



Watertown City Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED
OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President &
District C Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

Report of the Committee on Economic Development and Planning Meeting Date: November 20, 2025

The Committee convened on Thursday November 20, 2025, at 5:00 pm in the City Council Office. Present were Lisa Feltner, chair; John Gannon, vice chair; and Vincent Piccirilli, secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct Historic District Commission and Public Arts and Culture Committee interviews.

Lei Ma is seeking appointment to the Public Arts & Culture Committee. She is a biologist and educator working at Harvard. Last year she was the Dragon Boat co-captain for the Chinese American Association of Watertown, and attended the Civics Academy, and she's eager to do more to give back to the community. Lei feels her skills in building relationships will be a good fit in helping to make Watertown an arts destination.

Brendan Shanahan is seeking appointment to the Historic District Commission as the Historical Society of Watertown representative, to fill the unexpired term of Robert Bloomberg. He joined HSW in 2022 was able to transcribe their past minutes from the 18th and 19th centuries. Brendan studied at the North Bennet Street School and works as a carpenter specializing in historic woodworking and construction, which he feels will be very helpful to evaluate projects in the district. He also volunteers at the Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford.

Dawn Scaltreto is seeking reappointment to the Public Arts & Culture Committee at the encouragement of committee members. She is an artist, musician, illustrator, and art teacher and was one of the original members of the PACC in 2021. Dawn currently serves as Secretary, and loves coordinating efforts with other arts groups, the schools, and the library. With our full-time Public Arts & Culture Planner and funding from several sources, they have been able to offer diverse cultural events that generated excitement and were well attended, and she looks forward to doing many more.

Harvey Steiner and Linda Sternberg are seeking reappointment to the Historic District Commission and were interviewed together. They live in the district and were both originally appointed in 2003 at its inception, and they currently serve as Chair and Vice Chair. There has been a lot of change in Watertown, but they both feel it is important to balance that change with preserving Watertown's historic characteristics. They discussed how the new "wayfinding" signs are practically unreadable and don't offer a visual representation for the Historic District. They are eager to have the commission work with staff to develop better signage and the public amenities that enhance the area's character, especially with the Mt. Auburn corridor improvements underway and interest by residents to see period-appropriate materials. They have previously shared some ideas with DPW and DCDP but there has since been a lot of staff changeover. They also expressed a desire to return to in-person meetings.

Matt Hanna is seeking reappointment to the Public Arts & Culture Committee, which he has served on since 2023. He is a musician, a music teacher, and a podcast host. He has also been attending some Live Well walks and Watertown Business Coalition events to generate new ideas for community engagement. One of the initiatives he worked on was the inaugural Porchfest in 2024, which was a big success, and it has now transitioned from the PACC to the Cultural District Partnership to manage. Matt is now working on getting more live music in restaurants as part of the creative economy, which proved to be an economic success for participants in the first Porchfest “after hours” this May, and opportunities for live music help make Watertown a more vibrant place.

- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Lei Ma for appointment to the Public Arts & Culture Committee for a term expiring November 15, 2027. Voted 3-0.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Brendan Shanahan for appointment to the Historic District Commission for a term expiring November 15, 2026. Voted 3-0.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Dawn Scaltreto for reappointment to the Public Arts & Culture Committee for a term expiring November 15, 2028. Voted 3-0.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Harvey Steiner for reappointment to the Historic District Commission for a term expiring November 15, 2028. Voted 3-0.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Linda Sternberg for reappointment to the Historic District Commission for a term expiring November 15, 2028. Voted 3-0.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend that the City Council confirm Matt Hanna for reappointment to the Public Arts & Culture Committee for a term expiring November 15, 2028. Voted 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli