



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

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Theophilus Offei,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

Minutes of the City Council Committee on Economic Development and Planning Meeting Date: February 12, 2026

The Committee convened on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 5:00 pm in the Louis P. Andrews Conference Room on the third floor. Present were John Gannon, chair; Vincent Piccirilli, vice chair; and Lisa Feltner, secretary.

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct interviews with residents to serve on the Community Preservation Committee, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Amy Plovnick is seeking reappointment to the Community Preservation Committee. She still feels new to the CPC, as she was a new appointee last August, but she is getting her bearings as she learns from other members, and she also appreciated the recent training provided by the Community Preservation Coalition. There hasn't been interest in one person serving as a long-term chair beyond three months yet, and they plan on rotating until after more time has passed with a fully appointed committee. The CPC has started talking about the process of updating their five-year plan and looks forward to hearing from the Watertown community about what they feel our priorities should be. She appreciates in-person meetings with a remote option for the public.

Dennis Duff is seeking reappointment to the Community Preservation Committee and thoroughly enjoys serving on the CPC and he helps provide needed historical context for preservation priorities in their discussions, given his lifelong residency and involvement in other Watertown redevelopment projects. He hopes a long-term chair will be identified this year to provide more continuity and momentum for the committee. Ongoing coordination provided by Lanae Handy continues to be welcomed and appreciated by members. Limited quality and passive open space remains a concern; there is excitement about the approach to preservation efforts at the Commander's Mansion; and affordable housing efforts are receiving a lot of support but not everyone realizes how complex projects such as Willow Park are.

Payson Whitney is seeking reappointment to the Planning Board. He is grateful to be working with staff on developing specific rules for developers in bringing projects forward for review and/or approval. He thinks it's important to ask hard questions and having access to some history of applicants' work with Gamble Assoc. would provide better context and help inform their decisions. He also feels the community meeting reports should be improved, even if it was just a transcript, along with renderings that reflect a project's surroundings or neighborhood. Most applications for ADUs so far have been rather straightforward, but he looks forward to seeing proposed regulations for Watertown and see what things could be streamlined vs. what might need more public review. He feels it would benefit everyone to have a joint meeting with the Historic District as part of the HDC process; the public also more closely watches the calendar with regularly scheduled Planning Board meetings compared to occasional and remote-only HDC meetings.

Sarah Baker is seeking reappointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals. She is thoroughly enjoying serving on the ZBA even though she initially started out feeling nervous because she feels the caliber of her ZBA colleagues is so high. She finds herself noticing more about the built environment when she drives around or walks in different neighborhoods, especially as she thinks about her continued investment with her children growing up in Watertown. Sarah tries to ask good questions that others haven't thought of, and they're not afraid to ask the petitioner to come back with more information if they don't provide enough detail or have important answers. We definitely see a variety in quality from different developers, and Sarah feels ZBA tries to balance the economic tradeoffs with potential costs and keeps an eye out for enhanced beautification. This winter has also been a reminder about important considerations for landscaping, snow removal or storage, and ways to minimize impacts to abutters from trash-recycling services and fencing.

Action Item: Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feltner, to recommend City Council confirm Amy Plovnick for reappointment to the Community Preservation Committee for a term expiring February 1, 2029; approved 3-0.

Action Item: Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feltner, to recommend City Council confirm Dennis Duff for reappointment to the Community Preservation Committee for a term expiring February 1, 2029; approved 3-0.

Action Item: Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feltner, to recommend City Council confirm Payson Whitney for reappointment to the Planning Board for a term expiring February 15, 2029; approved 3-0.

Action Item: Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feltner, to recommend City Council confirm Sarah Baker for reappointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term expiring February 15, 2031; approved 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Lisa Feltner