



Watertown Town 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

Anthony J. Donato,
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland,
District D Councilor

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M. MEETING WILL ONLY HAVE REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION WITH PUBLIC ACCESS MINUTES

The Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown held a public meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, relating to the 2020 COVID-19 emergency and to avoid group congregation, this meeting had only remote opportunities for participation with public access provided as follows:

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. The meeting was televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): <https://imd0mxanj2.execute-api.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/ssr/live/60195e83b9696d00075a2e67>
- B. The Public was able to join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92991331344>
- C. Public was able to join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 929 9133 1344 #
- D. Public was able to comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov

1. ROLL CALL

Council President Sideris called to order a regular meeting of the Town Council at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, §20, relating to the 2020 COVID-19 emergency and to avoid group congregation, through remote opportunities for participation with public access. Those present were Councilors Caroline Bays, Anthony J. Donato, John G. Gannon, Lisa J. Feltner, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Also present were Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development/Assistant Town Manager, Thomas Tracy, Town Auditor/Assistant Manager for Finance, Mark Reich, Town Attorney, and Marilyn W. Pronovost, Town Council Clerk

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC FORUM

Russ Arico – Fayette Street – Stated the Environmental Emergency Declaration indicated tunnel vision and poor judgment. It did not consider the suffering caused by its economic impact and that it would hurt the poor and the lower middle class the most.

John Ovoian – Stated his opposition to the Declaration of a Climate Emergency. He was concerned as to what it entailed and what the cost might be. This is something that is being addressed in the Energy Master Plan. He felt local government should not be working on national issues but rather on local ones. He also stated that he did not understand the logic for having a designated bike lane on Waverly Avenue between Orchard and Belmont Streets when larger sections of the road did not have these lanes.

Jennifer Smith – Stated that she was new to environmental activism but feels that global warming is a serious threat that needs to be addressed daily; that others need to be aware of potential catastrophic events; and that the Town needs to educate its citizens. The value of the declaration is that it provides a clear message that the Town needs to act to control the emergency.

Miriam Karachi – Stated that the Energy Master Plan is a good step forward. She feels that Emergency Climate Declaration is beneficial because it clearly establishes the Town's commitment to climate change and holds the Town Council accountable. Although the resolution has no direct policy implications, climate change is a real threat that needs to be addressed immediately through such a declaration. She created a petition that this is a necessary step; 347 citizens have signed it. Climate change is the biggest problem facing generations now.

Andre Compagna – Stated that the bike path on Waverley Street is a way to improve streets using the Complete Streets concepts. It provides access to many areas of town and it offers an opportunity to improve people's health, reduce traffic, and improve air quality.

Leyla Mandel – As a child she saw the firsthand effects of climate change in Turkey. She also saw that those who contributed the least to climate change were the most affected by it. This is not a distant worry; something needs to be done before it is too late. The Town needs to act as if it is an emergency and that it affects our future because it does.

There being no other speakers, Council President Sideris closed the Public Forum

4. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

[Minutes of the February 9, 2021 Town Council Meeting](#)

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt the minutes as written; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Referral to the Committee on Public Works Regarding the Establishment of a 311 Line for Watertown

Council President Sideris stated that the referral should be to the Committee on Media and Public Outreach rather than Public Works and that later the referral may be joined with the Committee on Public Works. Some options are available and there is a need for policy guidance. Councilor Piccirilli moved to refer to the Committee on Media and Public Outreach the matter of establishing a 311 Line for Watertown; Councilor Gannon seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Council President Sideris stated that on Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. there would be a Special Town Council Meeting to review the Noise Ordinance. He asked that pertinent documents be made available to the Council prior to the meeting.

6. MOTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDER, AND RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution Endorsing the [Declaration of a Climate Emergency](#)

Councilor Palomba read the Declaration of a Climate Emergency Resolution. Councilor Palomba moved to adopt the resolution; Councilor Gannon seconded the motion.

In the discussion that followed, these matters were discussed:

- The issue of climate change is a real and present danger, but this resolution circumvents the goals set by the Town Council in 2019 without comment from the public
- The Master Energy Plan will begin its work within the next 4-6 weeks and calls for 100% renewable municipal energy by 2035 and 100% renewable municipal heating and transportation by 2050
- The Resolution was drafted by residents and the rationale for the resolution was to create a statement whereby Watertown, along with 1800 other communities across the nation including Boston, Worcester, and other MA communities, would be on record acknowledging that climate change is an existential issue
- A referral was not made because this was not meant to be a policy issue
- The Town would be better served by enacting policy through the committee process rather than by the resolution process and that the Council should wait for the results of the Master Energy Plan; this resolution could serve as a declaration that comes from the plan

- A Resolution is an aspirational statement, and the Town can endorse a policy and continue to work through the policy action steps; it does not create a new directive
- The resolution would set the goals of the Town for those working on the Master Energy Plan; it is not an ordinance that requires commitment to a regulated review process
- The resolution does not provide the transparency that is owed to all citizens
- Public Comment is needed as the resolution affects both public and private property
- This is not an emergency resolution that seeks money as defined by state statute
- Resolutions, such as this one, generally have no teeth; resolutions should be substantive, reviewed, and aim for realistic possibilities
- This resolution is merely a statement of general concern and will not take away from Watertown’s current climate change efforts

It was suggested that the resolution be referred to the Committees on Public Works and Economic Development and Planning at the kickoff meeting of the Master Energy Plan as a statement of intent and purpose. This method would provide for a process and allow for public participation. Councilors Palomba and Gannon withdrew their motion and second. Councilor Palomba moved to refer the matter to the Committees on Public Works and Economic Development and Planning for consideration; Councilor Piccirilli seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote. Council President Sideris thanked the resolution’s adherents for their commitment to the issue of climate change and stated that this would make people comfortable with the way it was achieved.

B. First Reading on a Proposed Ordinance to [Modify Hours of Operation of the Administration Building and Senior Center.](#)

Mr. Driscoll provided some background and stated that the Public Hearing would be on March 23, 2021.

7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

A. Committee on Human Services Report Regarding the [Reappointment of Allan Gallagher to the Watertown Housing Authority](#) – Anthony Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

That the Town Council Reappoint Allan Gallagher to the Watertown Housing Authority for a Term to Expire on May 15, 2025

Councilor Bays read the Human Services Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Report; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to reappoint Allan Gallagher to the Watertown Housing Authority for a term to expire on May 15, 2025; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

- B. Committee on Media and Public Outreach Report Regarding the Production of a [Town Council Newsletter and a Discussion of the Update of the Town Council Pages on the Website](#) – Anthony Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

That the Town Council Request the Town Manager Commission a High-Resolution Image File to Be Created of the Original Town Seal if One Cannot be Discovered

Councilor Palomba read the Media and Public Outreach Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Report; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to request the Town Manager to commission a high-resolution image file to be created of the original Town Seal if one cannot be discovered; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

- C. Committee on Parks and Recreation Report Regarding the Need to Address [Issues at Howe Dog Park](#) – Kenneth M. Woodland, Chair

Councilor Woodland read the Parks and Recreation Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Report; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote. Councilor Gannon noted that the wording “Friends of Howe Park” should be changed to “a dog owners group”. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

- D. Committee on Public Works Report Regarding the [Discussion of the Upper Waverley Design Options](#) – Vincent J. Piccirilli, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

That the Town Council Recommend Proceeding with the Upper Waverley Avenue Conceptual Design Option 2, Subject to the Conditions that the Administration Work with the Owner of the Business at 235 Waverley Avenue to Address Concerns with the Proposed Driveway Curb Cut, and to Also Explore Options to Make the Transition from the Dedicated Uphill Bicycle Lanes to the Share-the-Road Lanes Less Jarring for Bicyclists

Councilor Piccirilli read the Public Works Committee Report. Councilor Woodland moved to accept the report; Councilor Palomba seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved that the Town Council recommend proceeding with the Upper Waverley Avenue Conceptual Design Option 2, subject to the conditions that the administration work with the owner of the business at 235 Waverley Avenue to address concerns with the proposed driveway curb cut, and to also explore options to make the transition from the dedicated uphill bicycle lanes to the share-the-road lanes less jarring for bicyclists; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion.

The discussion addressed the following matters:

- The motion makes clear that the Town would like to support its local small businesses and is asking Zoning to consider that
- The crosswalks are shorter in Option 2 than Option 1
- There will be a loss of 22 parking spaces
- Neighbors did discuss this matter and the major concern was at Dr. Caruso's property; otherwise, there did not seem to be an issue with parking
- The parking study was completed in March during the parking ban with the possibility that the numbers would be different in the spring or fall
- The ban is an overnight ban, and the study was completed from the hours of 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday to allow for traffic variations.

The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There were no New Business items.

9. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Request for Confirmation of Reappointment to the Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Driscoll stated that there was a request to reappoint Elodia Thomas to the Community Preservation Committee for a term to expire on February 1, 2024. Under Town Council Rules, this would be referred to the Committee on Parks and Recreation.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to refer the matter to the Committee on Parks and Recreation; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Driscoll stated that March 17, 2021 would be the fourth anniversary of Firefighter Joseph Toscano's death and that the Fire Department would be having a memorial ceremony at the corner of Bigelow Avenue and Merrifield Avenue. There would be a moment of silence at 10:19 followed by a 30 second salute.

10. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION/REVIEW OF LIST OF PENDING MATTERS

There were no requests for information.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Gannon stated that Scout Troop 30 was holding another Food Drive at the Food Pantry on March 20, 2021 at 80 Mount Auburn Street from 12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. If pick-ups are needed, please contact watertowntroop30@gmail.com to schedule one. He stated that any brand name boxed or canned product would be accepted. The most desired item is instant rice followed by soups. Items such as toothpaste, deodorants, and shampoo would be appreciated because federal food programs do not subsidize hygiene products.

Councilor Feltner read a statement regarding the [Police Department](#). She stated the Public Safety Committee hearings would not be discussing defunding the police but rather the services being provided or practices used and how they can be improved. To provide sufficient time to discuss the matter, the Public Safety Committee would hold two meetings where the public could participate. She hoped that this would be a meaningful dialogue.

Councilor Bays announced that Yardart is occurring in town. To find the locations, please search “Watertown Yardart” online.

12. PUBLIC FORUM

Lena Caruso Bryant – Stated that the loss of parking spaces would affect the traffic on Waverley Street as there are more than 19 cars parked on the street during the day.

13. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted on a roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

ADDENDUM

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by a vote of 8 for, 0 against, 0 present on March 23, 2021.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President
s:/MWP

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.
MEETING HAD ONLY REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PARTICIPATION WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

1. Minutes of the February 9, 2021 Town Council Meeting – Item 4
2. Resolution Endorsing the Declaration of a Climate Emergency – Item 6A
3. Proposed Ordinance to Modify Administration Building and Senior Center Hours – Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, to Town Council – March 4, 2021 – Item 6B
4. Committee on Human Services Report Regarding the Reappointment of Allan Gallagher to the Watertown Housing Authority – Anthony Palomba, Chair – October 21, 2020 – Item 7A
5. Committee on Media and Public Outreach Report Regarding the Production of a Town Council Newsletter and a Website Update of the Town Council Page – Anthony Palomba, Chair – February 5, 2021 – Item 7B
6. Committee on Parks and Recreation Report Regarding Howe Park – Kenneth M. Woodland, Chair – March 9, 2021 – Item 7C
7. Committee on Public Works Report Regarding Upper Waverly Design Options – Viincent J. Piccirilli, Chair – February 25, 2021 – Item 7D
 - Letter Regarding the Effect of the Plan on 235 Waverly Avenue – Joanne Caruso – February 19, 2021
 - Letter Supporting Option 2 of the Design Options – John P. Luther
8. Request for Confirmation – Reappointment to the Community Preservation Committee - Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, to Town Council – March 5, 2021 – Item 9
9. Statement Regarding Public Safety Committee Meetings Regarding Police services and Processes – March 9, 2021 – Item 11