history of our Thanksgiving holiday, which is not without controversy itself. Shall we cancel or rename Thanksgiving next?

Please lead with courage and clarity and do the correct thing for your Italian-American constituents.

Regards,
Alberto Russo

Public Works committee meeting on a Recommendation on the Petition for the Name of the Columbus Delta

Amleto Martocchia <melmartocchia@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 3:43 PM

To: Sideris, Mark <msideris@watertown-ma.gov>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>;Nicole Gardner <ngardner@watertown-ma.gov>;Izzo, Emily <eizzo@watertown-ma.gov>;John Airasian <jairasian@watertown-ma.gov>;Bays, Caroline <cbays@watertown-ma.gov>;Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Council President and Watertown City Council members of the Public Works Committee,

I am unable to attend tonight's Public Works meeting on the subject agenda item as I am currently traveling.

I strongly urge committee members to make a recommendation of NO CHANGE as to the name or location of the "Columbus Delta." After having attended a prior meeting of the City Council on this item, I strongly believe there is no positive outcome to do otherwise!

Thank you,

Amleto Martocchia

92 Franklin St

--

Amleto "Mel" Martocchia, CRB, CRS

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Public Works committee meeting on a Recommendation on the Petition for the Name of the Columbus Delta

apettiglio@martocchia.com <apettiglio@martocchia.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 4:35 PM

To: Sideris, Mark <msideris@watertown-ma.gov>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>;Nicole Gardner <ngardner@watertown-ma.gov>;Izzo, Emily <eizzo@watertown-ma.gov>;John Airasian <jairasian@watertown-ma.gov>;Bays, Caroline <cbays@watertown-ma.gov>;Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to express my opinion regarding the petition to change the name of the Columbus Delta. To put it simply, I do not want to see a name change. Honestly, I do not refer to this area as the Columbus Delta or even the Delta. For me, it has always been Watertown Square. I grew up on Fayette St, near the intersection of Spring. I took many walks to the square with Napoli Pizza being one of my favorite stops. My mother and brother still live in the 2 family home at 15 Fayette St that my grandparents bought in the 1950's after emigrating from Italy. I am a first generation American and very proud to be American. I am also proud of my Italian upbringing and I am a member and officer with the Watertown Sons and Daughters of Italy. I am a lifelong Watertown resident, married to another lifelong Watertown resident living at 10 Holly St. Our children both work for the Watertown School Department and my father in law was a Watertown Police Detective. He often talked about the early days of doing traffic from the booth in the square.

I'm not writing to defend Columbus or Italian Americans, which I would gladly do, but rather to say I don't understand the need for the change. I feel that the council's time could be better spent with more important items than reversing the work of former council members. As I'm sure you know, the stone that stands on the Delta was dedicated by the Knights of Columbus and the delta was named by the Watertown Council. The Watertown Sons and Daughters of Italy does place a wreath by the stone for Columbus Day but other than that, I don't think many people even notice the name or the stone. A name change feels like an attempt to change or erase history. While I wouldn't want a change, It would make more sense, if the petition had included a new name suggestion.

I hope you will add my name to the list of residents in favor of no change to the Delta. While I'm writing, I do enjoy how the trees are lit.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie (Martocchia) Pettiglio
10 Holly St
Watertown

Stop perpetuating lies about Columbus

Anthony <asoyoyo@yahoo.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 3:46 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

I am deeply saddened and disappointed by your consideration of renaming the Columbus Delta.

I request that you consider all sides. Follow the lead of NYC and New York State's who have stated that similar statues, areas, and holidays in NYC should remain. You have been informed that the slanderous lies against Christopher Columbus that have driven this action are myths that have been debunked by all experts in the field. It saddens us that a symbol of importance of immigrants to this country (not just Italian) is being used in such a petty political manner. Nevertheless, you have struck at the soul of Italian-Americans across this country with a blatant act of divisiveness that fuels mistrust and demonstrated that ignorance drives policy.

I ask that you and those that want to replace the holiday consider the saying "let those who are without sin cast the first stone."

Is it because you don't understand the Italian-American experience in America or they don't care? Do they need to tear down another group to make themselves feel better? What is gained here? What is lost?

Where does it end, do we change the name of United States of America, because it was named after the Italian Amerigo Vespucci? Do we not celebrate the founding fathers and Presidents because they owned slaves, were adulterers, etc. Do we not celebrate Independence Day, because not everyone was independent? Are these the future goals? Or are Italian-Americans seeing a rise of biased against them? Taking away this important acknowledgement is a slap in the face to all the Italian-American predecessors, who made progress against the odds of bias; whose shoulders not only do I (and other Italian-Americans) stand on; but won victories for other Americans as well. Are you aware that the first mass lynching In America was of Italian-Americans in New Orleans? Are you aware that many of the victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire were Italian-American seamstresses, and that this led to work site safety rules for all Americans? Are you not aware of the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti? I hope you are aware of the Italian-American participation in helping the plight of ALL workers in the Lawrence strike of 1912. This has been part of the Italian-American experience in America. Only part, but we don't forget it. White washing our history was not a desirable alternative.

Acknowledgement of Italian-American contributions vis-à-vis a Columbus holiday was never a celebration of the past transgressions real or imagined of an imperfect person living in a different time and moral and legal standard than today. The Italian-American community stands against racial injustice. How could they not based on their past experience? They have always supported these values even when they were not afforded the same.

We ALL emigrated here. We often hear that we are stronger together, but it seems like this only applies in this case when we support your views. In the end this divides us. Stop working to divide us.

We understand that life is not black and white, you have to take the good with the bad. We take into consideration whether the good that outweighs the bad. We realize no one is perfect.

Healing comes from accepting and moving ahead, not through retribution for transgressions that occurred long ago. Help us heal, help us understand, help us move forward. This starts with forgiveness and understanding, not actions based on misinformation. Stop getting in the way.

I respectfully request that you consider the Italian-American contributions to this very community when

making your decision and not deface all the Italian-Americans who came before and made contributions that all Americans enjoy. The Italian American community demand that you reconsider the renaming of delta.

Sincerely,

Anthony Socci

Delta name change

Aravinda Ananda <aravinda.ananda@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 9:22 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>

Dear Councillors,

You have heard from me before on this topic, so I will try to be brief. Thank you for meeting tonight and for your consideration of changing the name of the delta.

I support this change because place names matter. As someone with family members with African heritage, I understand how terrorizing place names can be that honor people who brutalized your ancestors or are responsible for unleashing great pain and suffering on them. To those of us not affected by this, it can seem inconsequential and trivial. For people who are targeted by these environmental hostilities, it can contribute to a daily experience of feeling threatened on an ongoing basis, or at the very least, not welcome. I want our city to be welcoming for all who live here. There are many things our city can do to help create a more welcoming place for all who live here, and changing the name of the delta seems like a good place to continue this important work.

I feel privileged to have attended Yale for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees, an institution that has had to grapple much with having buildings and other places named after people who have caused great historical injustice and suffering. This grappling is happening across the country and I thank you for considering this name change with the gravity of the importance of changing it.

Thank you for your service to this city.
Sincerely,
Aravinda Ananda
157 Common Street

Delta Name Change

Barbara R <ruskinb00@icloud.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 4:16 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councilors on the Public Safety Committee,

We appreciate your consideration of the petition to change the name of the Delta, which has become our town square, to a name more inclusive and respectful of all our citizens and our history.

You have heard that Columbus was a daring sailor, but he never arrived in this country and is now known for genocidal policies and an only recently withdrawn Papal decree approving the concept of "discovery" and conquest centuries ago. We honored him and that's fine. Our neighbors who descend from Italian immigrants have enjoyed the identification with a hero. But times have changed and our learning, for every ethnic group in this diverse nation, never stops.

As we learn our history and expand our understanding of the civilizations and longing of oppressed peoples, we can no longer center the names of exploiters. This is becoming a common endeavor these days. I have been reading about name changes from major museums, fine universities, cities all over the world, and schools in this country. People all over are no longer willing to honor pharma scoundrels, philanthropists with ill-gotten gains, and slave masters (and their Confederate Lost Cause sympathizers) who thought it proper to own, humiliate, and brutalize other human beings. We even have high school and professional mascots changing names to honor honest valor, instead of ridiculing our First People.

So, it is not unique for us to discuss changing the name of the land where so many in Watertown gather to celebrate, honor, mourn, and advocate. It is honorable for Watertown to choose a historic name, whether it mention our first settlers the Native American Pigsgusset, or some say Pequosette people, or another broader and more inclusive signification.

It is incumbent upon us to meet an ethical standard once we become aware of an injustice.

Sincerely,
Barbara and Jeremy Ruskin
Spring Street

Columbus

Bob Hamel <bhamel5386@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 4:13 PM

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

Good afternoon.

Here's hoping that you don't give in to the woke minority this evening.
Bob Hamel

Renaming the "Columbus Delta"

Phil & Lina DAlleva <dalleva@comcast.net>

Tue 4/18/2023 2:59 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

April 18th, 2023

Dear Watertown City Council's Committee Members,

I am writing to you regarding your interest to recommend to the entire Council the renaming of the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square, scheduled for Tthis evening April 18th. Removing the name of Columbus from our heritage and history is a matter of serious concern not just for the Italians, but for the future understanding of our American and world history. Columbus contribution to the innovations of navigation resulted with many other individuals setting foot on the US soil and eventually creating this much acclaimed experiment of governance by a Democracy. The founding of America has granted a refuge and a "Haven" to numerous human beings who are now ancestors of the many current US citizens of diverse nationalities. After Columbus' voyages, millions of European immigrants populated this New World and brought with them their art, music, science, medicine, philosophy and religious principles. ***Hence Columbus is a symbol of the expansion of cultural and economic exchange between the two continents of America and Europe.***

Additionally, after gaining their independence from England, our Founding Fathers, having rejected England and its cultural values, sought for ways to fill the voids. Along with other dominions, they looked for champions and heroes to fill the pages of their new developing story. They already had a number of men and women: George Washington, Abigail Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and countless others who had risen to prominence through their courage, patriotism, wisdom, foresight and capability. And yes, after the American Revolution, it should be of no surprise to anyone that Columbus also rose to this sought level of prominence. His foresight, audacious resolve, sense of exploration, and daring grit to risk everything for what he believed to be true aligned exactly with the sentiment of the colonists who had just defeated the mighty British army and navy. Hence, through their perseverance, ***both Columbus and the Colonists are the symbol of expansion of man's evolution by altering the course of history, with their incomparable gifts of determination.***

Today it's well worth remembering why Columbus was so admired by our ancestors and our Founding Fathers and why it is important to keep his name viable and relevant. Ronald Reagan articulated the sentiment distinctively: "[Columbus] was a dreamer, a man of vision and courage, a man filled with hope for the future and with the determination to cast off for the unknown and sail into uncharted seas for the joy of finding whatever was there." ***Hence it can be said, with some good level of certainty, that Columbus was the ancestor of the American dream and the explorer whose discovery provided the land where the dream was rendered.*** *Columbus' name is all around us. Columbia University is named for him, as is Columbus, Ohio, Columbia County in Georgia, Columbia, the capital of South Carolina, and other numerous cities, places and counties of the US. The Knights of Columbus adopted his name in honor of his Catholic roots and most significantly, the District of Columbia, in Washington, D.C., our national capital, bears his name.*

It is also a fact that, between 1776 and 1887, ***more than 250 years after Columbus first visited the New World,*** *the United States government and some of its citizens, through the so-called "Indian Wars." managed to take by aggressive and morally reprehensible means 1.5*

*billion acres of land (roughly **2/3** the size of China) from the Indigenous People. In comparison, the entire continental United States currently has 1.9 billion acres of land! In addition, between 1778 and 1871, the America's federal administrations signed over 500 treaties with indigenous tribes and have broken every one of them.* ***To blame Columbus for America's demise of the Native American Indians is comparable to blaming John Glenn, being the first American to orbit the earth, for any future conflicts that may arise in regard to space.***

Essentially, the name Columbus commemorates the vitality of both Christopher Columbus and our Founding Fathers. It conveys the sentiment of bravery, equality, diversity, vitality, quality, energy, resolve, innovation, courage, etc. It should remain as it has been established in order to have the future generations know the history of our nation as it truly evolved!!! I urge you to keep the name Columbus Delta as it has been established.

Very Respectfully,
Carmelina DAlleva
Board Member of the IAA;
Pirantello Lyceum;
The Dante Alighieri;
Wakefield Sons and Daughter's of Italy

Changing the name of the Watertown Delta

cdickins@verizon.net <cdickins@verizon.net>

Tue 4/18/2023 4:06 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>
Cc: Mike Schade <mikeschade@comcast.net>;Lynn <bratleylynn@verizon.net>

Vinny, Lisa, and Tony …

I'm writing to support the name change of the Delta. I agree with the general perspective expressed in the Pigsgusset Initiative letter, particularly its reference to Council Resolution #85 statement that "naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change."

I've been uncertain about removing the Columbus Delta name because of my concerns about its effect on the Italian-American community in Watertown – especially in an effort that has been largely instigated by relatively new "transplants" to Watertown. Nonetheless, I've come to the conclusion that the time has come for a change.

I believe the change is needed primarily because the Delta is such a central space to Watertown, and is (by its very name) interconnected with the river where the original native people lived for centuries. I think the Delta should reference and honor these traditions with a new name reflecting native people and, in the process, help to shape the perceptions and values of future generations.

… Chuck

Chuck Dickinson
617 794-0483

Name change of the Delta in Watertown Square

David Meshoulam <daveedmesh@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 9:30 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

April 13, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. We first wrote to the City Council about this in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

In your wisdom, you passed Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019, which states “The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.” Part A further states “the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.”

Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country’s history. Thankfully, it is in the past. Wouldn’t it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn’t the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

David Meshoulam
49 Oliver Street

Re: Meeting Tonight ?

Dennis J. Duff <dduff0539@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 5:15 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>

Thank you Vinny, my suggestion is to just call it the Watertown Delta !!
That would be my comment. And, For most of my life it's just been referred to as The Delta.
Thank you, Dennis

On Tue, Apr 18, 2023 at 5:04 PM Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov> wrote:

> Hi Dennis, it's both in-person and by zoom. The link is on the agenda:
> https://watertownma.portal.civicclerk.com/event/5136/overview
>
> It is not a public hearing, and there will be some limited opportunities for the public to speak. If you have a statement to make, it would be better if you email it to the committee as there will not be an opportunity to read it.
>
> Vinnie
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Dennis J. Duff <dduff0539@gmail.com>
> **Sent:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 4:16 PM
> **To:** Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>; Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>
> **Subject:** Meeting Tonight ?
>
> Hello Councilors Lisa and Vinny, can you please tell me if tonights meeting at the town hall is open to the public and if it's open for comments at the town hall ??
>
> Or - is it just on Zoom ? If it is on Zoom only, can we comment ?
>
> Thank you!! Dennis
>
> --
> Dennis J. Duff
> When writing or responding, please remember that any email sent or received by an employee of the City of Watertown is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (M.G.L. c. 66).

--
Dennis J. Duff

Renaming the Delta

Elaine Mello <elaine.mello@comcast.net>

Tue 4/18/2023 8:34 AM

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

Dear Councilor Piccirilli,

I am writing to you with concerns about the subject of tonight's Public Works Committee meeting to be held this evening on the subject of renaming the delta in Watertown Square. Frankly, I'm surprised that this topic has come up yet again, pushed by a small group of people on behalf of the whole city.

It is my understanding that 154 people signed a petition several years ago requesting renaming of the delta. 154 people out of some 35,250 odd people comes to what I see is 0.4% of the city's population making this request. If you limit that to registered voters, it rises only slightly to 0.6% of the population.

For many of us who grew up here, the delta was known as simply that - the delta. This movement to rename it because Columbus has now become persona non grata to some who live here and who are offended by the name on behalf of others seems to be a waste of the committee's precious time that surely could be better spent on other subjects.

I ask you to consider not wasting your time on this discussion and to not recommend any renaming of the delta, nor wasting the full council's time with any further discussion on this topic.

Thank you for your time,

Elaine Mello
170 Main St. 304
Watertown

The Delta

Elizabeth DelPorto <edelporto@me.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 2:21 PM

To: **City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>**

Dear City Councilors,

I'm writing to you as a proud Italian-American. My mother's (Rosa Virgina Dorothea D'Andrea) parents came to New York through Ellis Island from Napoli and Calabria in the early 1900s. I must tell you that, whenever I pass the Columbus Delta in Watertown, I am filled with embarrassment that Watertown continues to honor Christopher Columbus in this way. While I understand the intentions of the originators of the name, who likely had little knowledge of Christopher Columbus's bloody history of genocide, we do now know better. How can we, as conscientious northerners, advocate for the removal of the Confederate flag throughout the South, but ignore our own problematic monuments? It is the very height of hypocrisy.

As for what to name the Delta in place of its current moniker, that, I do not know. What I do know is that it is a decision that should be thought out carefully, and one that should seek input from Watertown's diverse community. If there were a way to honor Indigenous people in a respectful and meaningful way, with input from local tribal nations, I would certainly be in favor of that.

One final thought - although I did not attend the last hearing, I did hear that it became contentious, with loud voices of non-Watertown residents. I do not thing their input should be considered at ALL, pro or against.

Thank your for your continued consideration of this important issue. Names and history matter!

Warmly,

Elizabeth Del Porto

Rename the delta

Liz Oppenheim <liz@lizonaplane.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 8:13 AM

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

April 13, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing to you in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. We first wrote to the City Council about this in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

In your wisdom, you passed Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019, which states “The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.” Part A further states “the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.”

Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country’s history. Thankfully, it is in the past. My grandmother and her parents faced discrimination when they arrived in this country from Italy in 1927, but they did not extend that discrimination to others. Even in his time, Columbus was considered cruel and his behavior abhorrent We shouldn’t be celebrating his legacy of genocide just because of Italian American pride. Rather, let’s celebrate Americans who truly live the values we celebrate such as inclusion and equality. Wouldn’t it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn’t the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elizabeth Oppenheim
50 Watertown St #410
Watertown MA 02472

Sent from my iPhone

Fwd: My Comment on Delta Renaming on WN 4/17/23

Joan Gumbleton <gumbletonj@aol.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 7:53 PM

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

This is a comment I put in the Watertown News last night. I would appreciate it if you would please read it.

Thank you,

Joan Gumbleton
32 Falmouth Rd.

-----Original Message-----
From: Joan Gumbleton <gumbletonj@aol.com>
To: Joan Gumbleton <gumbletonj@aol.com>
Sent: Tue, Apr 18, 2023 6:37 am
Subject: My Comment on Delta Renaming on WN 4/17/23

I also agree that the name on the Delta should remain the same. For some reason people feel it is important to erase history and, therefore, no one learns from it. People are people and we all have failings and successes. Hopefully, we learn from any of our mistakes. Christopher Columbus was a brave explorer who took on an adventure that probably most of us wouldn't even think of attempting. The events that unfolded over time weren't all in his control. Let's not condemn all people in our history and in our present for some things they do or did badly. Can't we ever learn to look for the good in people and their good contributions and accept that we are all humans with warts. Let's not be the first to cast the stone!

Renaming the Watertown Delta

Joan Martin <joan.d.martin@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 7:53 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>
Cc: Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>

1 attachments (15 KB)
The Delta.docx;

April 18, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing in regards to the Watertown Square delta, which was named in honor of Christopher Columbus. This is an excellent opportunity to educate, especially our young people, about the mistakes made in the past, so as not to repeat them in the future, and to best rectify the present.

Pope Alexander VI in 1493 issued a papal bull or decree, “Inter Caetera." This document supported Spain's strategy to ensure its exclusive right to the lands discovered by Columbus, an Italian, the previous year. The Vatican has formally repudiated this inhumane “Doctrine of Discovery” decree, which condoned colonization of Native peoples, forced conversion, and enslavement.

When the Delta was first named by the Knights of Columbus, they did so in good faith to honor their countryman. Had they had better information about the history of the times, they may have chosen differently. Let us provide information publicly on the Native American Pequossette and Nonantum tribes who have the original claim to Watertown, explain why the small plot in the square was given its present name, and then decide to call it, “The Delta.”

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Joan Martin
683 Main Street
Watertown, MA

Columbus Delta

John Casamassima <john.casamassima@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 2:32 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Councilors, I'm writing to ask you to preserve Watertown's history and not change the name of Columbus Delta.
Sincerely,
John Casamassima

Please excuse any typos, this was sent from my iPhone.

Watertown Delta renaming

DelPonte, Johnanthony E <Johnanthony_DelPonte@student.uml.edu>

Tue 4/18/2023 2:30 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Hi Folks,

As an Italian, it would be an egregious offense to change the name of the Columbus Delta.

I ask that you reconsider the name change, on behalf of all Italians in Massachusetts and the United States.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

John A Del Ponte

Fwd: INDOMITO: Call to Action TODAY - Watertown's Columbus Delta Under Threat

Joseph Rizza <rizzjoey@aol.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 2:35 PM

To: **City Councilors <citycouncilors@watertown-ma.gov>**

NOT AGAIN
WE THOUGHT THIS WAS SETTLED!!!
JOE RIZZA
A PROUD MEMBER OF THE IAA
GOD BLESS COLUMBUS

From: theitalianamericanalliance@gmail.com
To: rizzjoey@aol.com
Sent: 4/18/2023 2:27:49 PM Eastern Standard Time
Subject: INDOMITO: Call to Action TODAY - Watertown's Columbus Delta Under Threat

INDOMITO

The Voice of the Italian American Alliance

THE ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE OPPOSES DISCRIMINATION AGAINST **ALL** PEOPLE. WE PROUDLY PROMOTE OUR ITALIAN HERITAGE WHICH INCLUDES THE GREAT ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS---AND WE WELCOME PEOPLE OF ALL RACES, ETHNIC GROUPS, AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES INTO OUR GREAT AND GROWING ALLIANCE FAMILY WHICH NOW INCLUDES:

Over SEVEN THOUSAND Members

Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come

BECOME A VOTING IAA MEMBER, SIGN UP HERE!

BECOME A VOTING MEMBER

SIGN FR. CAPODANNO'S PETITION

CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE PETITION

Watertown's Columbus Delta Under Threat

Renaming the “Columbus Delta”, in Watertown MA, is on tonight’s Watertown City Council’s Committee on Public Works agenda.

The area of Watertown Square called “Columbus Delta” was named after Christopher Columbus in 1940 to honor the great Italian explorer as well as the Italian American community of Watertown.

The only item on tonight’s agenda is whether or not to recommend to the entire City Council that the name of the Columbus Delta be changed.

The committee meets tonight, Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building, 149 Main St, Watertown MA.

We are asking our membership to attend this meeting to voice your support for keeping the name of the Columbus Delta **UNCHANGED**.

If you are unable to attend, you can email your comments in support of the Columbus Delta to the following email addresses:

vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov
lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov
apalomba@watertown-ma.gov

Your email MUST be received by 5:00 PM this evening to be included in the meeting.

The Public may join the virtual meeting online:
https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/85840006723

The Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 858 4000 6723

Tonight's agenda and meeting packet can be accessed here: https://watertownma.portal.civicclerk.com/event/5136/files

The Watertown News first reported on this issue last year, their story can be read here: https://www.watertownmanews.com/2022/06/23/council-to-consider-changing-name-of-columbus-delta-in-watertown-square/

It is important that OUR voices be heard in this matter so please try to attend and if you can not, please email your support for Columbus to the committee.

Please let us know if you have any questions about this process.

The Italian American Alliance has a new Website!
Please check it out:
www.theitalianamericanalliance.com

WHO WE ARE
THE ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE NATIONAL COUNCIL
President Virginia Gardner
The **MASSACHUSETTS** ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE
President James Di Stefano / Chairman Dom Amara
The **CONNECTICUT** ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE
President Joey Catanzaro

The **RHODE ISLAND** ITALIAN AMERICAN ALIANCE
President Atty. Richard Pacia
The **FLORIDA** ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE
Organizing Leader Frank Teodosio
THE **NEW HAMPSHIRE** ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE
Organizing Leader Don Macella
THE **NEW YORK** ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE
Organizing Leader ---
THE **VERMONT** ITALIAN AMERICAN ALLIANCE
Organizing Leader Paul Trojano

WEBSITE:
www.theitalianamericanalliance.com

FACEBOOK:
https://www.facebook.com/theitalianamericanalliance

The Italian American Alliance | 36 Orient Ave, East Boston, MA 02128

Unsubscribe rizzjoey@aol.com

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Trusted Email from Constant Contact - Try it FREE today.
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Changing the name of the Delta

Joseph Rotella <jkrotella@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 2:23 PM

To: Palomba, Anthony <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Councilors Palomba, Piccirilli and Feltner,

I am writing today about the petition for changing the name of the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square. I am a long time resident of Watertown, living on Common Street and am second generation Italian American. I own a small business in Waltham and have been a part of several Watertown community groups for years. I believe the name should be changed, the monument removed and suggest the space to be called "the People's Delta" as an alternative, a name that recognizes the importance of having a space that it for all people.

There is a reckoning happening in this country where the narratives of history as many of us were taught in schools are being questioned. This isn't coming from a place of hate or "wokeness", but rather from a place of wanting to know the truth. It is perhaps easy for some people in town to see how people in the south who want to keep confederate statues in place are being racist and caught up in their own white-supremacy nationalism. It is harder for some people in town to see how keeping this name and monument in our square, is also a form of white-supremacy and racism. Columbus was never here. What was here was a thriving indigenous tribe, the Pequosette people, who stewarded this land for many generations before the arrival of European colonizers who through biological and violent genocide took land that wasn't theirs. Columbus was arguably that start of this genocide on this continent. Even the Catholic Church is now reckoning with this issue and have now denounced the "Doctrine of Discover", the very document that allowed Columbus to do what he did.

To my Italian American neighbors, this change is not to negate the contributions of your and my ancestors. I want to recognize the hardships that many immigrants faced coming to this nation and still continue to face. Let's put our energy into remembering their stories, telling their stories and using it as a basis to help those who travel that similar journey today.

Also, I want to point out the inscription that is currently on the monument on the Delta, which is "he gained a world, he gave that world its grandest lesson on sail on." This is the final line from the poem "Columbus" written by Joaquin Miller for the 400th anniversary of Columbus landing on this continent. There is some interesting context to this poem. First, Miller was paid $50 to write this poem for the anniversary and it actually never mentions Columbus in the poem. Miller's life changed drastically when he was recruited to fight in the Indian Wars and was shocked by the injustice of it. That experience, lead him to spend years living with several tribes, documenting his experiences and becoming an advocate for indigenous rights. Perhaps Miller saw what the future held, and that the grandest lesson is actually for us today, to reckon with our history and to right the injustices for the first peoples of this land.

In conclusion, what side of history do we want to be on? This is not about erasing our past but rather recognizing its complexity and learning from it. Do we want to be remembered as the people who held onto the false narrative of a genocidal colonizer who murdered countless women and children, or do we want to further the long process of acknowledgement and reconciliation for the harm that has been caused. Changing the name of the Delta is a good step in that process.

Thank you,

Joseph

Joseph Rotella
he/him/his or they/them/their
157 Common Street
Watertown, MA 02472
617-388-1300

“When people volunteer and grow to understand the real needs of their community, they don’t only want to help their neighbors—they want to change social conditions and improve people’s lives.”

Lori Lander, Co-founder - Many Helping Hands 365

Pigsgusset Petition to Rename Columbus Delta 4-18-23

Lisa Capoccia <lisa_capoccia@yahoo.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 9:07 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Watertown City Councilors and Public Safety Committee Members Piccirilli, Palomba, and Feltner,

Thank you for reviewing the petition submitted by our local Pigsgusset Initiative to reconsider the name of the Columbus Delta here in Watertown. **I'm writing to express my wish that you recommend to the City Council they support the petition.**

As you know, Christopher Columbus symbolizes, among other things, the enslavement of indigenous people, colonialism, and violence. The Pigsgusset Initiative petition has broad community support and joins with a positive national trend to cease the harmful practice of honoring symbols that reinforce the settler (and in effect, erase the native) narrative.

I celebrate my Italian culture and pride with my family, whose American roots originate one hundred years ago with the Conti family farm on Brookline Street here in Watertown, but have never connected this pride to Christopher Columbus' harmful legacy. If anything, I have been uncomfortable knowing the City has had (but not yet resolved to exercise) the option to remove the symbol and replace it with something that acknowledges the area's true history and our community's diversity today.

Although I realize there are community members who will oppose this petition and who misunderstand the full and harmful implications of voting to keep the Delta name as is, I am certain the support you will receive from various individuals and groups in the community in response to voting to support the petition will be overwhelming.

I would be proud to know my City leaders voted to acknowledge and correct this mistake by recommending the City Council support the petition and initiate a process to identify a suitable name for the Columbus Delta.

Thank you for considering this input.

Sincerely,
Lisa Capoccia
42 Carroll Street
617-999-7813

Comments on Columbus Delta

Marissa Babin <marissababin@yahoo.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 4:54 PM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my opposition to the renaming of the Columbus Delta. For several reasons, I find it hurtful and upsetting that this idea is under consideration.

First, Christopher Columbus is a hero who is worthy of being honored. Although he wasn't a perfect person (because no one is), he was incredibly brave, independent-minded, intelligent, and determined. These positive qualities make him worthy of being celebrated in his own right.

Additionally, Columbus is a symbol of immigration and of Italian Americans' accomplishments. Honoring him is important to the Italian American community. The removal of memorials to Columbus is harmful and discriminatory towards Italian Americans.

Furthermore, I consider it extremely important to live in a world where a wide variety of historical figures are honored. The statues, plaques, and memorials in our public spaces should reflect a wide range of viewpoints, cultures, stories, and perspectives. This is what diversity and inclusion mean to me. Actions such as renaming the Columbus Delta are the opposite of diversity and inclusion, because these actions exclude Italian Americans and reflect a narrow view about which historical figures ought to be celebrated.

Finally, I just want to add a personal note about why Columbus is so important to me. I am an Italian American who also happens to be on the autism spectrum. I love studying history in general, and Columbus in particular. As someone who is frequently excluded and marginalized, Columbus statues and monuments are one of the few things that make me feel accepted, included, and represented in society. Renaming the Columbus Delta would make me feel even more excluded and marginalized.

In conclusion, I strongly support leaving the Columbus Delta as is, and rejecting the proposal to rename it. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marissa Babin

Columbus Delta

Ann-Marie and Mark Pettiglio <pettiglio@yahoo.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 5:32 PM

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

Hi

I oppose any name change to the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square. This insanity has gone on long enough. I'm an officer at The Watertown Sons of Italy and a lifetime Watertown resident and voter. I'm responsible for a charitable fundraiser for the food pantry and I will tirelessly support logical votes to support the monument in the Delta and Christopher Columbus.

Mark Pettiglio

Sent from my iPhone

Comments for tonight's committee on public works meeting

Meghan O <meghanaoc@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 6:21 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear councilors,

I would like for my written comments below to be recorded during tonight's committee on public works meeting:

I do not support the initiative set forth by the Watertown Citizens working group to ask for a general renaming of the "Columbus Delta" square in our city, for the reason that they have not followed proper procedures as clearly stated in Resolution 2019-R-85.

This resolution states that the procedure to name an area of Watertown must begin with a proposed individual's name. The first sentence of the resolution process states, quote, "Any Watertown resident may propose in writing that a square or intersection be named for a notable non-veteran with specific ties to Watertown." End quote.

The initiative that was put forth last June to the town council was a request to remove the name of the Columbus Delta. But no replacement name has been suggested.

The resolution states that the purpose of naming squares or intersections, quote, "is a matter of substantial or significant public interest and deserves careful consideration." End quote. It also states that quote "the Town Council creates this policy to establish a systemic, consistent, and transparent approach for naming squares or intersections in Watertown." End quote.

The resolution also states quote, "The proposal shall be submitted to the town council president and must include documentation to support the rationale for the naming, including a broad level of community backing." End quote.

As the proposed initiative does not include a name suggestion, nor does it show documentation to support the rationale for a new name, this initiative should not be considered complete and should not be voted upon by the Committee of Public Works or the Town Council.

Sincerely,
Meghan O'Connell

Gmail Vincent Piccirilli <vincent.piccirilli@gmail.com>

Renaming of Watertown Monument

Vincent Piccirilli <vincent.piccirilli@gmail.com> Tue, Apr 18, 2023 at 1:24 PM
To: Tony Palomba <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>, Lisa Feltner <lfeltner@comcast.net>
Cc: Vincent Piccirilli <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

FYI only. Please do not reply.

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Julianne Lindsay** <juliannelindsay@aol.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 18, 2023 at 1:10 PM
Subject: Renaming of Watertown Monument
To: vincent.piccirilli@gmail.com <vincent.piccirilli@gmail.com>

Dear Councillor Piccirilli,

While it is a fact of history that the political party in power has always claimed the right to re-write history in its own image to reflect its own ideals as well as prejudices, I can't help but see that as a quite unfortunate and limited practice.

It is news to me, after 51 years residence here, that our town has a monument to a 15th Century explorer or a "delta" (a quite particular and quite dated term) named after that explorer. That happened before my time and reflected the desires of citizens I never knew who took the time and effort and put the activism in to see it through. That 15th Century explorer himself existed long before my time and so it would be presumptuous and short-sighted of me to judge either the complete range of his actions and motivations or of those who chose to so memorialize him.

Must we seek to re-write the past until somehow we feel we can control it and it ceases to offend our very current sensibilities? I have always thought better to leave the past as it has presented itself to us so we can learn from it and use it to improve our own lives and judgments.

So I would advise that, rather than destroy what those who came before have given us, it would be much better to create our own monuments for history reflecting our viewpoints, and with full knowledge that history may one day judge them as purely temporal, popular, and misguided, and with the understanding that while we can make history we cannot control it.

Sincerely,

Richard O'Connor 81 Channing Road 926 5704

Naming the Watertown SQ Delta

Rvarnum1964 <rvarnum1964@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 6:53 AM

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

April 18, 2023

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

Good morning Vince. I hope you and your family are well. It seems like yesterday but also forever-ago that Stella and James graduated from WHS in 2017. I am sending this plea again regarding my support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. We first wrote to the City Council about this in August 2020. The center of our city is where hundreds of neighbors gather to make our voices heard about a variety of issues. To some, the current name of the square and presence of the Columbus monument is upsetting. While others feel strongly that the name should stay the same, I ask: What side of history do you want to be on? And what side of history do you want Watertown to be on? Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to propel European colonial conquests, the Vatican recently repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” which Columbus used to justify the slaughter of the Taino people. Is the public interest served by keeping a name that offends some while failing to reflect our unique community today?

In your wisdom, you passed Watertown Council Resolution #85 in 2019, which states “The Town Council shall have sole authority for the naming of Squares or Intersections in the public right-of-way under the control of the Town of Watertown.” Part A further states “the Town Council understands that said naming may have long-lasting effects and will span future generations whose perceptions and values might change.”

Times have changed. Italian-Americans are no longer persecuted as they were when they first arrived in the United States. The discrimination and violence they experienced is a stain on our country’s history. Thankfully, it is in the past. Wouldn’t it be best to have the center of our city named for all the people who live here now? And shouldn’t the monument, that belongs to a private religious organization, be returned to them? It does not belong in our public square.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bob

Robert Varnum
617-823-3687

Support for changing name of Delta in Watertown Square

Vasiliki P <vanavp98@gmail.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 9:00 AM

To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>;Palomba, Anthony <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

Dear Public Works Committee Chair Piccirilli,

I am writing to you today in support of changing the name of the Delta in Watertown Square. As someone who grew up in Watertown, graduated from University in Boston and continues to live and be active in the Watertown community, it's a truly great opportunity to have my voice heard and participate in civic society as a young adult.

Part of that participation includes bringing my hard-earned knowledge to the table and supporting my community. Since the naming of this delta, many things have changed in our history, Watertown's and wider. Italian-Americans no longer face the same discrimination they once did, and we now know that Columbus didn't discover America, as Indigenous people already lived here. Watertown was already inhabited by the Pequossette and Nonantum tribes before it was called Watertown. Why not pay homage to those that existed before us? Who protected and managed the land that we now enjoy and rely on?

Right now is an amazing opportunity to breathe new life into this city, and while some see the renaming as upsetting, it could help lead to a transformation of space that provides new places for community members to gather and enjoy the amazing greenery Watertown has to offer. Why not be the change that Watertown needs?

Balancing old and new wants and ideas is a difficult task but I believe the City Council and Watertown community overall understand that change is coming.

Thank you for your consideration, I hope to hear good news soon!

Best,
Vana Pistoftzian
Resident at 25 Forest st. Watertown, MA

Renaming the Delta

wtsd@rcn.com <wtsd@rcn.com>

Tue 4/18/2023 3:43 PM

To: Palomba, Anthony <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>;Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>;Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>
Cc: Susan Twombly <twomblysusan@gmail.com>

Dear Lisa, Tony, and Vinnie,

I'm writing to you in support of changing the name of the Columbus Delta in Watertown Square. With all due respect to those who wish to commemorate the courage of early Italian immigrants to these shores, and to acknowledge the hardships and discrimination they experienced, I truly do not believe that naming the Delta after Columbus is the right way to accomplish those objectives. Columbus had nothing to do with Watertown, and is widely recognized as having instigated irreparable damage to the lives and culture of Indigenous people in the areas he occupied. I do not believe we should hold him up as a hero on land that was taken from other Indigenous folks by English settlers.

My wife Sue suggested that the area be called "The People's Park," which seems like a very fitting, all-inclusive name. I'm sure you will hear 1000 other ideas, but perhaps we can all agree that it's time for Watertown to make a commitment to being more inclusive by renaming this very public spot. I realize you have a very tough decision to make, with many voices to consider. I ask you to base your final vote on what you truly believe are the core values you wish to promote in our city, both now and in the future.

Thank you for your consideration, and all the best,
Will Twombly

Columbus Delta

Lucille Del Ponte <ldelponte1528@yahoo.com>

Wed 4/19/2023 4:10 PM

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

Hi I feel as an Italian American the Columbus Delta should not be done away with , we as Italian Americans Are losing our identity, others are pressured To bow down and change things down that are just plain history but what about the Italian Americans we are losing identity terribly we have built some of the most sturdy beautiful bridges and buildings and church is an Italian community when the immigrants Italian and others the backbone of the United States, came here and little by little we are being denied an identity. We Italian Americans are the backbone of the United States came here in a little by little we're being chipped away little by little too not having an identity, out to nothing Forgetting the Italian Americans who are the backbone when regular Americans did not want to do the dirty Jobs, We might be immigrants We might be immigrants!!! but boy can we build buildings that have stood 200 years , consider keeping the name or at least include the word Italian in it somewhere thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Attachment E

ANNUAL REPORTS

BY THE OFFICERS OF THE

Town of Watertown

FOR THE

Three Hundred and Ninth Year of its Organization

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1939

Record of Special Town Meeting
December 12, 1939

Meeting was called to order at 8.00 P.M. by Moderator John M. Russell. Officers' returns on Warrant were read by Town Clerk George B. Wellman. Number present at time of calling meeting to order: 141. Number present at meeting as reported by Checkers' records: 185. Number of Town Meeting Members necessary for a quorum: 93.

Article 19. To see if the Town will vote that the delta in Watertown Square be named Columbus Delta, or take any action relating thereto. (Request of Henry L. Morley and others).

On standing vote, 85 in favor, and 59 opposed, it was

Voted: That the delta in Watertown Square be named Columbus Delta.

The Columbus Delta Monument in Watertown Square:

[at top, Knights of Columbus Emblem]

COLUMBUS DELTA

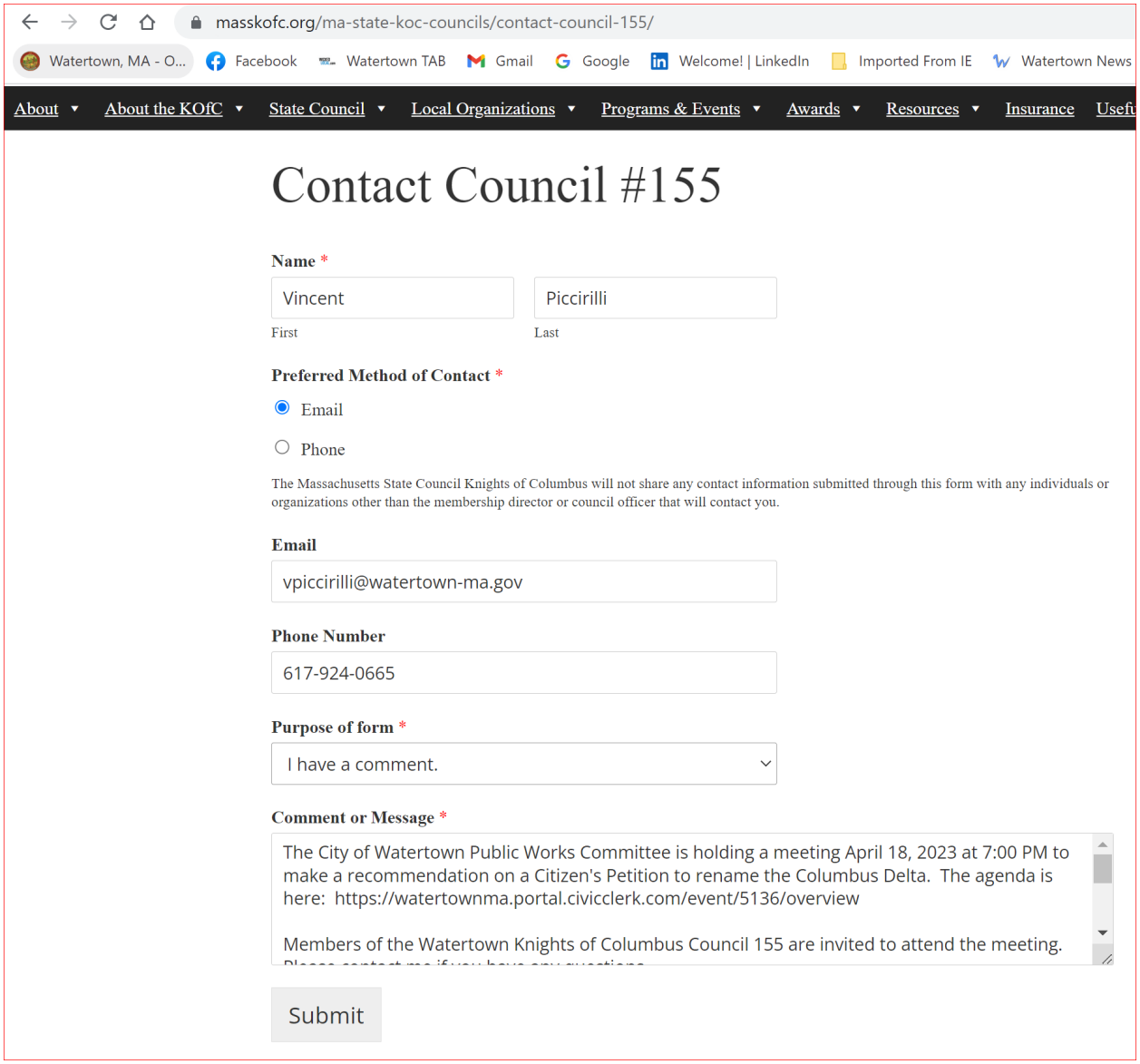
HE GAINED A WORLD
HE GAVE THAT WORLD
ITS GRANDEST LESSON
ON! SAIL ON!

DEDICATED OCT. 12, 1940
BY WATERTOWN COUNCIL N° 155.

The inscription is formed by the last two lines of the poem Columbus by Joaquin Miller (1837-1913). The full text of the poem is published in J.M. Dickey, *Christopher Columbus and His Monument Columbia* (Chicago and New York: Rand, McNally & Company, 1892), p. 235-237.

Attachment F

Message sent to the Watertown Knights of Columbus on April 14, 2023



The City of Watertown Public Works Committee is holding a meeting April 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM to make a recommendation on a Citizen's Petition to rename the Columbus Delta. The agenda is here: https://watertownma.portal.civicclerk.com/event/5136/overview

Members of the Watertown Knights of Columbus Council 155 are invited to attend the meeting. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.
City Council Vice President/District C Councilor
vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov
617-924-0665

155 Watertown

← Return to Directory

Name: 155 Watertown

Council Number: 155

Region: Council, Middlesex County, South

Council Home Town: Watertown

City/Town Jurisdiction: Watertown

Meeting Dates/Times: The second Monday of each month.

Phone Number: 617-926-1492

Contact Council #155

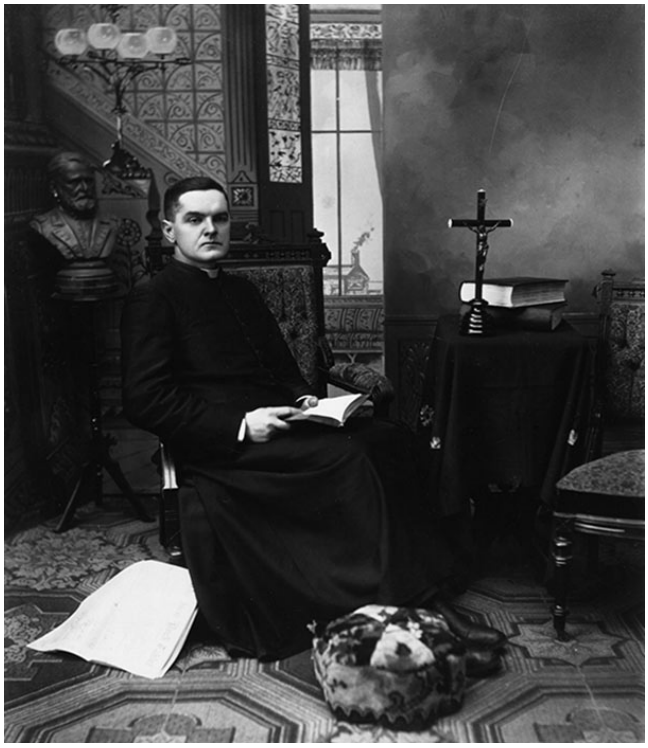
Council Status: Active

Fourth Degree Assembly: #403 Governor David I. Walsh

Attachment G

Knights of Columbus

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FOUNDED



Late-19th century Connecticut was marked by the growing fraternal benefit societies, anti-Catholic prejudice and dangerous factory working conditions that left many families fatherless. Recognizing a need in his community, Father Michael J. McGivney, the 29-year-old assistant pastor of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., gathered a group of men at his parish on Oct. 2, 1881. He proposed establishing a lay organization to prevent Catholic men from entering secret societies antithetical to Church teaching, uniting

OUR HISTORY

2010-NOW

2000-2009

1979-1999

1961-1978

1951-1960

1941-1950

1930-1940

1919-1929

1910-1918

1900-1909

1882-1899

Catholic men and helping families of deceased members.

To demonstrate their loyalty to their country as well as their faith, these men took Christopher Columbus — recognized as a Catholic and celebrated as the discoverer of America – as their patron. The Knights of Columbus elected officers in February 1882 and assumed corporate status on March 29.

In addition to the Order's benefits, Catholic men were drawn to the Knights because of its emphasis on serving one's Church, community and family with virtue. Fraternity and patriotism were added to the Knights' founding principles of charity and unity in 1885 and 1900, respectively.

1882: The Knights of Columbus is born on Feb. 6, 1882, when the first members choose Columbus as their patron. Immediately after the Order's March 29 incorporation, Father McGivney sends a diocesan-wide appeal for new members to priests.

Attachment H

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Knights of Columbus

The **Knights of Columbus** (**K of C**) is a global Catholic fraternal service order founded by Michael J. McGivney on March 29, 1882.[1][2] Membership is limited to practicing Catholic men.[3] It is led by Patrick E. Kelly, the order's 14th Supreme Knight.[3][4]

The organization was founded in March 1882[5] as a mutual benefit society for working-class and immigrant Catholics in the United States. In addition to providing an insurance system for its members, its charter states that it endeavors "to promote such social and intellectual intercourse among its members as shall be desirable and proper".[6] It has grown to support refugee relief, Catholic education, local parishes and dioceses, and global Catholic social and political causes.[1][7][8][9] The Knights promote the Catholic view on public policy issues, including opposition to same-sex marriage[10] and abortion.[11]

The organization also provides certain financial services to the individual and institutional Catholic market.[12] Its wholly owned insurance company, one of the largest in the world, underwrites more than two million insurance contracts, totaling more than $114 billion of life insurance in force as of 2021.[13][14] It is a Fortune 1000 company based on its annual revenues.[15]The order also owns the Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, a money management firm which invests in accordance with Catholic social teachings.

As of 2019, there were nearly two million members around the world.[16][17][18] Women may participate in K of C through the Columbiettes and other female auxiliaries, and boys may join the Columbian Squires. The Order comprises four different "degrees", each one of which exemplifies one of the core principles of the order.[1] There are more than 16,000 local Knights of Columbus councils around the world,[17] including over 300 on college campuses.[19][20]

Knights of Columbus

Emblem of the Knights of Columbus

Abbreviation	K of C
Formation	March 29, 1882
Founder	Bl. Michael J. McGivney
Founded at	New Haven, Connecticut
Type	Catholic fraternal service order
Headquarters	Knights of Columbus Building, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.
Supreme Knight	Patrick E. Kelly
Supreme Chaplain	William E. Lori
Affiliations	International Alliance of Catholic Knights Columbian Squires Squire Roses
Website	www.kofc.org (https://www.kofc.org)

History

Early years

American Catholic priest Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary's Church in 1882 as a mutual benefit society for Catholic immigrants in New Haven, Connecticut.[21][22] [23][24] As a parish priest in an immigrant community, McGivney saw what could happen to a family when the main income earner died. This was before most government support programs were established.[24] Because of religious and ethnic discrimination, Catholics in the late 19th century were regularly excluded from labor unions, popular fraternal organizations, and other organized groups that provided such social services.[25]

Michael J. McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus

Although its first councils were all in Connecticut, the Order spread throughout New England and the United States in subsequent years.[26] As the order expanded outside of Connecticut, structural changes in the late 1880s and 1890s were instituted to give the Knights a federalist system with local, state, and national levels of government.[27] This allowed them to coordinate activities across states and localities.[28]

20th century

During World War I, the Knights established soldiers' welfare centers in the U.S. and abroad.[29] After the war, the Knights participated in education, occupational training, and employment programs for veterans.[30]

The Oregon Compulsory Education Act of 1922 would have disallowed parochial schools, including Catholic schools, in that state.[31][32][33] The Knights of Columbus challenged the law in court,[34] and, in a landmark 1925 ruling (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*), the U.S. Supreme Court struck it down.[35]

To combat the animus targeted at racial and religious minorities, including Catholics, the Order formed a historical commission which published a series of books on their contributions, among other activities.[36][37] The "Knights of Columbus Racial Contributions Series" of books included three titles: *The Gift of Black Folk*, by W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Jews in the Making of America* by George Cohen, and *The Germans in the Making of America* by Frederick Schrader.[36][37]

Meanwhile, though the membership system at the time did not explicitly exclude African Americans, as few as one negative vote (and later, four or five) against a prospective candidate (no matter the size of the council) was enough to deny someone entry. This occurred in a racist manner often enough, especially in the Deep South, that the Josephites helped found the Knights of Peter Claver in 1909 for African Americans. The KoC national leadership later amended their policies so that rejections required a majority of council members.[38][39][40]

Around 1915, during the nadir of American race relations, the Ku Klux Klan began promoting a conspiracy theory claiming that Fourth Degree Knights swore an oath to exterminate Freemasons and Protestants.[41][42][43][44][45] The Knights of Columbus vehemently denied the existence of any such oath, calling the rumors libel.[6] In 1923, the Knights of Columbus offered $25,000 to any person with

proof that the fake oath attributed to the fourth degree membership was part of any authentic ceremony.[46] The Knights began suing distributors for libel in an effort to stop this,[47] and the KKK ended its publication of the false oath.[48]

Recent history

According to church historian Massimo Faggioli, the Knights of Columbus are today "'an extreme version' of a post-Vatican II phenomenon, the rise of discrete lay groups that have become centers of power themselves."[9]

As the Order and its charitable works grew, so did its prominence within the Church.[49] Pope John Paul I's first audience with a layman was with Supreme Knight Dechant, and Pope John Paul II met with Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant three days after his installation.[49] During the pope's 1979 visit to the United States, the Supreme Officers and Board were the only lay organization to receive an audience.[50]

President Richard Nixon addressed the Supreme Convention in 1971.[51] President Ronald Reagan spoke in 1982[52] and 1986[53] and George W. Bush spoke in 2004.[53] George H. W. Bush spoke as vice president in 1984 and then again as president in 1992.[53] President Bill Clinton sent a videotaped message to the 111th Supreme Convention saying the Order's "contributions to the Catholic Church and to your communities merit our applause."[53]

Faggioli believes the scope of the Knights' philanthropy can "create influence through money, especially in important places like Rome or Washington, D.C."[9]

Organization and principles

The order is dedicated to the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism.[54] Membership is restricted to adult male Catholics.[55] As of 2020, there were 2 million knights.[56][57]

Each member belongs to one of more than 16,000 local "councils" around the world.[17] The college councils program started at The Catholic University of America in 1898.[58] The oldest continuously running college council is the University of Notre Dame Council #1477, chartered in 1910.[59] As of 2018, there are more than 300 college councils.[19][20] Separate organizations, known as Fourth Degree assemblies, may form color guards to attend important civic and church events; they are often the most visible arm of the Knights.[60]

Council	Assembly	Circle
Grand Knight	Navigator	Chief Squire
Chaplain*	Friar*	Father Prior
Deputy Grand Knight	Captain	Deputy Chief Squire
Chancellor	Admiral	Marshal Squire
Recorder	Scribe	Notary Squire
Financial Secretary**	Comptroller	Bursar Squire
Treasurer	Purser	Bursar Squire
Lecturer*	*nonexistent*	*nonexistent*
Advocate	*nonexistent*	*nonexistent*
Warden	Pilot	Marshal Squire
Inside Guard	Inner Sentinel	Sentry
Outside Guard	Outer Sentinel	Sentry
Trustee (3 Year)	Trustee (3 Year)	*nonexistent*
Trustee (2 Year)	Trustee (2 Year)	*nonexistent*
Trustee (1 Year)	Trustee (1 Year)	*nonexistent*
nonexistent	Color Corp Commander*	*nonexistent*

The Supreme Council is the governing body of the order. It elects insurance members to serve three-year terms on a 24-member Board of Directors.[61][62] Leaders' salaries are set by the board of directors and ratified by the delegates to the Supreme Convention.[63] The seven-figure salaries of senior K of C officers have been criticized as excessive.[63][64]

In 1969, the Knights opened a 23-story headquarters building in New Haven.[65][66]

(**Appointed annually by each council's Grand Knight or assembly's Navigator*)
(***Appointed for a three-year term by the Supreme Knight*)

Knights of Columbus headquarters

Charitable giving

Charity is the foremost important principle of the Knights of Columbus.[67][68] At their 2019 convention, then-Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said that the organization had donated $185 million and 76 million volunteer-hours toward charity projects in 2018.[55] Charitable activities include support for refugees, aid for victims of natural disasters, and advocating Catholic ethics, such as opposition to same-sex marriage and opposition to abortion.

Beginning in 1897, the National Council encouraged local councils to establish funds to support members affected by the 1890s depression.[69] Councils also offered employment agency services and provided aid to the poor and sick.[70] Aid has also been dispensed to assist victims of natural and man-made disasters, starting with a flood in Kansas in 1903.[71][72] In 2015 alone, the order donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to victims of typhoons and other natural disasters.[9]

During times of war, the Order supports aid to refugees. Between 2014 and 2018, the Knights gave more than $2 million to provide food, shelter, clothing, and medical care to persecuted Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East.[73][9] The Knights donated $250,000 in 2018 to help refugees crossing over the Mexico–United States border who were seeking asylum in the United States and later expanded the program.[18] Within days of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the 2,000 Knights of Columbus in the country worked to help those impacted.[74] They began by providing food and clothing to those at train and bus stations in Lviv who were fleeing into Poland.[74] They then began organizing busses to take people the Polish border.[74] In the first three months of the war, the Knights in Poland helped more than 300,000 people, or 10% of those who fled to that country.[74]

The Knights of Columbus has donated more than $600 million to those with intellectual and physical disabilities.[75] One of the largest recipients of aid in this area has been the Special Olympics, where the Knights have been involved since the very first games in 1968.[75]

After the Knights had donated more than 1,000 ultrasound machines to crisis pregnancy centers from 2009 to 2019, Anderson said, "Our ultrasound initiative is now the greatest humanitarian achievement in the history of the Knights of Columbus. ... We can, and I am confident that we will, save millions of unborn lives."[76] Following the United States Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, Supreme Knight Patrick E. Kelly called on the order to increase their support for women facing unplanned and crisis pregnancies with the Aid and Support After Pregnancy (ASAP) initiative.[77]

The Knights also donate to the institutional church, including being a major donor to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops[9] and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.[78] As of 2017, the Knights' *Vicarius Christi* fund has contributed more than $57 million to the charitable efforts of the pope.[79] The Knights have supported the Vatican's news operation for decades.[9]

In the field of education, the Knights of Columbus have a number of scholarships and other programs for seminarians, veterans,[80] students at The Catholic University of America,[58][81] and at other Catholic colleges. Especially during World War I and World War II, the Order operated a number of "huts" to support troops serving in combat, regardless of race or religion.[80][82][83]

Insurance program

Year	Insurance in force	Assets
2019[84][55][85]	$109 billion	$26 billion
1956[86][a]	$650 million	
1955[86]	$562 million	
1932[72]	$300 million	
1919[87]	$140 million	
1897[88]		$42,282
1896[89]		$12,000

Early years

The original insurance system devised by McGivney gave a deceased Knight's widow a $1,000 death benefit. Each member was assessed $1 upon a death, and when the number of Knights grew beyond 1,000, the assessment decreased according to the rate of increase.[90] Each member, regardless of age, was assessed equally. As a result, younger, healthier members could expect to pay more over the course of their lifetimes than those men who joined when they were older.[91]

There was also a Sick Benefit Deposit for members who fell ill and could not work. Each sick Knight was entitled to draw up to $5 a week for 13 weeks. If he remained sick after that, the council to which he belonged determined the sum of money given to him.[92]

In the post-World War II era, to enhance yields on its capital, the organization began investing in real estate leaseback transactions.[93] Between 1952 and 1962, 18 pieces of land were purchased for a total of $29 million.[94] Late in 1953 the order purchased the land beneath Yankee Stadium for $2.5 million.[94][95] In 1971, the City of New York took the land by eminent domain.[96]

Modern program

The order offers permanent and term life insurance, as well as annuities, long term care insurance, and disability insurance.[97][98][99] The order has more than $109 billion of life insurance policies in force and $26 billion in assets as of 2019.[84][55][85] A. M. Best ranked it 49th on the list of all life insurance companies in North America.[100]

The order chooses equities that first, are a sound investment, and second, do not conflict with the investment guidelines produced by the United States bishops based on Catholic social teaching.[99][12] Its insurance operation invests in loans to various Catholic institutions.[101][94][b] As of 2008, over $500 million had been loaned through the ChurchLoan program.[101]

For 40 consecutive years, the order has received A. M. Best's highest rating, A++.[102][97][85]

Promotion of the Catholic faith

Efforts against religious discrimination

Since its earliest days, the Knights of Columbus has been a "Catholic anti-defamation society."[103] In 1914, it established a Commission on Religious Prejudices.[103] As part of the effort, the order distributed pamphlets, and lecturers toured the country speaking on how Catholics could love and be loyal to America.[104]

The creation of the 4th Degree, with its emphasis on patriotism, performed an anti-defamation function as well as asserting claims to Americanism.[105][106] In response to a defamatory "bogus oath" circulated by the KKK,[107] in 1914 the Knights set up a framework for a lecture series and educational programs to combat anti-Catholic sentiment.[108]

The Knights of Columbus presented a check to The Catholic University of America on the steps of the university's McMahon Hall in 1904 to establish a Chair of American History.

New evangelization

The Knights have been urged to take a prominent role in the new evangelization.[109] The CIS published a series on the new evangelization in 2011,[110] and donations to other Catholic mass communication services represent one of the Knights' major expenditures.[111] The Knights have also established councils in both secular and Catholic universities.[112]

Political activity

While the Knights were politically active from an early date, in the years following the Second Vatican Council, as the "Catholic anti-defamation character" of the order began to diminish as Catholics gained more acceptance, the leadership began to use its financial resources to directly influence the direction of the church.[9] That led to the creation of a "variety of new programs reflecting the proliferation of the new social ministries of the church."[113][9]

At times, the leadership of the order has been both liberal and conservative. Martin H. Carmody and Luke E. Hart were both political conservatives, but John J. Phelan was a Democratic politician prior to becoming Supreme Knight,[114] John Swift's "strong support for economic democracy and social-welfare legislation marks him as a fairly representative New Deal anti-communist,"[115] and Francis P. Matthews was a civil rights official and member of Harry Truman's cabinet. Anderson previously served in the Office of Public Liaison under Ronald Reagan.[116]

The Knights of Columbus is classified as a 501(c)(8) fraternal benefit society by the IRS. Unlike the more common 501(c)(3) nonprofits, 501(c)(8)s are allowed to engage in limited direct political activity without jeopardizing their tax exemptions.[117] However, Anderson has said “One of our most important traditions throughout our 125-year history is that we do not, as an organization, become involved in partisan politics."[118]

The Knights of Columbus supports political awareness and activity among its members and local councils. Public policy activity is limited to issue-specific campaigns, typically dealing with Catholic family and sanctity of life issues.[119][55] They state that

> In addition to performing charitable works, the Knights of Columbus encourages its members to meet their responsibilities as Catholic citizens and to become active in the political life of their local communities, to vote and to speak out on the public issues of the day. ... In the political realm, this means opening our public policy efforts and deliberations to the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church. In accord with our Bishops, the Knights of Columbus has consistently maintained positions that take these concerns into account. The order supports and promotes the social doctrine of the Church, including a robust vision of religious liberty that embraces religion's proper role in the private and public spheres.[119]

The order opposed the persecution of Catholics in Mexico during the Cristero War,[120] and opposed communism.[121][122] during the 20th century, the order also established the Commission on Religious Prejudices and the Knights of Columbus Historical Commission, organizations which fought against racism.[123] It was also supportive of trade unionism, and published the works "of the broad array of intellectuals", including George Schuster, Samuel Flagg Bemis, Allan Nevins, and W. E. B. DuBois.[123]

During the Cold War, the order had a history of waging anti-socialist, anti-communist and anti-anarchist crusades.[124] They lobbied for the addition of the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, as a religious response to Soviet atheism.[125][126] The Knights have actively opposed the legalization of same-sex marriage and in terms of funding, they have also been a key contributor to local measures against same-sex marriage.[10] The Knights have donated over US$1 million to the Susan B. Anthony Foundation and other anti-abortion and anti-contraception organizations.[9][127]

Subsidiaries

Museum

On March 10, 2001, the order opened a museum in New Haven dedicated to their history.[129][66] The 77,000 square foot building cost US$10 million to renovate.[129] It holds mosaics on loan from the Vatican and gifts from Popes, the membership application from John F. Kennedy, and a number of other items related to the history of the Knights.[129] Near the entrance is the cross held by Jesus Christ on the facade of St. Peter's Basilica[129] before undergoing a Knights-financed renovation.[128][129]

The cross from the façade of St. Peter's Basilica now resides in the Knights' museum.[128]

Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors

In 2015, the order launched Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, a money management firm which invests money in accordance with Catholic social teaching.[12][99] The firm uses the Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines published by the United States

Conference of Catholic Bishops to guide their investment decisions.[12][99] The guidelines include protecting human life, promoting human dignity, reducing arms production, pursuing economic justice, protecting the environment, and encouraging corporate responsibility.[c][12]

In addition to the wholly owned subsidiary, it also purchased 20% of Boston Advisors, a boutique investment management firm, managing assets for institutional and high-net-worth investors.[12][131] Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors manages the fixed-income strategies for their funds while Boston Advisors sub-advises on the equity strategies.[12][131] Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors also offers model portfolio, outsourced CIO services, a bank loan strategy, and other alternative investment strategies.[12] In 2019, the Knights purchased the institutional management business of Boston Advisors.[131]

Saint John Paul II National Shrine

The order owns and operates the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington D.C.[9] In 2011, the Order purchased the 130,000-square-foot John Paul II Cultural Center.[132][133][9] The mission as a cultural center ended in 2009[134] and the Knights rebranded it as a shrine to Pope John Paul II.[132][133] Soon after the pope was canonized, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops named the building a national shrine.[134]

Each year 64,000 pilgrims visit the shrine, which features video content, interactive displays, and personal effects from John Paul.[134] There is also a first class relic of the pope's blood on display for veneration.[134] It also serves as a base for the Order in Washington, D.C.[135]

Notable Knights

Many notable Catholic men from all over the world have been Knights of Columbus. In the US, some of the most notable include John F. Kennedy; Ted Kennedy;[137] Al Smith;[138] Sargent Shriver;[139] Samuel Alito; Conrad Hilton;[140] John Boehner;[141] Ray Flynn;[142] Jeb Bush;[143] film maker John Ford;[144] and Sergeant Major Daniel Daly,[145] a two-time Medal of Honor recipient.[146]

President John F. Kennedy was a Fourth Degree member of Bunker Hill Council No. 62.[136]

In the world of sports, Vince Lombardi, the famed former coach of the Green Bay Packers;[147] James Connolly, the first Olympic gold medal champion in modern times;[148] Floyd Patterson, former heavyweight boxing champion;[149] and baseball legend Babe Ruth[150] were all knights.

On October 15, 2006, Bishop Rafael Guízar y Valencia (1878–1938) was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in Rome. In 2000, six other Knights, who were killed in the violence following the Mexican Revolution, were declared saints by Pope John Paul II.[151]

Emblem of the order

The emblem of the order was designed by Past Supreme Knight James T. Mullen and adopted at the second Supreme Council meeting on May 12, 1883.[152] Shields used by medieval knights served as the inspiration. The emblem consists of a shield mounted on a Formée cross, which is an artistic representation of the cross of Christ. This represents the Catholic identity of the order.[153]

Mounted on the shield are three objects: the fasces, an anchor, and a dagger. In ancient Rome, the fasces was carried before magistrates as an emblem of authority. The order uses it as "symbolic of authority which must exist in any tightly-bonded and efficiently operating organization."[153] The anchor represents Christopher Columbus, admiral under the orders of the kings of Spain and patron of this partnership, here a symbol of the Catholic contribution to America.[154] The short sword, or dagger, was a weapon used by medieval knights. The shield as a whole, with the letters "K of C", represents "Catholic Knighthood in organized merciful action."[153]

Auxiliary groups

Women's auxiliaries

Many councils also have women's auxiliaries. At the turn of the 20th century, two were formed by local councils, each taking the name Daughters of Isabella.[155][156] They expanded and issued charters to other circles but never merged. The newer organization renamed itself the Catholic Daughters of the Americas in 1921, and both have structures independent of the Knights of Columbus.[157][158] Other groups are known as the Columbiettes.[155] In the Philippines, the ladies' auxiliary is known as the Daughters of Mary Immaculate.[159]

A proposal in 1896 to establish councils for women did not pass and was never proposed again.[89]

Columbian Squires

The Knights' official junior organization is the Columbian Squires. According to its founder Barnabas McDonald, "The supreme purpose of the Columbian Squires is character building."[160]

It was founded in 1925 in Duluth, Minnesota, by Barnabas McDonald.[161][162][163] The formation of new Squire Circles in the United States and Canada is discouraged, as the Order desires to move youth activities from exclusive clubs into the local parish youth groups.[163]

Similar Christian organizations

The Knights of Columbus is a member of the International Alliance of Catholic Knights (IACK), which includes fifteen fraternal orders such as the Knights of Saint Columbanus in Ireland, the Knights of St Columba in Great Britain, the Knights of Peter Claver in the United States, the Knights of the Southern Cross in Australia and New Zealand, the Knights of Marshall in Ghana, the Knights of Da Gama in South Africa, and the Knights of Saint Mulumba in Nigeria.[164]

The Loyal Orange Institution, also known as the Orange Order, is a similar organization for Protestant Christians.[165][166]

See also

- Columbus Fountain
- Columbus School of Law
- Father Millet Cross
- James Cardinal Gibbons Memorial Statue
- Knights of Columbus Hostel fire
- List of Knights of Columbus buildings
- List of Massachusetts State Deputies of the Knights of Columbus
- *Manuscripta*
- *Parish Priest* (book)
- Pope John Paul II Cultural Center

Notes

a. The $88 million increase during 1956 was the greatest single increase in the Order's history.[86]
b. The first loan was to St. Rose Church in Meriden, Connecticut in 1896.[101][94]
c. The full guidelines are published on the episcopal conference's website.[130]

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External links

- Official website (http://www.kofc.org/en//index.html)
- Father Michael J. McGivney Guild (http://www.fathermcgivney.org/)

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Knights_of_Columbus&oldid=1148956771"

Attachment I

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Discovery doctrine

The **discovery doctrine**, or **doctrine of discovery**, is a disputed interpretation of international law during the Age of Discovery, introduced into United States municipal law by the US Supreme Court Justice John Marshall in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* (1823). In Marshall's formulation of the doctrine, discovery of territory previously unknown to Europeans gave the discovering nation title to that territory against all other European nations, and this title could be perfected by possession. A number of legal scholars have criticized Marshall's interpretation of the relevant international law. In recent decades, advocates for Indigenous rights have campaigned against the doctrine. In 2023, the Vatican formally repudiated the doctrine.[1]

Discovery in international law

The means by which a state can acquire territory in international law are conquest, cession by agreement, occupation of land which belongs to no state (*terra nullius*), and prescription through the continuous exercise of sovereignty.[2][3] Discovery of a territory creates a mere inchoate title which must be completed within a reasonable period by effective occupation of that territory.[3]

Robert J. Miller states that by 1493, "The idea that the Doctrine [of discovery] granted European monarchs ownership rights in newly discovered lands and sovereign and commercial rights over Indigenous peoples due to first discovery by European Christians was now established international law, at least to Europeans."[4] Kent McNeil, however, states, "it is not apparent that such a rule was ever part of the European law of nations."[5]

Historical background

Miller and others trace the doctrine of discovery back to papal bulls which authorized various European powers to conquer the lands of non-Christians.[6][7] In 1452, Pope Nicholas V issued the bull *Dum Diversas*, which authorized King Afonso of Portugal to "subjugate the Saracens and pagans and any other unbelievers and enemies of Christ", and "reduce their persons to perpetual servitude", to take their belongings, including land, "to convert them to you, and your use, and your successors the Kings of Portugal."[8] In 1455, Pope Nicholas V issued *Romanus Pontifex*, which extended Portugal's authority to conquer the lands of infidels and pagans for "the salvation of all" in order to "pardon ... their souls". The document also granted Portugal a specific right to conquest in West Africa and to trade with Saracens and infidels in designated areas.[8][9] Charles and Rah argue that these bulls were used to justify the Atlantic slave trade.[7]

In 1493, following a dispute between Portugal and Spain over the discovery of non-Christian lands in the Americas, Pope Alexander VI issued *Inter Caetera* which drew a north-south line 100 leagues West of the Cape Verde Islands and gave the Spanish Crown exclusive rights to travel and trade west of that line, and to "bring under your sway the said mainland and islands with their residents and inhabitants and to bring them to the Catholic faith." In 1494 Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty of Tordesillas which moved the line separating their spheres of influence to 300 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands.[8] The treaty was eventually endorsed by Pope Julius II in the 1506 bull *Ea quae pro bono pacis*.[10]

Throughout the sixteenth century, Spain and Portugal claimed that papal authority had given them exclusive rights of discovery, trade and conquest of non-Christian lands in their respective spheres of influence. These claims were challenged by theorists of natural law such as the Spanish theologians Domingo de Soto and Francisco di Vitoria. In 1539 Vitoria wrote that the Spanish discovery of the Americas provides "no support for possession of these lands, any more than it would if they had discovered us."[11]

France and England also made claims to territories inhabited by non-Christians based on first discovery, but disputed the notion that papal bulls, or discovery by itself, could provide title over lands. In 1541, French plans to establish colonies in Canada drew protests from Spain. In response, France effectively repudiated the papal bulls and claims based on discovery without possession, the French king stating that "Popes hold spiritual jurisdiction, and it does not lie with them to distribute land amongst kings" and that "passing by and discovering with the eye was not taking possession."[12]

Similarly, when in 1580 Spain protested to Elizabeth I about Francis Drake's violation of the Spanish sphere, the English queen replied that popes had no right to grant the world to princes, that she owed no allegiance to the Pope, and that mere symbolic gestures (such as erecting monuments or naming rivers) did not give property rights.[13]

From the sixteenth century, France and England asserted a right to explore and colonize any non-Christian territory not under the actual possession of a Christian sovereign.[14] The stated justifications for this included the spread of Christianity, the duty to bring civilization to barbarian peoples, the natural right to explore and trade freely with other peoples, and the right to settle and cultivate uninhabited or uncultivated land.[15]

Hugo Grotius, writing in 1625, stated that discovery does not give a right to sovereignty over inhabited land, "For discovery applies to those things which belong to no one." Dutch policy was to acquire land in North America by purchase from indigenous peoples.[16]

By the eighteenth century, some leading theorists of international law argued that territorial rights over land could stem from the settlement and cultivation of that land. William Blackstone, in 1756, wrote, "Plantations or colonies, in distant countries, are either such where the lands are claimed by right of occupancy only, by finding them desert and uncultivated, and peopling them from the mother-country; or where, when already cultivated, they have been either gained by conquest, or ceded to us by treaties. And both these rights are founded upon the law of nature, or at least upon that of nations."[17] Two years after Blackstone, Emer de Vattel, in his *Le droit des gents* (1758), drew a distinction between land that was effectively occupied and cultivated, and the unsettled and uncultivated land of nomads which was open to colonization.[18]

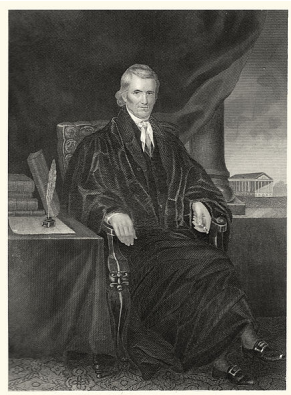
All imperial European states enacted symbolic rituals to give notice of discovery and possession of lands to other states. These rituals included burying plates, raising flags, erecting signs, and naming territories, rivers or other features. More concrete claims of possession ranged from building forts to establishing settlements. Rituals of a transfer of sovereignty often involved trials, executions and other acts to symbolize that the laws of the colonizing power were in force.[19][20]

European monarchs often asserted sovereignty over large areas of non-Christian territory based on purported discoveries and symbolic acts of possession. They frequently issued charters and commissions giving the grantees the power to represent the Crown and acquire property. While European states often acknowledged that indigenous peoples inhabiting these lands had property rights which had to be acquired through conquest, treaty or purchase, they sometimes acted as if territories were uninhabited and sovereignty and property rights could be acquired through occupation.[21][22]

Summarizing the practices European states used to justify their acquisition of territory inhabited by indigenous peoples, McNeil states, "While Spain and Portugal favoured discovery and papal grants because it was generally in their interests to do so, France and Britain relied more on symbolic acts, colonial charters, and occupation."[21] Benton and Strauman argue that European powers often adopted multiple, sometimes contradictory, legal rationales for their acquisition of territory as a deliberate strategy in defending their claims against European rivals.[23]

North American jurisprudence

In 1792, U.S. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson claimed that the doctrine of discovery was international law which was applicable to the new US government as well.[24]


Chief Justice John Marshall

The discovery doctrine was expounded by the United States Supreme Court in a series of decisions, most notably *Johnson v. M'Intosh* in 1823. In that case, Chief Justice John Marshall held that under generally accepted principles of international law,

1. Discovery of lands previously unknown to Europeans gave the discovering nation title to that land against all other European nations, and this title could be perfected by possession.
2. The nation discovering that land had "the sole right of acquiring the soil from the natives, and establishing settlements upon it."
3. On discovery, the sovereignty of the indigenous peoples and their rights to sell their land were diminished, but their right of occupancy remained.
4. The discovering nation, having ultimate title to the land, had the right to sell the land of indigenous peoples, subject to the latter's right of occupancy.
5. This ultimate title of the discovering nation (in this case Britain) passed to the individual states after the Declaration of Independence, then to the US in 1789.[25]

Dunbar-Oritz states that the doctrine outlined in this case continues to influence American imperialism and treatment of indigenous peoples.[24]

Johnson v. M'Intosh

Banner and Kades argue that the 1823 case was the result of collusive lawsuits where land speculators worked together to make claims to achieve a desired result.[26][27] The plaintiff, Johnson, had inherited land originally purchased from the Piankeshaw tribes. Defendant McIntosh claimed the same land, having purchased it under a grant from the United States. In 1775, members of the Piankeshaw tribe sold certain land in the Indiana Territory to Lord Dunmore, Royal Governor of Virginia, and others. In 1805, the Piankeshaw conveyed much of the same land to William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, thus giving rise to conflicting claims of title.[28] The court found, on three grounds, that it should not recognize the land titles obtained from Native Americans prior to American independence. A number of academics and Indigenous rights activists have argued that Chief Justice John Marshall had large real estate holdings that would have been affected if the case were decided in favor of Johnson.[29]

Decision

Marshall found that ultimate title to land comes into existence by virtue of discovery and possession of that land, a rule that had been observed by all European countries with settlements in the New World. The United States had ultimate title of the land, as against other European nations, because it inherited that title from Britain and France, the original discoverers.

Marshall noted:

> On the discovery of this immense continent, the great nations of Europe ... as they were all in pursuit of nearly the same object, it was necessary, in order to avoid conflicting settlements, and consequent war with each other, to establish a principle which all should acknowledge as the law by which the right of acquisition, which they all asserted, should be regulated as between themselves. This principle was that discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects, or by whose authority, it was made, against all other European governments, which title might be consummated by possession. ... The history of America, from its discovery to the present day, proves, we think, the universal recognition of these principles.[30]

Marshall noted the 1455 papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* approved Portugal's claims to lands discovered along the coast of West Africa, and the 1493 *Inter caetera* had ratified Spain's right to conquer newly found lands. Marshall stated, however, "Spain did not rest her title solely on the grant of the Pope. Her discussions respecting boundary, with France, with Great Britain, and with the United States, all show that she placed it on the rights given by discovery. Portugal sustained her claim to the Brazils by the same title."[30] Marshall pointed to the exploration charters given to the explorer John Cabot as proof that other nations had accepted the doctrine.[31]

Legal critique

Allison Dussias states that the Piankeshaw were not party to the litigation and therefore, "no Indian voices were heard in a case which had, and continues to have, profound effects on Indian property rights."[32]

McNeil states that the authority for the doctrine of discovery, as formulated by Marshall, was "flimsy". Furthermore, Indigenous nations in North America were factually independent and sovereign prior to the arrival of Europeans and therefore the European powers should not have been able to acquire territorial sovereignty by discovery and settlement, but only by conquest or cession.[33]

Pagden states that Marshall did not sufficiently consider Francisco de Vitoria's critique of the claim that discovery gave a right to possession of inhabited lands.[34] Vitoria, however, stated that the Spanish could claim possession of the Americas by conquest if indigenous populations violated principles of natural law.[35]

Blake Watson states that Marshall overlooked evidence showing that the Dutch and some English settlers acknowledged the right of Indians to their land and favored purchase as a means of acquiring title. Watson and others, such as Robert A. Williams Jr., state that Marshall misinterpreted the "discovery doctrine" as giving exclusive right to lands discovered, rather than the exclusive right to treaty with the inhabitants who owned that land.[36]

Other United States cases

In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), the US Supreme Court found that the Cherokee Nation was a "domestic dependent nation" with no standing to take action against the state of Georgia.[37]

In *Worcester v Georgia* (1832), Marshall re-interpreted the doctrine of discovery. He stated that discovery did not give the discovering nation title to land, but only "the sole right of acquiring the soil and making settlements on it." This was a right of preemption which only applied between the colonizing powers and did not diminish the sovereignty of the indigenous inhabitants. "It regulated the right given by discovery among the European discoverers, but could not affect the rights of those already in possession, either as aboriginal occupants, or as occupants by virtue of a discovery made before the memory of man."[38]

However, in five further cases decided between 1836 and 1842, *Mitchel I*, *Fernandez*, *Clark*, *Mitchel II*, and *Martin*, the Supreme Court restored the rule in Johnson that discovery gave the discovering nation ultimate title to land, subject to a right of occupancy held by indigenous peoples.[39]

In *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* (1979), the Supreme Court held that discovery deprived tribes of the right to prosecute non-Indians. In *Duro v. Reina* (1990) the court held that tribes could not prosecute Indians who were not a member of the prosecuting tribe.[40] However in November 1990, the Indian Civil Rights Act was amended by Congress to permit inter-tribal prosecutions.[41][42]

As of March 2023, the most recent time the doctrine was cited by the Supreme Court is in the 2005 case *City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation of New York*, by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in the majority decision.[43]

Impact on Canadian law

Johnson v M'Intosh was extensively discussed in *St Catharines Milling and Lumber Co v R* (1888), the first Canadian case on Indigenous land title. The judge in first instance stated that Marshall had "concisely stated the same law of the mother country". On appeal, however, the Privy Council departed from Johnson in finding that native land rights were derived from the Royal Proclamation of 1763.[44]

In 1973, *Calder v British Columbia (Attorney General)*, the Supreme Court of Canada found that the Indigenous peoples of Canada held an aboriginal title to their land, which was independent of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and was derived from the fact that, "when the settlers came, the Indians were there, organized in societies and occupying the land as their forefathers had done for centuries".[44]

In *Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia* (2014), the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed that "the doctrine of *terra nullius* never applied in Canada". Aboriginal title is a beneficial interest in land, although the Crown retains an underlying title.[45] The court set out a number of conditions which must be met in order for the Crown to extinguish Aboriginal title.[46]

Advocacy against the doctrine

In 2007, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which acknowledges the "rights of Indigenous peoples to their land". The only nations to vote against the declaration were the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. All four would later reverse their positions.[47]

The discovery doctrine has been condemned as socially unjust, racist, and in violation of basic and fundamental human rights.[48] The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) noted the doctrine of discovery "as the foundation of the violation of their (Indigenous people) human rights".[29] The eleventh session of the UNPFII, held at the UN's New York headquarters from 7–18 May 2012, had the special theme of "The Doctrine of Discovery: its enduring impact on Indigenous peoples and the right to redress for past conquests (articles 28 and 37 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)".[49] It called for a mechanism to investigate historical land claims, with speakers observing that "The Doctrine of Discovery had been used for centuries to expropriate Indigenous lands and facilitate their transfer to colonizing or dominating nations".[50]

The General Convention of the US Episcopal Church, conducted on 8–17 August 2009, passed a resolution officially repudiating the discovery doctrine.[51]

During the Ninth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April 2010, the Holy See addressed the doctrine, saying that it had been abrogated as early as 1494 by subsequent papal bulls, encyclicals, and pronouncements. It said that it considered *Inter caetera* as "a historic remnant with no juridical, moral or doctrinal value".[52]

At the 2012 Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly in Phoenix, Arizona, delegates passed a resolution repudiating the doctrine of discovery and calling on Unitarian Universalists to study the doctrine and eliminate its presence from the current-day policies, programs, theologies, and structures of Unitarian Universalism.[53]

In 2013, at its 29th General Synod, the United Church of Christ repudiated the doctrine in a near-unanimous vote.[54]

In 2014, Ruth Hopkins, a tribal attorney and former judge, wrote to Pope Francis asking him to formally revoke the *Inter caetera* papal bull of 1493.[55]

At the 2016 Synod, 10–17 June in Grand Rapids, Michigan, delegates to the annual general assembly of the Christian Reformed Church rejected the doctrine of discovery as heresy in response to a study report on the topic.[56]

At the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2016), commissioners called on members of the church to repudiate the doctrine of discovery. The commissioners directed that a report be written reviewing the history of the doctrine. That report was approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), along with recommendations for a variety of additional actions that could be taken by the church at all levels to acknowledge indigenous peoples and to confront racism against them.[57]

In 2016, the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted Assembly Action CA16.02.04 titled "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" by a vote of 912–28, describing the doctrine as "an example of the 'improper mixing of the power of the church and the power of the sword' ".[58]

On November 3, 2016, a group of 524 clergy publicly burned copies of *Inter caetera*,[59] as part of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.[60][61] As part of their demonstration, they invited a number of indigenous elders to authorize the burning.[62]

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada have repudiated the doctrine and called on governments to remove it from laws and policies.[63][64]

During Pope Francis's July 2022 penitential pilgrimage to Canada in light of the abuses of Canadian Indigenous children in residential schools,[65][66] Canadian bishops requested that the Catholic Church issue a new statement on the doctrine of discovery.[65]

On March 30, 2023, the Vatican repudiated the doctrine of discovery as "not part of the teaching of the Catholic Church." The Vatican pointed to the 1537 papal bull, *Sublimis Deus*, which affirmed the liberty and property rights of Indigenous peoples and prohibited their enslavement.[43][67]

See also

- Aboriginal title
- First contact (anthropology)
- Frontier thesis
- Manifest destiny
- Monroe Doctrine
- *Terra nullius*

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External links

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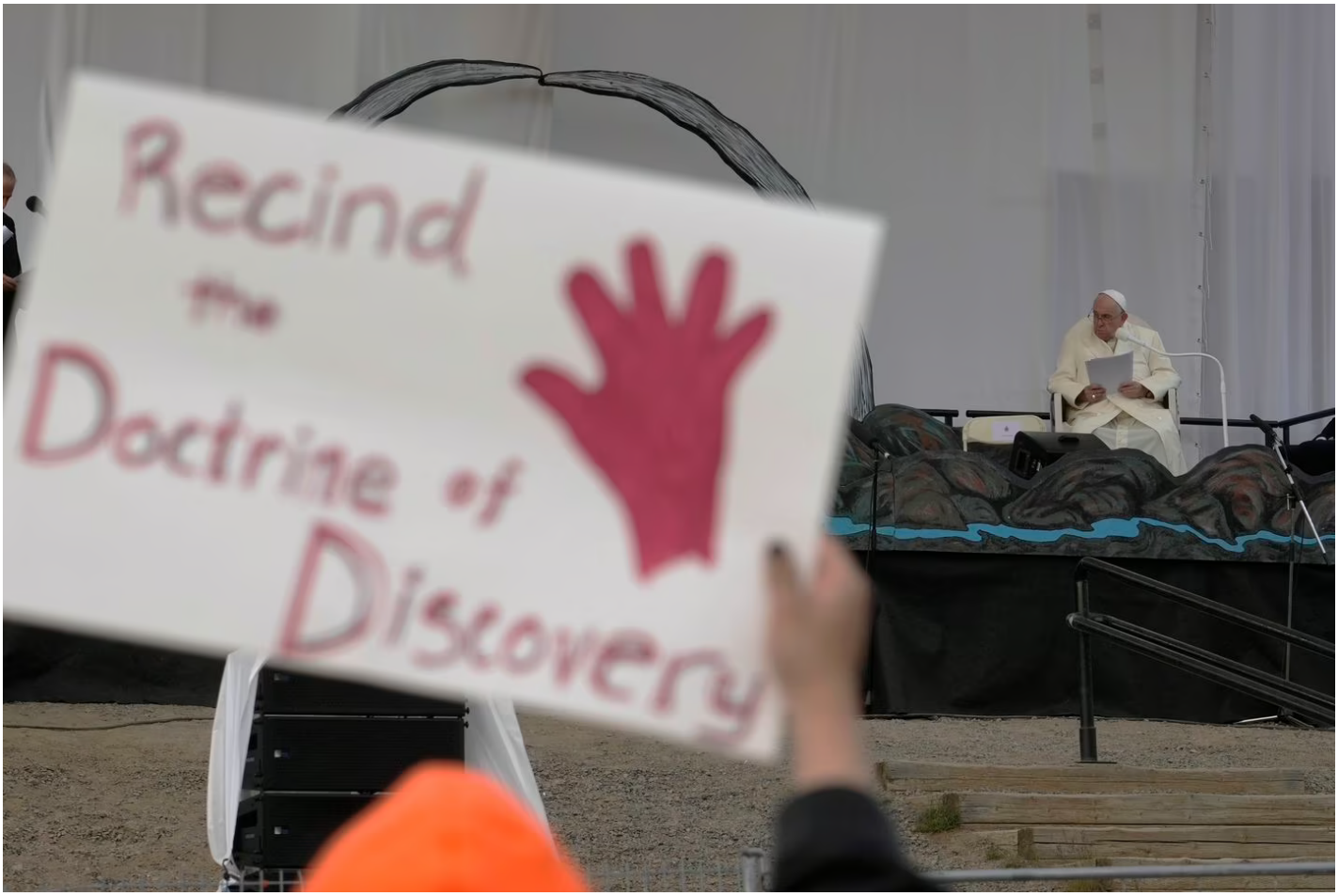
Attachment J

Responding to Indigenous peoples, Vatican rejects 'Doctrine of Discovery'

Doctrine decrees legitimized colonial-era seizure of Native lands and form the basis of some property laws today

By **NICOLE WINFIELD** The Associated Press, Updated March 30, 2023, 6:28 p.m.



People protested as Pope Francis met young people and elders at Nakasuk Elementary School Square in Iqaluit, Canada, July 29, 2022. The Vatican has formally repudiated the "Doctrine of Discovery." GREGORIO BORGIA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican on Thursday responded to Indigenous demands and formally repudiated the "Doctrine of Discovery," the theories backed by 15th-century

"papal bulls" that legitimized the colonial-era seizure of Native lands and form the basis of some property laws today.

A Vatican statement said the papal bulls, or decrees, "did not adequately reflect the equal dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples" and have never been considered expressions of the Catholic faith.

The statement, from the Vatican's development and education offices, marked a historic recognition of the Vatican's complicity in colonial-era abuses committed by European powers. It was issued under Pope Francis, history's first Latin American pontiff, who was hospitalized Thursday with a respiratory infection, exactly one year after he met at the Vatican with Indigenous leaders from Canada who raised the issue.

On Thursday, these Indigenous leaders welcomed the statement as a first good step, even though it didn't address the rescinding of the bulls themselves and continued to take distance from acknowledging actual Vatican culpability in abuses. The statement said the papal documents had been "manipulated" for political purposes by competing colonial powers "to justify immoral acts against Indigenous peoples that were carried out, at times, without opposition from ecclesial authorities."

It said it was right to "recognize these errors," acknowledge the terrible effects of colonial-era assimilation policies on Indigenous peoples, and ask for their forgiveness.

The statement was a response to decades of Indigenous demands for the Vatican to formally rescind the papal bulls that provided the Portuguese and Spanish kingdoms the religious backing to expand their territories in Africa and the Americas for the sake of spreading Christianity.

Those decrees underpin the "Doctrine of Discovery," a legal concept coined in an 1823 US Supreme Court decision that has come to be understood as meaning that ownership and sovereignty over land passed to Europeans because they "discovered" it.

It was cited as recently as a 2005 Supreme Court decision involving the Oneida Indian Nation written by the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

During Pope Francis' 2022 visit to Canada, where he apologized to Indigenous peoples for the residential school system that forcibly removed Native children from their homes, he was met with demands for a formal repudiation of the papal bulls.

Two Indigenous women unfurled a banner at the altar of the National Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré on July 29 that read: "Rescind the Doctrine" in bright red and black letters.

Before that, Michelle Schenandoah of the Oneida Nation had called for the Vatican to rescind the papal bulls when she delivered the closing remarks of the First Nations delegation that met with Francis during a weeklong visit last year by Native groups from Canada. On Thursday, she called the Vatican statement "another step in the right direction" but noted that it didn't mention the rescinding of the bulls themselves.

"I think what this does is it really puts the responsibility on nation-states such as the United States, to look at its use of the Doctrine of Discovery," she said in an interview from Syracuse, N.Y., where she is a professor of Indigenous law at Syracuse University's College of Law. "This goes beyond land. It really has created generation upon generation of genocidal policies directed towards Indigenous peoples. And I think that it's time for these governments to take full accountability for their actions."

In the statement, the Vatican said: "The Catholic Church therefore repudiates those concepts that fail to recognize the inherent human rights of Indigenous peoples, including what has become known as the legal and political 'doctrine of discovery.'"

Phil Fontaine, a former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations in Canada who was also part of the First Nations delegation that met with Francis at the Vatican, said the statement was "wonderful," resolved an outstanding issue, and now puts the matter to civil authorities to revise property laws that cite the doctrine.

"The church has done one thing, as it said it would do, for the Holy Father. Now the ball is in the court of governments, the United States and in Canada, but particularly in the United States where the doctrine is embedded in the law," he told the Associated Press.

The Vatican offered no evidence that the three papal bulls (Dum Diversas in 1452, Romanus Pontifex in 1455, and Inter Caetera in 1493) had themselves been formally abrogated, rescinded, or rejected, as Vatican officials have often said. But it cited a subsequent bull, Sublimis Deus in 1537, that reaffirmed that Indigenous peoples shouldn't be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, and were not to be enslaved.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, the Canadian Jesuit whose office coauthored the statement, stressed that the original bulls had long ago been abrogated and that the use of the term "doctrine" — which in this case is a legal term, not a religious one — had led to centuries of confusion about the church's role.

The original bulls, he said, "are being treated as if they were teaching, magisterial, or doctrinal documents, and they are an ad hoc political move. And I think to solemnly repudiate an ad hoc political move is to generate more confusion than clarity."

He stressed that the statement wasn't just about setting the historical record straight, but "to discover, identify, analyze, and try to overcome what we can only call the enduring effects of colonialism today."

It was significant that the repudiation of the "Doctrine of Discovery" came during the pontificate of history's first Latin American pope. Even before the Canadian trip, the Argentine pope had apologized to Native peoples in Bolivia in 2015 for the crimes of the colonial-era conquest of the Americas.

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