



CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
www.watertown-ma.gov
617 972-6465

Residents' Advisory Committee
Wednesday, February 4, 2026
Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Kathryn Madden, Gohar Meliksetyan and Liz Cremens. Sam Ling was not present.

Administrative

The meeting started at 5:00. The next RAC meeting is March 4, 2026 at 5PM.

Gohar announced she will have to step down from the RAC in near future as she and her family are moving to Framingham on or about March 1, 2026. She expressed her regret that her family will be leaving Watertown—her first home since coming to the United States from Armenia, and she will miss her work on the RAC.

Approval of Minutes:

Review of the Minutes for January 14, 2026 Meeting. Approved unanimously.

Discussion

Outreach and Recruitment:

Tyler Cote, Community Engagement Specialist, was in attendance to discuss with the RAC strategies and ideas for more effective outreach. RAC has been concerned with the decrease in residents applying for the Boards/Commissions/Committees (Boards). Tyler had reviewed the Boards Web page which seems to be clear and informative. For other purposes, such as social media and a proposed brochure, the description of the Boards may be too long and could be adapted.

Tyler and Sarah Burns, who is on the City Manager's Staff, are working on some communication strategies such as a brochure. Sarah has experience in graphic design. For the Boards they are thinking of developing icons, short descriptions, and taglines to create an identity for each Board.

We discussed the results of Gohar's review of the applications regarding how the applicant heard about the Board opportunity.

Tyler works with Jeanne Ostroff, Digital Media Manager on dissemination of information on the City Web page. We agreed that the communication of opportunities on the Boards on the City's Web page has increased and is more prominent on the City Web Page. Tyler explained that notices are not sent to outside news outlets but news outlets such as Watertown News may pick up and publish the notices.

Tyler suggested more contextualization in notices about the Boards emphasizing the importance of the work of the particular Board.

In the next weeks applications will be accepted for the Second Civics Academy—seven sessions, April 30 to June 11. All agreed that last year’s Civic Academy resulted in a number of graduates expressing interest in the Boards and some applying for appointments to a Board with some being appointed.

Other Ideas

Tyler also discussed other initiatives and ideas, including participation in events, a Resident Handbook, and a volunteer Hub. The group also discussed working with the Library to display the Board video when it is completed and perhaps other RAC information.

Reach Out to Watertown Engineers, Planners and Architects

Kathryn reported that JoAnna is in the process of sending letters to Engineers/Architects/Planners/Landscape Architects who live in Watertown based on the state licensing and Watertown Census data. As discussed at the last meeting the letter would inform them of Boards such as Historical Commission, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Conservation Commission referring them to the City’s Web Page on Boards and the Universal Application if they are interested.

Board Video

Invitation letter to Board Chairs is finished and approved as is the legal Release which will be at the end of the letter. Will begin outreach to Chairs of Board/Commission/Committee for participants.

Executive Session

At 6:00 by Motion by Liz seconded by Gohar to go into Executive Session pursuant to MGL 30A, Section 21(a), Subsection (8) to interview and consider applicants and not to reconvene as a public meeting. Approved unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn by Gohar seconded by Liz, unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:55.

Minutes approved with edits unanimously at the RAC meeting on March 4, 2026

Submitted by Liz Cremens