

NOVEMBER 14, 2023



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023, 7:00 P.M.

RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 149 MAIN STREET

MINUTES

ACCESS INFORMATION:

A. This meeting will be held on November 14, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber

B. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television):

<http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/?channel=3>

C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92991331344>

D. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 929 9133 1344

E. Public may comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov

F. Please Visit the City Council Website here: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/350/City-Council>

1. ROLL CALL

Council President Sideris called to order a regular meeting of the City Council at 7:00 p.m. in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Those present were Councilors John M. Airasian, Caroline Bays, John G. Gannon, Nicole Gardner, Lisa J. Feltner, Emily Izzo, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Also present were George Proakis, City Manager, Mark Reich, City Attorney, and Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC FORUM

Cedar Pruitt – 2 Wyoming Rd, Newton - Stated that this is her second time speaking at

Public Forum regarding the noise pollution emanating from the biolab buildings along the Charles River. She stated that there are many products, such as acoustic curtains, that are designed to mitigate noise from these types of buildings that are used well in neighboring communities such as Waltham. She continued to say that, while she now lives in Newton, she lived in Watertown for years working at Athena Health making philanthropic investments in Watertown for the sake of community. She stated that the Charles River is home to a plethora of wildlife, but now that is being affected by the constant drones of biolabs.

Melissa Prudhomme – 14 Wyoming Rd, Newton – Echoed comments made by Cedar Pruitt. She stated that her neighborhood was quiet for years, but since the establishment of 580 Pleasant, the neighborhood has been loud and disturbing. She continued to say that she is realistic, and is not asking for the company to cease, but just that they put up screens that are engineered for the purpose of mitigating the noise. She then noted that the new biolab on Galen Street has such products and doesn't understand why the labs on Pleasant Street do not. She concluded with asking Watertown to request the labs in question, as well as all new construction labs, to use noise mitigating products on their buildings.

Linda Scott – 55 Olcott St – Stated that she researched a 2020 Conservation Committee Meeting wherein the Chair remarked that a project proposal for 650 Pleasant Street was a year and a half late, there was little to no communication with Con Com, and that the plan lacked several important items: no plan for stored water, no clear delineation where DCR land ended and the client's land began, no buffer zones, no report of excavating trees. She expressed concern on behalf of Watertown's Newton neighbors, while urging that Watertown must hold developers and their own stewardship of development to a higher standard.

Cathleen Callahan – 68 Stuart St – Expressed her concern with the sidewalk and street work on Highland Ave. She stated that her fence was damaged, and that they have not heard back from anyone after seeking repairs. She stated that her driveway was once flush with the sidewalk, but now there is an 18" incline which has caused cars to bottom out getting in and out of the driveway. She continued to say that her concerns have been left unanswered.

Paul Weeden – 102 Lexington St – Expressed concerns about the sidewalk and street work on Highland Ave. He stated that a curb has been put up that blocks a portion of his driveway. He stated that now he currently has 17' of access to his driveway, but that the access of the driveway has been at the previous larger size for decades and decades. He made reference to the 11' and 22' foot (driveway) rule but noted that he has seen much larger driveways than 22' in town and stated that the rule is being applied inconsistently. He stated that Tony Mancini is responsible for the inconsistency and "horrific planning", and that the Assistant City Manager and City Manager are allowing it to happen. He continued to note that City Manager Proakis is slated for a performance bonus, but he does not believe this is representative of a job well done. He concluded that this project should be for the betterment of the City and not take away from its residents.

Russ Arico – 49 Fayette St – Remarked on the Watertown Town Square kickoff, particularly with an idea that was proposed which would reduce the traffic lanes down to one for streets coming into the square. He expressed his doubts with this notion but

proposed to put the idea to the test with a pilot program over the course of 30-60 days to see if reducing the lanes would be feasible, particularly through snowstorms. He remarked that the intersection includes route 20 and route 16, which are state roads, and altering them would cause complications with the state. He concluded by saying that any change that is made to the square should be backed by hard evidence, and that he personally doesn't want to see the square overdeveloped.

Joan Gumbleton - 32 Falmouth Rd – Stated that the residents are paying good taxes in the city, and that Watertown should set a high standard of living for its residents with regard to noise from biolabs that abut the residential neighborhoods, as well as grandfathering in existing driveways during the streets and sidewalk updates.

Dennis Holland – 29 Nyack St – Remarked on the ongoing work on Highland Ave. He stated that he has experience in road work, and to his observations, there doesn't seem to be a lack of oversight as to work going on, and that common sense should have prevailed to eliminate the grass strips on narrow streets in order to add a curb if that was the purpose of the project. He continued to mention that work regarding safety measures around the school should have taken place during the summer as opposed to the school year, and that work that is going on is often drawn out longer than necessary which leaves unfinished and unsafe construction sites. He then stated that the city can't stop the low bidding process, but that there should be a performance review of the contractors doing work, and remarked that it would be a mistake to use this particular contractor for the Mt. Auburn Corridor. He remarked on a road grader on Mt. Auburn St. that was taking up parking spaces in front of small businesses and asked whether Mt. Auburn is getting excavated.

Annee Marie Cloonan - 14–16 Winthrop St – Remarked on the negative traffic flow around the Hosmer School as well as the presented gate and signage. She stated that the flow is hazardous, that there is no crossing guard or any governance of traffic, and that it has become a nightmare for the residents of that neighborhood. She requested to have a follow-up meeting with the council to work out solutions and stated that the School has not been responsive to their requests.

Carl Paulson – Partridge St – Stated that there is currently a significantly leaning telephone pole at the entrance of the Ridgelawn Cemetery that became askew during the sidewalk construction and stated that the cables from the pole are hanging dangerously low. He also remarked that the finish coat of the pavement is seemingly delayed.

Maureen Foley – 10-12 Winthrop St – Stated that she attended the traffic meeting concerning the area around the Hosmer School. She said that the status of the traffic around the neighborhood is so poor that she often avoids going home during certain hours of the day to avoid it. She continued to remark on the portion of Winthrop Street that was extended in front of the school is only being used for teacher's parking, but its purpose was for bus drop off and visitor temp parking. She stated that all other new schools have a dedicated space for school bus drop off, but that isn't the case for Hosmer. She expressed disappointment that the space isn't being used as it was proposed.

Janet Nolen - 217 Highland Ave – Stated that her sidewalk was changed from concrete to a rubberized mixture, and that the work on the sidewalk has altered her walkway by 5" in height. The height and material change was due to a dead tree on the sidewalk, and while

she anticipated the tree and roots to be cleared away, that did not happen. After she asked the purpose of the change in material, she was told that it is so the roots of the trees and grow and the sidewalk would grow and adjust with it. She believed did not make any sense and pointed out that, instead of cracks, the sidewalk will be rolling and unstable.

Dean Martino – Resident – Stated that he does not believe the city does a good job in doing a project recap once a construction job is done and said there should be a review of problems/areas of improvement for each project. He stated that he has seen a lack of oversight on these projects, that the work seemed inconsistent on a schedule level which included much delay, and that there was little care for the houses surrounding the projects. He urged the city to learn from shortfalls of previous projects so that they can be avoided in the future.

Josh Wheeler – 25 Highland Ave – Echoed statements of complaints with the work done on Highland Ave. He claimed that he had two legal parking spots prior to the project, but now has zero legal parking spots due to the construction. He stated that Mr. Mancini has been demeaning and disingenuous in response to his complaints in claiming that there are still two parking spots, because the spots in question aren't big enough to fit a car.

Elodia Thomas – 67 Marion Rd – Stated that there are so many individuals coming forward with concerns about the community and asked the Council to represent its residents. She cited issues on many streets around town, and that there needs to be a better response from the City. She continued to say that she understands that the City is in a period of great flux with a new City Manager, but these issues have been pent up for a long time. She stated that there is a lot of ongoing development and that there needs to be action in response to the residents' concerns.

Cathleen Callahan – 68 Stuart St – Stated that she lives near a telephone pole that was knocked down in October, and while some work was done to clean it up and the street was temporarily closed, the street and sidewalk are now open, but the telephone pole is still dangerously leaning. She asked what the City was going to do to attend to the matter.

Joan Gumbleton - 32 Falmouth Rd – Spoke on the parking matter that coincides with the street and sidewalk work on. She stated changes to on-street parking aren't always posted in advance and asked for the Council to come up with a system to properly inform the residents prior to changes.

Elodia Thomas – 67 Marion Rd – Stated that residents don't have enough time to go in front of the planning board to challenge when something like their driveway widths are suddenly being changed. She stated that there is little notification for road work, surveyors are hard to come by, and residents are caught flat footed. She asked for an improvement in process.

Linda Scott - 55 Olcott St – Asked the Council to not forget about the children's safety with regard to the lack of signs for crosswalks around the Cuniff School.

President Sideris asked to bring up item 10 A as it pertains to the majority of comments heard during Public Forum.

Councilor Piccirilli made a motion to move 10A up and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE CITY MANAGER

A. Review of Policies and Strategies for DPW Streets and Sidewalks Projects

City Manager Proakis acknowledged the amount of public comment regarding the ongoing streets and sidewalks project. He stated that the one key issue that he is struggling with most is separating the policies and strategies about street construction with the particular challenges the City has encountered with contractors -specifically on Highland Ave. He continued to say that he believes the residents and the City collectively share a frustration with the speed and organization of how work is getting done. He stated that this issue will be receiving more attention with the new personnel in the City Engineering Management Team.

Superintendent St. Louis presented DPW's Road Program Goals which includes 72 centerline miles of City roads, over 10,000 feet of gas, water, and sewer main replacement, and over 10,000 feet of pavement in road reconstruction, sidewalk rehabilitation, and mill & overlay. He stated that the City-Wide Pavement Condition Index scores a 65. He continued to say that the score is improving with ongoing projects, but it's imperative to make the improvements in correct order to avoid redoing work. He stated that elements of road reconstruction includes reclamation & paving, curbing, drainage repairs, providing ADA ramps, and grass borders with street trees. He stated that the DPW's annual roadway program review is focused on developing pavement condition, utilities, public utilities, an estimation on traffic and transportation impacts, and safety improvements. After reviewing that information, the DPW determines an order of what streets to work on. DPW notifies all residents with when they are planning on doing work on their streets in advance with what work they intend to do. After that, they walk through the sites with contractors to specifically mark what work needs to be done so that the contractor doesn't make ad hoc decisions.

Superintendent St. Louis presented the sequence of a typical capital improvement project: water main work and/or lead services, gas main replacement, complete street and design guidelines identified, secure budgets, bid projects, construction & punch list. He stated that the state bid guidelines dictate the DPW to accept the lowest responsible & responsive bidder. He continued to say that if an accepted bidder proves to be irresponsible or unresponsive, you can create a paper trail so that it can be taken into account when it comes time for the next project to be sent out to bids. He stated that there are punch lists that the DPW execute during site walks during the construction period of projects that review the work being done.

Superintendent St. Louis presented the upcoming Capital Projects: Watertown Square, Arsenal Street, Long Streets/Connectors, Coolidge Ave, and Mt Auburn Street. He concluded by stating the DPW is working hard to combat challenges for projects: limited number of vendors, weather, planned and unplanned utility work, private development, limiting scope creep on impacting budgets, and staffing demands.

City Manager Proakis offered to gather staff and help sort out some of the project

challenges on site, specifically with Highland Ave. He continued to say that he is keeping a closer on the responsible and responsive characteristics of contractors. He stated that the City is trying to get the standard of the streets up to the “complete street” standard defined in the comprehensive plan. He stated that the effect of the narrowing of streets is somewhat by design as it promotes slower traffic and safer neighborhoods, and referenced that the completed streets in the Watertown are good successful examples of what they are trying to achieve. He spoke to the driveway ordinances stating that notifications were sent out in April of '22, and stated that there is a zoning officer whose job is to make sure that driveways are in compliance, but also mentioned that there is an opportunity for certain driveway to be grandfathered – driveways that were recently paved without going through the proper channels do not comply with the ordinance. He stated that if a resident disagrees with the enforcement of the ordinance, there is an appeal process that they can take up with the Zoning Board, and if the appeal fails, they can ask for a variance. He concluded by saying that his staff is working to apply the ordinance while keeping the concerns of the public in mind, and again offered to go on site to Highland Ave to better understand the issues at hand.

4. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- A. Minutes from City Council Meeting October 24, 2023

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the minutes from the October 24th meeting and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The minutes were accepted unanimously in a Voice Vote.

5. PRESIDENTS REPORT

- A. Proposed Resolution Regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Process

President Sideris presented the Resolution.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the Resolution and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The Resolution was approved unanimously in a Voice Vote.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Order Allocating the Property Tax Levy Among or Between Property Classes for Fiscal Year 2024

City Manager Proakis stated that with the arrival of the Home Rule Petition, the City now

has the ability to give relief to the residential portion of property taxes and shift the burden more to the commercial side. He also noted that this reduction in taxes is a “one time back” for 2024 and that work still needs to be done to make this reprieve permanent.

Assessor Earl Smith presented the Tax Classification for Watertown. He stated that Massachusetts law allows cities and towns to shift their tax rate between the residential and commercial property class.

The table below illustrates the effect of the tax shift Watertown will implement with the proposed Order, as well as residential & commercial property value information.

Item	FY23	FY24
Average Residential Assessment	\$802,987	\$840,331
Residential Tax Rate	\$13.58	\$11.70*
Average Tax Bill	\$10,904	\$9,832
Residential Exemption (Tax Dollars)	-\$3,598	-\$3,245*
Average Residential Tax Bill with Residential Exemption	\$7,306	\$6,587
Total Residential Value	\$8,100,534,759	\$8,502,470,850
Total CIP Value	\$2,850,351,099	\$3,428,833,774
Total Real and Personal Property Value	\$10,950,885,858	\$11,931,304,624
*Projected Tax Rate and Residential Exemption. Contingent on Council adoption maximum shift allowed by law and maintaining residential Exemption at 33%		

The table below illustrates the change in residential and commercial industrial property value & percentages from 2014 to 2024.

Fiscal Year	Total Value	Residential Value	Residential Percentage	Commercial Industrial Personal Property Value	Commercial Industrial Personal Property Percentage
2014	\$5,167,075,222	\$4,170,633,977	80.72%	\$996,441,245	19.28%
2024	\$11,931,304,624	\$8,502,470,850	71.26%	\$3,428,833,774	28.74%

Assessor Smith remarked on the record-breaking new growth over the past few years thanks to new development and increase in value of personal real estate. He stated that the Council has voted to adopt a 175% shift of tax burden from residential taxpayers to CIP. The Council also passed a resolution enabling the ability to lower the minimum allowable residential burden from 61.6240% to 50% provided the shift doesn't exceed

175%. He stated that if the Council votes for the order, it will save the residential taxpayers \$33,665,310 in FY 2024. He continued to say that Watertown has a residential exemption of 33%, which was the highest in the state in 2023 – illustrating more tax relief while understanding that property value is increasing. He concluded that the Board of Assessors' Recommend that the Council adopt the maximum shift of 173.985% and that the Council accepts the provisions of Chapter 59, section 5C approving a residential exemption of 33% off average assessed value for residents that are domiciled in Watertown for FY 2024.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt the maximum shift and Councilor Feltner seconded.

Councilor Piccirilli stated that this is awesome news.

Councilor Gannon asked how the numbers are looking beyond FY24 in terms of new growth.

Assessor Smith stated that the new growth of this past year was more than they anticipated for the year, but they knew that that growth was coming, it just came ahead of schedule. He stated that they have scaled back "new growth" for the next few years. He continued to say that there are projects planned that have been delayed, but he is hopeful they will begin in the near future.

Councilor Izzo thanked the Assessors and the State Delegation as well as former Councilor Dinardo for their work on the home rule petition and tax shift legislation. She stated that she was happy for the residents to see some financial relief as a result of commercial development.

Assessor Smith stated that Councilor Izzo and Councilor Airasian, in particular, made this issue a priority and helped keep it on track to be passed.

The motion passed unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved accept a residential exemption of 33% for FY24 and Councilor Feltner Seconded.

Councilor Feltner asked why the exemption has yearly been voted on to be 33% as opposed to the apparent maximum of 35%

Assessor Smith replied that they achieved the goal they hoped for this year, but that with variables in commercial development, that might shift could alter in coming years, and the extra percentages give the Assessors a little bit of room to offset.

The motion passed unanimously in a Roll Call Vote.

B. Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Ordinance Amending the City Manager's Salary

President Sideris stated that there was an issue with properly advertising this Ordinance, so it will be addressed in a future meeting.

7. MOTIONS, ORDERINANCES, ORDER, AND RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution Approving the Acceptance of Gift of Tangible Personal Property of a City Flag from Athena Health to be used during City Celebrations

City Manager Proakis presented the Resolution.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the Resolution and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The Resolution was approved unanimously in a Voice Vote.

B. Resolution Authorizing a Petition for Special Legislation Regarding Municipal Charges Liens for Nonpayment of Any Local Charge, Fee, or Fine

City Manager Proakis stated that this Resolution had appeared on a previous meeting, that was then referred to Committee. At the Committee meeting where the purpose was to solidify the legitimacy using a provision of state law to allow using municipal charge liens for nonpayment of fines, there was some question as to whether that particular piece of state law would be appropriate, and there was a suggestion to get legislature to authorize Watertown to perform this practice. He continued to say that in efforts to expedite this, they decided they wouldn't use that state law, and instead submit a clearer legal strategy; a proposal to allow the City to authorize a Home Rule Petition to perform this practice.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the Resolution and Councilor Feltner seconded

Councilor Gannon stated that he was happy to support the Home Rule Petition, as he believed using the state law provision was inappropriate for this means.

The Resolution was approved unanimously in a Voice Vote.

C. Resolution to Undertake the Creation of a Watertown Square Cultural District

Assistant City Manager Magoon stated that the City has tried to establish a Cultural District, but it has encountered a few false starts. He continued to say that due to the hard

work of many, particularly Liz Helfer, a clear and specific plan to organize the many public arts and cultural communities to create this district is ready to be implemented. He stated that in addition to making the community more aware of its arts entities, it allows the district to receive grants as well.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt the Resolution and Councilor Feltner seconded.

Councilor Piccirilli thanked the Department of Community Development, the different arts organizations, the Watertown Cultural Council, and the Watertown Public Arts and Culture Committee. He stated that the first time he attended a meeting regarding the creation of a Cultural District was July of 2015, so he is appreciative that it has come into fruition.

Councilor Palomba asked how the district is being determined, and remarked on its proposed odd shape.

Assistant City Manager Magoon replied that the guidelines of the shape of the district state that the district be walkable and not too large. He continued to say that one of the boundaries was stretched to incorporate the sculpture walk on the community path, another portion was stretched to include art studies, but the result is compact and incorporates many artistic features in the community.

Councilor Palomba asked about the partnership with the Cultural District and the City, particularly how involved and intertwined the two will be.

Assistant City Manager Magoon replied that it would be something that needs to be flushed out when it's on its feet but can vary from being very involved to passive.

Councilor Feltner extended her congratulations.

Councilor Gardner stated she believed the timing is perfect with the development of Watertown Square.

The Resolution was approved unanimously in a Voice Vote.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- A. Committee on Education and School System Matters report regarding its meeting on October 10, 2023 - Izzo, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Jen Nicholson to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation's Board of Directors with a term expiring on September 15, 2026

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Robert Romano to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation's Board of Directors with a term expiring on September 15, 2026

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Elaine Mello to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation's Board of Directors with a term expiring on September 15, 2026

Councilor Izzo presented the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Gannon Seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the Action Items and Councilor Gardner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

B. Committee on Park and Recreation report regarding its meeting on September 28, 2023 – Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

The committee recommends that the full City Council ask the Administration to take a pause and reevaluate the design for Casey Park and its use.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the Action Items and Councilor Feltner seconded.

Councilor Palomba stated for the record that the agenda was to discuss the renovation and the changes to the baseball area of the park, and that he believed they could have moved forward with the plans as is, and didn't think that any renovations would affect the baseball field where it stands.

Councilor Airasian agreed with Councilor Palomba in terms of going forward with the plans for the baseball field, and that some issues raised were correctable.

Councilor Feltner noted that there were questions raised about ADA access elements, and how they were going to be implemented with the field renovations. She continued to state that adding proposed batting cages would greatly change the area, and that the pause would allow the Committee to address these concerns.

The motion passed 7 (Sideris, Gardner, Gannon, Izzo, Feltner, Bays, Piccirilli) – 2 (Airasian, Palomba) in a Voice Vote.

C. Committee on Rules & Ordinances & Committee on Public Works report regarding its joint meeting on September 25, 2023 - Gannon, Chair of Committee on Rules and Ordinances; Piccirilli, Chair of Committee on Public Works

ACTION ITEM:

- A) The Committees ask the Administration to have KP LAW review the final draft of the proposed Ordinance.
- B) The Committees ask the Council President to bring the proposed Ordinance forward for a first reading after the KP Law review.
- C) The Committees ask the City Council to endorse the Regulations to the Ordinance.

ACTION ITEM:

The Committee on Public Works and the Committee on Rules and Ordinances shall review the data after the first winter but prior to May 30 to evaluate the results of the program and propose possible changes to the Ordinance and the Regulations.

ACTION ITEM:

The Committees agreed to refer to the Committee on Public Works a discussion of how the clearing of sidewalks abutting municipal and state owned properties, as well as sidewalks in unusual situations, will be addressed; and a discussion of snow plowing at the corners of intersections.

Councilor Gannon presented the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve Action Item 1 and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve Action Item 2 and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve Action Item 3 and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

- D. Committee on Personnel and City Organization report regarding its meeting on October 30, 2023 – Bays, Chair

Councilor Bays presented the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

- E. Committee on Economic Development & Planning report regarding its meeting on September 27, 2023 - Feltner, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend the City Council endorses the changes to the regulations for Community Meeting Requirements, as follows:

1. In the 2nd paragraph, the words “of new development” will be deleted.
2. Throughout the regulations, change 10 days or 2 weeks to “10 business days”.
3. For item 2, include a recommended list of documents that must be provided.

Councilor Feltner presented the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the Action Items and Councilor Gannon seconded.

Councilor Palomba remarked that there are some discrepancies in community meeting requirements compared to the code, and wanted to confirm they will work in concert. He then asked if the conferences are subject to open meeting law.

Assistant City Manager Magoon replied that they were not.

Councilor Palomba commented that the City of Cambridge’s Development Department’s guidelines for pre-application community engagement was excellent, and hoped that the engagement officer would look closely at their example.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

F. Committee on Human Services report regarding its meeting on October 31, 2023 – Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

Confirmation for appointment (James Mello) as the tenant representative to the Watertown Housing Authority for a term to expire on May 15, 2028

Councilor Palomba presented the report.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the Action Item and Councilor Gannon seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Consideration to designate a Hero Square in honor of WWII (KIA) Veteran, Vincent Ranucci at the intersection of Nichols Avenue and Bigelow Avenue.

President Sideris stated that this has been brought forward by the Veteran's Agent, and is following the process defined by the Council. He continued to mention there is a proclamation in the works regarding this event.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to authorize the naming of the Hero Square and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

- B. Consideration for the dedication of a flagpole in memory of the late Fire Chief Mario A. Orangio.

President Sideris stated that this was brought forward by Chief Nicholson, and that this action is consistent with the Watertown Fire Stations.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve the dedication and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE CITY MANAGER

- B. DPW Front Office Hours

City Manager Proakis asked for the review of a proposal of the front office hours of the DPW to match the hours of the laborers as opposed to the clerical staff. This would effectively change their front office hours to 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM. He mentioned that the staff and union have expressed interest in the change.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to have this referred to the Committee on Personnel and City Organization and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion passed unanimously in a Voice Vote.

City Manager Proakis announced the Administrations Building's hours over Thanksgiving, the Whoville Jubilee, that a Community Engagement Specialist has been hired, the Senior Fitness and Health Fair, and the upcoming Watertown Square Charette. He continued to note parks improvement updates and upcoming park projects and process thereof. He encouraged residents to sign up/apply to be a part of the Human Rights Commission. He thanked the City Clerk's office for a job well done during election season and thanked the Veteran's Agent for his work over the Veteran's Day holiday. He commented on Watertown's electricity choice, stating that the City has created a separate greener and discounted plan for residents. He concluded by remarking on trash and recycling, whose pick-ups are being delayed due to construction, and encouraged residents to put out trash the night before so that the collectors can pick up earlier.

11. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Councilor Gardner asked to receive information on the parks in town: a spreadsheet of the names of the parks and the multiuse games used there, information of the percent of the space that is programed vs. green passive use (excluding parking lots), and data on usage on the parks based on gender and age.

Councilor Gannon asked if there will be coordination of traffic routes during considerable construction and street closures, and if that information will be sent out to the residents.

Councilor Feltner asked for clarification of times for trash and recycling pickups.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Sideris announced that the new Watertown High School will have a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday the 16th of November.

Councilor Gardner announced that World in Watertown is hosting a workshop for the Human Rights Commission.

Councilor Palomba announced the upcoming Committee on Human Services to discuss the qualities of the future Health Director as well as the rodent control program.

Councilor Gannon announced a food drive that Scouts of Watertown Troop 30 is conducting for Thanksgiving.

13. PUBLIC FORUM

Dean Martino – Resident – Thanked the efforts of rodent control at the High School site but stated that it begs the question why similar efforts weren't set in place prior to the Moxley project. He stated that he attended multiple meetings on rodent control, voiced detailed concerns about the effects of the excavation at Moxley, and stated that his concerns became a real problem for the residents around that area. He concluded by saying that he is looking for accountability and assurance that proper measures are being taken proactively anywhere excavation is happening in town.

Elodia Thomas – 67 Marion Rd – Remarked that there were huge problems with the zoom and cable access feeds of the meeting. She commented that the issue of short term rentals has yet to come before the City Council despite multiple Committee Meetings over the course of the past year. She continued to say that there are no minutes available, and that there is no recommendation from the Council. She asked when this is going to be wrapped up and expressed the collective concern of the residents.

Councilor Piccirilli read an email from Amy Krupke – Resident – Requested that a noise barrier ordinance be put in place for new commercial development. She noted that certain buildings have partial barriers that lack coverage over the river, and that sounds travel greatly over the bodies of water.

Paul Weeden – Watertown Resident – Reiterated a plea to not take away from Watertown residents and urged the Council and the Manager to speak to Tony Mancini.

15. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Piccirilli made a motion to adjourn and Councilor Feltner seconded.

The motion was adopted unanimously in a Voice Vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

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 ___ for, ___ against, ___ present on December 12, 2023.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President
s:/BTM

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

City Council Meeting

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber

Administration Building, 149 Main Street

List of Documents

1. FY25 Budget Process– Item 5A
2. FY24 Tax Levy Between Property Classes – Item 6A
3. Athena Flag Gift – Item 7A
4. Municipal charges Lien – Item 7B
5. Watertown Square Cultural District – Item 7C
6. Committee on Education and School System Matters Report from 10/10/23 – Item 8A
7. Committee on Parks and recreation Report from 9/28/23 – Item 8B
8. Committee on Rules & Ordinance and Committee on Public Works Report from 9/25/23 – Item 8C
9. Committee on Personnel and City Organization Report from 10/30/23 – Item 8D
10. Committee on Economic Development & Planning Report from 9/27/23 – Item 8E
11. Committee on Human Services Report from 10/31/23 – Item 8F
12. Consideration for Ranucci Hear Square – Item 9A
13. Consideration for Orangio flagpole – Item 9B

**ADDENDUM TO THE
MINUTES OF THE
NOVEMBER 14, 2023 CITY
COUNCIL MEETING**



City Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:00 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber
149 Main St.
Watertown, MA

Agenda

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on November 14, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. Location: Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber
 - B. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch-now?site=3>
 - C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92991331344>
 - D. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 929 9133 1344
 - E. Public may comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov
 - F. Please Visit the City Council Website here: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/350/City-Council>
-

- 1. ROLL CALL
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 3. PUBLIC FORUM
- 4. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
 - A. Minutes from City Council Meeting October 24, 2023
- 5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
 - A. Proposed Resolution Regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Process
- 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS
 - A. Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Order Allocating the Property Tax Levy Among or Between Property Classes for Fiscal Year 2024.
 - B. Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Ordinance Amending the City Manager's Salary
- 7. MOTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDER, AND RESOLUTIONS
 - A. Resolution Approving the Acceptance of Gift of Tangible Personal Property of a City Flag from Athena Health to be used during City Celebrations

- B. Resolution Authorizing a Petition for Special Legislation Regarding Municipal Charges Liens for Nonpayment of Any Local Charge, Fee, or Fine
- C. Resolution to Undertake the Creation of a Watertown Square Cultural District

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- A. Committee on Education and School System Matters report regarding its meeting on October 10, 2023 - Izzo, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Jen Nicholson to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation's Board of Directors with a term expiring on September 15, 2026

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Robert Romano to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation's Board of Directors with a term expiring on September 15, 2026

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Elaine Mello to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation's Board of Directors with a term expiring on September 15, 2026

- B. Committee on Parks and Recreation report regarding its meeting on September 28, 2023 - Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

The Committee recommends that the full City Council ask the Administration to take a pause and reevaluate the design for Casey Park and its use.

- C. Committee on Rules & Ordinances & Committee on Public Works report regarding its joint meeting on September 25, 2023 - Gannon, Chair of Committee on Rules and Ordinances; Piccirilli, Chair of Committee on Public Works

ACTION ITEM:

A) The Committees ask the Administration to have KP LAW review the final draft of the proposed Ordinance.

B) The Committees ask the Council President to bring the proposed Ordinance forward for a first reading after the KP Law review.

C) The Committees ask the City Council to endorse the Regulations to the Ordinance.

ACTION ITEM:

The Committee on Public Works and the Committee on Rules and Ordinances shall review the data after the first winter but prior to May 30 to evaluate the results of the program and propose possible changes to the Ordinance and the Regulations.

ACTION ITEM:

The Committees agreed to refer to the Committee on Public Works a discussion of how the clearing of sidewalks abutting municipal and state owned properties, as well as sidewalks in unusual situations, will be addressed; and a discussion of snow plowing at the corners of intersections.

- D. Committee on Personnel and City Organization report regarding its meeting on October 30, 2023 - Bays, Chair
- E. Committee on Economic Development & Planning report regarding its meeting on September 27, 2023 - Feltner, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

To recommend the City Council endorses the changes to the regulations for Community Meeting Requirements, as follows:

- 1. In the 2nd paragraph, the words “of new development” will be deleted.
 - 2. Throughout the regulations, change 10 days or 2 weeks to “10 business days”.
 - 3. For item 2, include a recommended list of documents that must be provided.
- F. Committee on Human Services report regarding its meeting on October 31, 2023 - Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

Confirmation for appointment as the tenants representative to the Watertown Housing Authority for a term to expire on May 15, 2028

9. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Consideration to designate a Hero Square in honor of WWII (KIA) Veteran, Vincent Ranucci at the intersection of Nichols Avenue and Bigelow Avenue
- B. Consideration for the dedication of a flagpole in memory of the late Fire Chief Mario A. Orangio

10. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

- A. Review of Policies and Strategies for DPW Streets and Sidewalks Projects
- B. DPW Front Office Hours

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

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

13. PUBLIC FORUM

14. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large
Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large
Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large
Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

CITY COUNCIL ATTENDANCE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to accept the minutes for the October 24, 2023 City Council Meeting.

**CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Resolution regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Process.



Watertown City Council

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

RESOLUTION# 74

2023 - R - 79

WHEREAS: Article 5 of the Watertown Home Rule Charter sets out a process for the development and adoption of the annual operating budget and capital improvement program; and

WHEREAS: The City Council wishes to establish a timeline, consistent with the Charter, by which it will provide policy guidance to the City Manager on the development of the budget and capital improvement program; and

WHEREAS: Such a timeline will also give city residents notice of their opportunity to offer input on these important financial matters;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of the City of Watertown establishes the following timeline for the development of the Fiscal Year 2025 operating budget and capital improvement program:

1. The Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget Overview will be presented to the City Council by October 10, 2023.
2. The City Council will adopt its Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Policy Guidelines by November 27, 2023.
3. The proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Program will be presented to the City Council by January 23, 2024.
4. The City Council will adopt its conceptual recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Program by February 27, 2024, subject to the availability of funds.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 4 for, 0 against, and 0 present on November 14, 2023.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Auditor

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472-4410

Megan Langan
City Auditor

Telephone: (617) 972-6460
Facsimile: (617) 972-6563

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: Megan Langan, City Auditor

DATE: November 8, 2023

RE: Proposed Resolution – Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Process

WHEREAS: Article 5 of the Watertown Home Rule Charter sets out a process for the development and adoption of the annual operating budget and capital improvement program; and

WHEREAS: The City Council wishes to establish a timeline, consistent with the Charter, by which it will provide policy guidance to the City Manager on the development of the budget and capital improvement program; and

WHEREAS: Such a timeline will also give city residents notice of their opportunity to offer input on these important financial matters;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of the City of Watertown establishes the following timeline for the development of the Fiscal Year 2025 operating budget and capital improvement program:

1. The Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget Overview will be presented to the City Council by October 10, 2023.
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4. The City Council will adopt its conceptual recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Program by February 27, 2024, subject to the availability of funds.

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Order allocating the property tax levy among or between property classes for FY24.



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

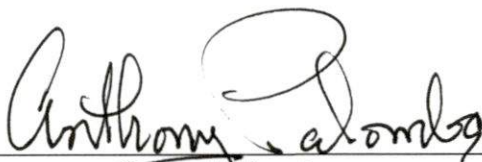
ORDER# 80

2023-O- 80

AN ORDER ALLOCATING THE PROPERTY TAX LEVY AMONG OR BETWEEN PROPERTY CLASSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

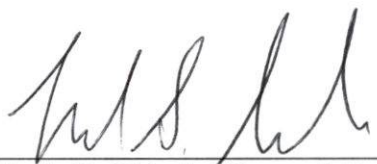
BE IT ORDERED: That for Fiscal Year 2024 for the purposes of Section 1A of the General Laws, Chapter 58, the Watertown Board of Assessors, in allocating the tax levy shall

1. Adopt a factor of 173.985% of the flat tax rate on the portion of the total tax levy imposed on the value of the Industrial, Commercial and Personal Property classes.
2. Adopt a 33% Residential Exemption


Council Member

I hereby certify that a regular meeting of the nine member City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Order was adopted by a vote of 9 for, 0 against, and 0 present on November 14, 2023.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

Fiscal Year 2024

Tax Classification Hearing
November 14, 2023



Summary Highlights

Item	FY23	FY24
Average Residential Assessment	\$802,987	\$840,331
Residential Tax Rate	\$13.58	\$11.70*
Average Tax Bill	\$10,904	\$9,832
Residential Exemption (Tax Dollars)	-\$3,598	-\$3245*
Average Residential Tax Bill with Residential Exemption	\$7,306	\$6,587
Total Residential Value	\$8,100,534,759	\$8,502,470,850
Total CIP Value	\$2,850,351,099	\$3,428,833,774
Total Real and Personal Property Value	\$10,950,885,858	\$11,931,304,624
*Projected Tax Rate and Residential Exemption. Contingent on Council adopting maximum shift allowed by law and maintaining Residential Exemption at 33%.		

WATERTOWN HISTORIC ASSESSMENTS/CLASSIFICATION REPORT

TEN YEAR LOOKBACK

Fiscal Year	Total Value		Residential Value	Residential Percentage		Commercial Industrial Personal Property Value	Commercial Industrial Personal Property Percentage
2024	\$11,931,304,624		\$8,502,470,850	71.26%		\$3,428,833,774	28.74%
2023	\$10,950,885,858		\$8,100,534,759	73.97%		\$2,850,351,099	26.03%
2022	\$10,049,624,325		\$7,602,271,296	75.65%		\$2,447,353,029	24.35%
2021	\$9,398,370,344		\$7,342,750,000	78.13%		\$2,055,620,344	21.87%
2020	\$9,098,604,508		\$7,209,091,371	79.23%		\$1,889,513,137	20.77%
2019	\$7,998,921,648		\$6,382,738,095	79.79%		\$1,616,183,553	20.21%
2018	\$7,193,842,933		\$5,808,343,439	80.74%		\$1,385,499,494	19.26%
2017	\$6,615,124,690		\$5,387,245,133	81.44%		\$1,227,879,557	18.56%
2016	\$6,272,536,699		\$5,088,998,429	81.13%		\$1,183,538,270	18.87%
2015	\$5,444,172,323		\$4,423,338,299	81.25%		\$1,020,834,024	18.75%
2014	\$5,167,075,222		\$4,170,633,977	80.72%		\$996,441,245	19.28%

Levy Limit, Single Tax Rate

- First step in setting the tax rate is determining tax levy followed by calculating a single tax rate.

Calculating the Levy Limit				Calculating a Single Tax Rate	
FY23 Levy Limit	\$144,133,270				
Plus 2.5%	\$3,603,332			Total Tax Levy	\$158,336,628
FY24 New Growth	\$10,600,026	*		÷Total Assessed Value	\$11,931,304,624
FY24 Levy Limit	\$158,336,628	9.85%		=Single Tax Rate	\$13.27
* New Growth Further Detailed Next Page		Increase over FY23			

Fiscal Year 2024

New Growth – Further Detail



Historically:

Permits, Conversions New Construction	Actual New Growth Tax Dollars			Three Year Average	FY24 Actual New Growth Tax Dollars
	FY21	FY22	FY23		
Single Family	\$73,635	\$29,389	\$54,166	\$52,397	\$78,240
Condominium	\$228,153	\$217,920	\$270,610	\$238,894	\$279,604
Two & Three Family	\$103,123	\$45,374	\$82,008	\$76,835	\$40,652
Apartment, Mixed Use	\$197,230	\$271,491	\$70,712	\$179,811	\$162,428
Commercial	\$1,585,148	\$1,076,673	\$966,561	\$1,209,461	\$1,149,340
Industrial	\$314,322	\$5,534,371	\$4,202,589	\$3,350,427	\$7,827,667
Personal Property	\$900,936	\$716,974	\$708,029	\$775,313	\$1,062,095
	\$3,402,547	\$7,892,192	\$6,354,675	\$5,883,138	\$10,600,026
	<i>Significant:</i>	<i>Significant:</i>	<i>Significant:</i>		<i>Significant:</i>
	<i>Arsenal Yards (967K)</i>	<i>705 Mt Auburn St (\$3.3M)</i>	<i>85 Walnut St (\$1M+)</i>		<i>Arsenal Yards (\$2M)</i>
	<i>Personal Property (900K)</i>	<i>Arsenal Yards (\$1.3M)</i>	<i>Arsenal on Charles (\$1M+)</i>		<i>Arsenal on Charles (\$1.8M)</i>
	<i>Arsenal on Charles (614K)</i>	<i>Personal Property (\$717K)</i>	<i>Arsenal Yards (\$1M+)</i>		<i>99 Coolidge Avenue (\$1.2M)</i>
	<i>65 Grove Street (197K)</i>	<i>Arsenal on Charles (\$425K)</i>	<i>99 Coolidge Avenue (\$803K)</i>		<i>85 Walnut St (\$1.2M)</i>
	<i>650 Pleasant Street (100K)</i>	<i>650 Pleasant Street (\$410K)</i>	<i>580 Pleasant Street (\$791K)</i>		<i>Personal Property (\$1M+)</i>
	<i>80 Elm Street (90K)</i>	<i>64 Grove St (\$379K)</i>	<i>Personal Property (\$717K)</i>		<i>66 Galen Street (\$737K)</i>

Classification

Massachusetts Law permits cities and towns to classify property according to use or property type, and to establish separate tax rates for the different classes. One hundred and nine cities and towns in the Commonwealth have chosen to split or “shift” the single rate into two rates: a residential rate and a commercial (CIP) rate*. The shift in the tax rates is intended to help alleviate residential tax rates by “shifting” more of the tax burden onto the commercial (CIP) class.

Watertown has adopted Chapter 200 of the Acts of 1988 amended M.G.L. c. 58, § 1A to allow cities and towns to give Residential property taxpayers greater tax relief by adopting a shift up to 175% of the property tax burden from Residential taxpayers to the Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property taxpayers, provided certain parameters are not exceeded.

Under Chapter 200,

- Commercial/Industrial/Personal Property taxpayers cannot pay more than 175% of their full and fair cash value share of the tax levy.
- Residential taxpayers must pay the greater of:
 - 50% of their full and fair cash value share of the levy, or
 - The lowest percentage share of the tax levy they have paid since classification began.
 - Watertown’s lowest residential percentage share of the levy, since classification began, is 61.2420%.

From Fiscal Year 2004 – Fiscal Year 2021, the Council has voted to adopt a 175% shift of the tax burden from Residential taxpayers to the Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property (CIP) taxpayers. In Fiscal Year 2022, the increasing CIP percentage triggered the lowest residential percentage resulting in the maximum allowable shift of 159.1528%. CIP continued to increase in Fiscal Year 2023 and the maximum allowable shift was 150%.

In August of 2022, the Honorable City Council passed a resolution enabling city to file special legislation seeking ability to lower the minimum allowable residential burden from 61.6240% to 50% provided the shift doesn't exceed 175%. Watertown's delegation worked diligently to secure passage of this legislation. Special thanks to Representative Steve Owens, Representative John Lawn and Senator William Brownsberger for shepherding this legislation through. Special legislation (H2910) passed in October of 2023. Watertown's commercial, industrial, personal property base continues to expand. Lowering the minimum amount the residential class tax burden from 61.24% to 50% allows for a maximum shift of 173.985%.

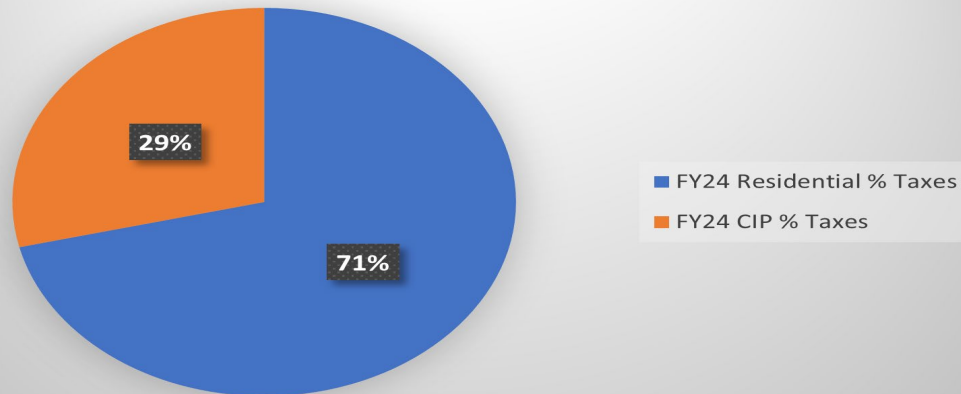
If the Council shifts the maximum allowed by law in Fiscal Year 2024, the shift will save the Residential taxpayers **\$33,665,310**. This amount is an additional \$14,915,105 over last year's amount of \$18,750,205.

***Nearby communities with split tax rates include Boston, Brookline, Burlington, Cambridge, Canton, Dedham, Framingham, Lexington, Lincoln, Marlborough, Medford, Needham, Newton, Norwood, Quincy, Randolph, Somerville, Waltham, Westwood, Wilmington, and Woburn.**

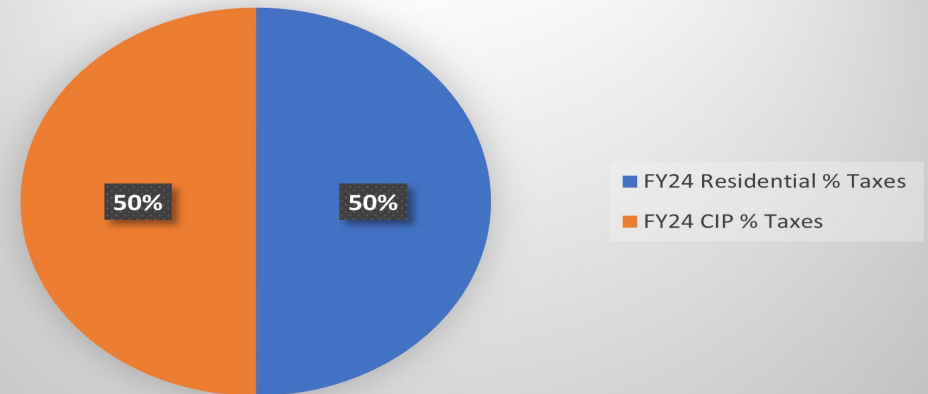
No Shift/Shift Comparison

No Shift				Maximum Shift by Law 173.985%			
Class	Total Assessed Value	Single Tax Rate	Taxes	Class	Total Assessed Value	Split Tax Rates	Taxes
Residential	\$8,502,470,850	\$13.27	\$112,833,740	Residential	\$8,502,470,850	\$9.31	\$79,168,430
Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property	\$3,428,833,774	\$13.27	\$45,502,888	Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property	\$3,428,833,774	\$23.09	\$79,168,198
	\$11,931,304,624	Total	\$158,336,628		\$11,931,304,624	Total	\$158,336,628
*Residential Tax Rate Without Residential Exemption				**Residential Tax Rate Without Residential Exemption			

No Split Tax Burden



Maximum Split Tax Burden



Community Comparison

When considering the impact of tax rates and shifts, it is useful to look beyond our borders to discover how nearby communities are dealing with similar issues. The next page provides a view of the tax structure of other nearby cities and towns for Fiscal Year 2023. Some of our neighbors have split tax rates while others do not. Generally, the smaller the commercial/industrial and personal property (CIP) share is of the total assessed value, the less benefit there is to shifting the tax rate. Arlington and Belmont both have very low CIP shares while Boston and Cambridge have high CIP shares. Boston and Cambridge also offer a larger residential exemption percentage, which coupled with large commercial tax bases, serves to push down the average residential tax bill. While Newton does have a commercial shift, they have chosen not to utilize the residential exemption and consequently the average residential tax bill is higher. Waltham, which is most like Watertown in its socio-economic structure, has a much larger commercial tax base which results in a lower residential tax rate.

Taxpayers often cite that other nearby cities and towns have lower tax rates, but they fail to realize that the average residential assessments in those municipalities may be considerably higher. Just looking at the tax rate in Newton for example, a taxpayer might conclude that taxes are lower than in Watertown. But with a much higher average assessed value, the average tax bill in Newton is much higher than Watertown's.

COMMUNITY COMPARISON

For Fiscal Year 2023

FISCAL YEAR 2023

MUNICIPALITY	RES TAX RATE	COMM TAX RATE	Share of Value RES %CIP %	2017 SHIFT	2018 SHIFT	2019 SHIFT	2020 SHIFT	2021 SHIFT	2022 SHIFT	2023 SHIFT	AVE RES VALUE FY2023	RES EXEMPT.	RES EXEMPT. SAVINGS	AVE RES TAX
BELMONT	\$11.24	\$11.24	95.18	4.82	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	\$1,202,411	no	\$-	\$ 13,515
NEWTON	\$10.18	\$19.07	90.90	9.10	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.72	1.75	\$1,262,792	no	\$-	\$ 12,855
ARLINGTON	\$11.21	\$11.21	94.53	5.47	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	\$849,336	no	\$-	\$ 9,521
WATERTOWN	\$13.58	\$19.73	73.97	26.03	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.59	\$802,987	33%	\$3,599	\$ 7,306
CAMBRIDGE	\$5.86	\$10.38	52.66	47.34	1.71	1.66	1.64	1.59	1.51	1.45	\$1,569,411	30%	\$2,759	\$ 6,438
BOSTON	\$10.74	\$24.68	66.69	33.31	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	\$919,526	35%	\$3,457	\$ 6,419
WALTHAM	\$10.32	\$21.95	65.29	34.71	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	\$744,154	35%	\$2,688	\$ 4,992

Historic Shifts in Watertown, Median Bill Changes

HISTORY			RESIDENTIAL							COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL			
	Fiscal Year	tax shift	tax rate	average assmnt	average tax	exempt dscnt	exempt amount	tax bill	tax bill change	tax rate	average assmnt	tax bill	tax bill change
	2014	1.75	14.96	\$ 427,057	\$ 6,389	20	\$ 1,278	\$ 5,111	3.41%	27.96	\$ 1,680,711	\$ 46,993	12.83%
	2015	1.75	15.03	\$ 451,638	\$ 6,788	20	\$ 1,358	\$ 5,430	6.25%	27.87	\$ 1,728,848	\$ 48,183	2.53%
	2016	1.75	13.68	\$ 517,701	\$ 7,082	20	\$ 1,416	\$ 5,666	4.33%	25.40	\$ 2,048,119	\$ 52,022	7.97%
	2017	1.75	13.89	\$ 547,540	\$ 7,605	22	\$ 1,673	\$ 5,932	4.70%	25.32	\$ 2,108,193	\$ 53,379	2.61%
	2018	1.75	13.47	\$ 587,413	\$ 7,912	23	\$ 1,820	\$ 6,093	2.71%	24.63	\$ 2,412,502	\$ 59,420	11.32%
	2019	1.75	12.88	\$ 643,680	\$ 8,291	23	\$ 1,907	\$ 6,384	4.78%	23.95	\$ 2,846,621	\$ 68,177	14.74%
	2020	1.75	12.14	\$ 723,586	\$ 8,784	24	\$ 2,108	\$ 6,676	4.58%	22.53	\$ 3,259,984	\$ 73,447	7.73%
	2021	1.75	12.25	\$ 733,688	\$ 8,988	25	\$ 2,247	\$ 6,741	0.98%	22.97	\$ 3,546,313	\$ 81,459	10.91%
	2022	1.59	13.25	\$ 757,802	\$ 10,041	30	\$ 3,012	\$ 7,029	4.28%	21.28	\$ 4,282,020	\$ 91,121	24.06%
	2023	1.50	13.58	\$ 802,987	\$ 10,905	33	\$ 3,598	\$ 7,307	4.0%	19.73	\$ 5,097,743	\$ 100,578	10.38%
							Median Increase Past 10 Years		4.31%		Median Increase Past 10 Years		10.64%
Line	OPTIONS		tax rate	average assmnt	average tax	exempt dscnt	exempt amount	tax bill	tax bill change	tax rate	average assmnt	tax bill	tax bill change
1	2024	1.74	11.7	\$ 840,331	\$ 9,832	33	\$ 3,245	\$ 6,587	-6.3%	23.09	\$ 6,063,711	\$ 140,011	39.21%
2	2024	1.74	11.8	\$ 840,331	\$ 9,916	34	\$ 3,371	\$ 6,544	-6.9%	23.09	\$ 6,063,711	\$ 140,011	39.21%
3	2024	1.74	11.9	\$ 840,331	\$ 10,000	35	\$ 3,500	\$ 6,500	-7.5%	23.09	\$ 6,063,711	\$ 140,011	39.21%

Snapshot FY2024's Inventory, Assessments, Value Changes & Residential Exemptions.



CONDOMINIUM				
Assessment	% of Condos	Number of Properties	Avg. Asmt. Change	Median Asmt. Change
Under \$600K	37.05%	1,481	4.37%	3.91%
\$600K-\$799K	47.41%	1,895	4.67%	3.88%
\$800K-\$1M	11.93%	477	5.50%	3.77%
\$1M+	3.60%	144	7.49%	4.53%
		3,997		

SINGLE FAMILY				
Assessment	% of Single	Number of Properties	Avg. Asmt. Change	Median Asmt. Change
Under \$600K	5.27%	150	3.48%	4.28%
\$600K-\$799K	51.98%	1481	5.02%	4.44%
\$800K-\$1M	25.80%	735	7.80%	7.58%
1M+	16.95%	483	12.16%	10.20%
		2849		

Total Residential Properties (1,2,3 Family and Condos) 9827				
Assessment	% of Properties	Number of Properties	Avg. Asmt. Change	Median Asmt. Change
Under 500K	15.39%	1512	4.23%	3.89%
500K-750K	33.78%	3320	4.53%	4.12%
751K-1M	37.75%	3710	4.50%	3.20%
1M+	13.08%	1285	5.80%	3.74%
Total		9827		

Who Gets Residential Exemption			
Use	Inventory	# Exemptions	Percentage Receiving Exemption
Single Family	2849	2385	84%
Condominium	3,997	2521	63%
Two-Family	2,627	1196	46%
Three-Family	354	110	31%
Total	9827	6212	63%

TWO FAMILY				
Assessment	% of 2-Fam	Number of Properties	Avg. Asmt. Change	Median Asmt. Change
Under \$800K	15.72%	413	2.20%	2.37%
\$800K-\$899K	35.93%	944	2.80%	3.03%
\$900K-\$1.1M	41.04%	1,078	3.56%	2.98%
1.1M+	7.31%	192	6.89%	4.70%
		2,627		

THREE FAMILY				
Assessment	% of 3-Fam	Number of Properties	Avg. Asmt. Change	Median Asmt. Change
Under \$900K	14.69%	52	2.17%	0.99%
\$900K-\$999K	31.64%	112	2.65%	1.67%
\$1M-1.1M	36.16%	128	2.38%	2.23%
\$1.1M+	17.51%	62	4.55%	3.01%
		354		



Board of Assessors' Thoughts on Residential Exemption

- The Board of Assessors recommends maintaining the residential exemption at 33%. The passage of special legislation has provided significant tax relief to the residential class.
- Going forward, the Board of Assessors policy is to review the impact change of the residential tax bills and if the average residential tax bill increases more than the previous ten-year median, the Board will consider recommending a further increase. The maximum exemption allowed by law is 35%.

Residential Exemption Consideration

The Residential Exemption is a reduction of a fixed assessment amount off every qualified taxpayer's assessment. To qualify, you must apply, and you must own and occupy your home as your primary residence (domicile) as of January 1st, 2023. The Residential Exemption is revenue neutral within the residential class meaning the reduction is paid for by a higher residential tax rate, high valued properties and taxpayers that don't qualify for the exemption.

The Residential Exemption Benefits:

- Owner occupants that purchased their primary residence home prior to 1/1/23, have applied for the exemption, and their assessment is less than \$1,358,000.
- Because the reduction is the same fixed amount (33% of the average residential assessment) off every bill, lower assessed properties reap more of the benefit by having a larger percentage of their taxes reduced.

The Residential Exemption is Paid by:

- All residential properties with an assessment greater than \$1,358,000.
- Investor-owned property.
- Home buyers that purchase for the first time after January 1, 2023 (qualify for FY25 but miss FY24).
- Taxpayers that have transferred their home into a Trust and have given up being a trustee and beneficial interest.
- Taxpayers that have a second home in which they have declared that home as their primary residence.

Actual Fiscal Year 2023 Average Assessments and Average Tax Bills

Description	FY23 Average Assessment	FY23 Tax Rate	33% Residential Exemption	Residential Exemption Amount	Avg Tax Bill With Res Ex	FY23	Last Year	Avg Tax Bill No Res. Ex.
Single Family	\$775,833	\$13.58	3,598	\$264,986	\$6,938			\$10,536
Condominium	\$548,372	\$13.58	3,598	\$264,986	\$3,849			\$7,447
Two Family	\$881,526	\$13.58	3,598	\$264,986	\$8,373			\$11,971
Three Family	\$1,009,175	\$13.58	3,598	\$264,986	\$10,107			\$13,705

Residential Exemption Scenarios For Fiscal Year 2024

No Res Ex.

Description	FY24 Average Assessment	Projected Tax Rate	33% Res Ex	Res Ex Value Amount	Avg Tax Bill With Res Ex	Dollar Difference From FY23	Tax Bill Change % From FY23	Avg Tax Bill No Res. Ex.	Dollar Difference From FY23	Tax Bill Change % From FY23
Single Family	\$833,543	\$11.70	\$3,245	\$277,309	\$6,507	-\$430	-6.20%	\$9,752	-\$783	-7.44%
Condominium	\$578,637	\$11.70	\$3,245	\$277,309	\$3,525	-\$324	-8.41%	\$6,770	-\$677	-9.09%
Two Family	\$911,557	\$11.70	\$3,245	\$277,309	\$7,420	-\$953	-11.38%	\$10,665	-\$1,306	-10.91%
Three Family	\$1,036,362	\$11.70	\$3,245	\$277,309	\$8,880	-\$1,226	-12.13%	\$12,125	-\$1,579	-11.52%

Description	FY24 Average Assessment	Projected Tax Rate	34% Res Ex	Res Ex Value Amount	Avg Tax Bill With Res Ex	Dollar Difference From FY23	Tax Bill Change % From FY23	Avg Tax Bill No Res. Ex.	Dollar Difference From FY23	Tax Bill Change % From FY23
Single Family	\$833,543	\$11.80	\$3,369	\$285,712	\$6,467	-\$471	-6.79%	\$9,836	-\$700	-6.64%
Condominium	\$578,637	\$11.80	\$3,369	\$285,712	\$3,459	-\$390	-10.13%	\$6,828	-\$619	-8.31%
Two Family	\$911,557	\$11.80	\$3,369	\$285,712	\$7,387	-\$986	-11.77%	\$10,756	-\$1,215	-10.15%
Three Family	\$1,036,362	\$11.80	\$3,369	\$285,712	\$8,860	-\$1,247	-12.33%	\$12,229	-\$1,476	-10.77%

Description	FY24 Average Assessment	Projected Tax Rate	35% Res Ex	Res Ex Value Amount	Avg Tax Bill With Res Ex	Dollar Difference From FY23	Tax Bill Change % From FY23	Avg Tax Bill No Res. Ex.	Dollar Difference From FY23	Tax Bill Change % From FY23
Single Family	\$833,543	\$11.90	\$3,495	\$294,115	\$6,424	-\$514	-7.40%	\$9,919	-\$617	-5.85%
Condominium	\$578,637	\$11.90	\$3,495	\$294,115	\$3,391	-\$458	-11.90%	\$6,886	-\$561	-7.53%
Two Family	\$911,557	\$11.90	\$3,495	\$294,115	\$7,353	-\$1,021	-12.19%	\$10,848	-\$1,124	-9.39%
Three Family	\$1,036,362	\$11.90	\$3,495	\$294,115	\$8,838	-\$1,269	-12.56%	\$12,333	-\$1,372	-10.01%

SHIFT = 1.73985

		\$ 9.31	\$ 11.40	\$ 11.70	\$ 11.80	\$ 11.90	\$ 11.40	\$ 11.90
	Discount %	0%	30%	33%	34%	35%	non qualifying property at 30% factor	non qualifying property at 35% factor
	Exemption	Exemption	Exemption	Exemption	Exemption	Exemption		
	value credit	0	\$252,099	\$277,309	\$285,713	\$294,116		
	tax credit	0	\$ 2,874	\$ 3,245	\$ 3,371	\$ 3,500		
	Assessment	taxes	taxes	taxes	taxes	taxes	taxes	taxes
	\$ 250,000	\$ 2,328	\$ 285	\$ 293	\$ 295	\$ 298	\$ 2,850	\$ 2,975
	\$ 350,000	\$ 3,259	\$ 1,116	\$ 850	\$ 759	\$ 665	\$ 3,990	\$ 4,165
low	\$ 450,000	\$ 4,190	\$ 2,256	\$ 2,020	\$ 1,939	\$ 1,855	\$ 5,130	\$ 5,355
	\$ 550,000	\$ 5,121	\$ 3,396	\$ 3,190	\$ 3,119	\$ 3,045	\$ 6,270	\$ 6,545
	\$ 650,000	\$ 6,052	\$ 4,536	\$ 4,360	\$ 4,299	\$ 4,235	\$ 7,410	\$ 7,735
	\$ 750,000	\$ 6,983	\$ 5,676	\$ 5,530	\$ 5,479	\$ 5,425	\$ 8,550	\$ 8,925
avg	\$ 840,331	\$ 7,823	\$ 6,706	\$ 6,587	\$ 6,544	\$ 6,500	\$ 9,580	\$ 10,000
	\$ 850,000	\$ 7,914	\$ 6,816	\$ 6,700	\$ 6,659	\$ 6,615	\$ 9,690	\$ 10,115
	\$ 950,000	\$ 8,845	\$ 7,956	\$ 7,870	\$ 7,839	\$ 7,805	\$ 10,830	\$ 11,305
	\$ 1,050,000	\$ 9,776	\$ 9,096	\$ 9,040	\$ 9,019	\$ 8,995	\$ 11,970	\$ 12,495
upper	\$ 1,150,000	\$ 10,707	\$ 10,236	\$ 10,210	\$ 10,199	\$ 10,185	\$ 13,110	\$ 13,685
	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 11,638	\$ 11,376	\$ 11,380	\$ 11,379	\$ 11,375	\$ 14,250	\$ 14,875
breakeven	\$ 1,358,000	\$ 12,643	\$ 12,607	\$ 12,644	\$ 12,653	\$ 12,660	\$ 15,481	\$ 16,160
	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 13,965	\$ 14,226	\$ 14,305	\$ 14,329	\$ 14,350	\$ 17,100	\$ 17,850
	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 18,620	\$ 19,926	\$ 20,155	\$ 20,229	\$ 20,300	\$ 22,800	\$ 23,800

- The residential exemption amount (value credit) is based on the average residential assessment (yellow) multiplied by the chosen discount factor which can range between 1 and 35%
- This value credit is then subtracted from the assessed value of every qualifying property. The reduced assessment is then multiplied by the tax rate that results from the selected discount factor.
- Essentially, the residential exemption is funded by the non-qualified residential property owner, they are taxed at the full assessed value with no value credit.
- As the property assessment increases, the tax savings from the exemption diminishes to a point where high value properties actually pay more with the residential exemption in place than if it didn't exist (gray shaded area).



Board of Assessors' Recommendations

- Council adopt the maximum shift allowed by law which is 173.985%.
- Council accepts the provisions of Chapter 59, section 5C approving a residential exemption of 33% off average assessed value for residents that are domiciled in Watertown for Fiscal Year 2024.

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Resolution approving the acceptance of gift of tangible personal property of a City Flag from Athena Health.



Watertown City Council

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

RESOLUTION# 81

2023 – R – 81

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFT OF TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY

WHEREAS: From time to time, this community is the beneficiary of a gift donated towards improving the quality and spirit of its inhabitants' lives; and

WHEREAS: Athena Health, formerly of Watertown, has offered to donate a city flag that was flown at the former Athena Health Building, located at the Arsenal on the Charles. 311 Arsenal Street; and,

WHEREAS: This generous gift of the city flag will be used at city celebrations and serve as a reminder of the city's long-standing friendship with Athena Health.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of the City of Watertown, hereby approves the Acceptance of Tangible Personal Property pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A1/2, a gift of a city flag from Athena Health, formerly of Watertown.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 4 for, 0 against, and 0 present on November 14, 2023.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the City Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager

Date: November 6, 2023

RE: Agenda Item – Acceptance of Gift of Tangible Personal Property

I am very pleased to inform you that Athena Health, formerly of Watertown has generously gifted a city flag that was flown at the former Athena Health Building, located at the Arsenal on the Charles. 311 Arsenal Street.

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A1/2, municipalities are authorized to accept gifts of tangible personal property with the approval of the City Council.

I respectfully request the attached Resolution accepting this gift of tangible personal property be placed on the November 14, 2023, City Council Agenda.

Thank you for your favorable consideration and action on this matter.

Resolution #

R – 2023 -

Resolution Approving the Acceptance of Gift of Tangible Personal Property

WHEREAS: From time to time, this community is the beneficiary of a gift donated towards improving the quality and spirit of its inhabitants' lives; and,

WHEREAS: Athena Health, formerly of Watertown, has offered to donate a city flag that was flown at the former Athena Health Building, located at the Arsenal on the Charles. 311 Arsenal Street; and,

WHEREAS: This generous gift of the city flag will be used at city celebrations and serve as a reminder of the city's long-standing friendship with Athena Health.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the City Council of the City of Watertown, hereby approves the Acceptance of Tangible Personal Property pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A1/2, a gift of a city flag from Athena Health, formerly of Watertown.

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above resolution was adopted by a vote of ____for, ____against and ____present on November 14, 2023.

Council Clerk

Mark S. Sideris, Council President

**CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Resolution authorizing a petition for special legislation regarding Municipal Charges Liens for nonpayment of any local charge, fee, or fine.



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

RESOLUTION# 82

2023 – R – 82

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A PETITION FOR SPECIAL LEGISLATION REGARDING MUNICIPAL CHARGES LIENS FOR NONPAYMENT OF ANY LOCAL CHARGE, FEE, OR FINE

WHEREAS: the City seeks to ensure compliance with the City Code and locally enforced statutory requirements through imposition of charges and fees, including issuance of fines for violations as necessary to ensure such compliance; and

WHEREAS: the City finds that existing methods of enforcement for violations of City rules, such as criminal complaints and non-criminal disposition, are inadequate or too cumbersome to administer in all cases; and

WHEREAS: the City seeks a more efficient and effective method of collecting municipal charges, fees, and fines.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the filing of a petition with the General Court for special legislation to authorize the collection of municipal charges, fees, and fines via municipal charges liens, as follows:

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF WATERTOWN TO PLACE MUNICIPAL CHARGE LIENS ON CERTAIN PROPERTIES IN THE CITY OF WATERTOWN FOR NONPAYMENT OF ANY LOCAL CHARGE, FEE OR FINE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The city of Watertown may impose a lien on property located within the city for any local charge, fee, or fine that has not been paid by the due date. This lien shall be known as a municipal charges lien. For purposes of this act, local charge, fee or fine shall mean any charge, fee, or fine imposed by the city under the city code, city regulations, statute or regulations of the commonwealth, and any charge, fee, or fine imposed by a court payable to the city as a result of any action initiated by city officials to enforce the city code, city regulations, statute or regulations of the commonwealth.

(b) A lien authorized under this act shall take effect upon recording of the unpaid municipal charge, fee, or fine, by parcel of land and by the name of the property owner assessed for the fine in the Middlesex south registry of deeds.

(c) If a charge, fee, or fine which is secured by a municipal charges lien remains unpaid when the city assessors are preparing a real estate tax list and warrant to be committed under section 53 of chapter 59 of the general laws, then the board or officer in charge of the collection of the municipal charge, fee, or fine shall certify such charge, fee, or fine to the assessors, who shall add the charge, fee, or fine to the tax on the property to which it relates and commit it with the warrant to the collector of taxes as part of the tax.

(d) If the property to which such charge, fee, or fine relates is tax exempt, the charge, fee, or fine shall be committed as the tax.

(e) A lien under this section may be discharged by filing in the Middlesex south registry of deeds, a certificate from the treasurer/collector that all municipal charges, fees, or fines constituting the lien, together with any interest and costs thereon, have been paid or legally abated.

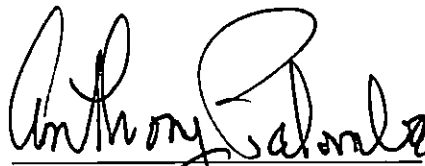
(f) All costs of recording or discharging a lien under this act shall be borne by the owner of the property.

(g) Prior to any lien being imposed for any local charge, fee, or fine as defined by this act, a vote of the city council shall be taken specifying each type of charge, fee, or fine to be collected pursuant to this act.

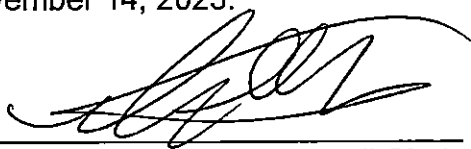
SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

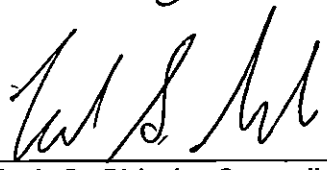
and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the proposed special act, unless the City Council approves such changes as are consistent with the public purposes of this petition prior to enactment by the General Court.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 9 for, 0 against, and 2 present on November 14, 2023.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

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

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the City Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
www.watertown-ma.gov
citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager 

Date: November 8, 2023

RE: Agenda Item – Resolution Authorizing a Petition for Special Legislation Regarding
Municipal Charges Liens for Nonpayment of Any Local Charge, Fee, or Fine

Attached please find a proposed Resolution Authorizing a Petition for Special Legislation regarding
Municipal Charges Liens for Nonpayment of any Local Charge, Fee, or Fine.

I respectfully request the attached Resolution be placed on the November 14, 2023, City Council
Agenda.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A PETITION FOR SPECIAL LEGISLATION
REGARDING MUNICIPAL CHARGES LIENS FOR NONPAYMENT OF ANY LOCAL
CHARGE, FEE, OR FINE.**

RESOLUTION #

R-

WHEREAS, the City seeks to ensure compliance with the City Code and locally enforced statutory requirements through imposition of charges and fees, including issuance of fines for violations as necessary to ensure such compliance; and

WHEREAS, the City finds that existing methods of enforcement for violations of City rules, such as criminal complaints and non-criminal disposition, are inadequate or too cumbersome to administer in all cases; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks a more efficient and effective method of collecting municipal charges, fees, and fines.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Watertown hereby authorizes the filing of a petition with the General Court for special legislation to authorize the collection of municipal charges, fees, and fines via municipal charges liens, as follows:

**AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF WATERTOWN TO PLACE
MUNICIPAL CHARGE LIENS ON CERTAIN PROPERTIES IN THE
CITY OF WATERTOWN FOR NONPAYMENT OF ANY LOCAL
CHARGE, FEE OR FINE.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The city of Watertown may impose a lien on property located within the city for any local charge, fee, or fine that has not been paid by the due date. This lien shall be known as a municipal charges lien. For purposes of this act, local charge, fee or fine shall mean any charge, fee, or fine imposed by the city under the city code, city regulations, statute or regulations of the commonwealth, and any charge, fee, or fine imposed by a court payable to the city as a result of any action initiated by city officials to enforce the city code, city regulations, statute or regulations of the commonwealth.

(b) A lien authorized under this act shall take effect upon recording of the unpaid municipal charge, fee, or fine, by parcel of land and by the name of the property owner assessed for the fine in the Middlesex south registry of deeds.

(c) If a charge, fee, or fine which is secured by a municipal charges lien remains unpaid when the city assessors are preparing a real estate tax list and warrant to be committed under section 53 of chapter 59 of the general laws, then the board or officer in charge of the collection of the municipal charge, fee, or fine shall certify such charge, fee, or fine to the assessors, who shall add the charge, fee, or fine to the tax on the property to which it relates and commit it with the warrant to the collector of taxes as part of the tax.

(d) If the property to which such charge, fee, or fine relates is tax exempt, the charge, fee, or fine shall be committed as the tax.

(e) A lien under this section may be discharged by filing in the Middlesex south registry of deeds, a certificate from the treasurer/collector that all municipal charges, fees, or fines constituting the lien, together with any interest and costs thereon, have been paid or legally abated.

(f) All costs of recording or discharging a lien under this act shall be borne by the owner of the property.

(g) Prior to any lien being imposed for any local charge, fee, or fine as defined by this act, a vote of the city council shall be taken specifying each type of charge, fee, or fine to be collected pursuant to this act.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Court may make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the proposed special act, unless the City Council approves such changes as are consistent with the public purposes of this petition prior to enactment by the General Court.

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of ____ for and ____ against on _____, 2023.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President

Brendan McCarthy, Council Clerk



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the City Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
www.watertown-ma.gov
citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager 

Date: September 21, 2023

RE: Agenda Item – Order Accepting The Provisions Of G.L. C. 40, §58 Allowing For The Imposition Of A “Municipal Charges Lien” On Property Located Within The City For Any Local Charge Or Fee That Has Not Been Paid By The Due Date

I respectfully recommend and request your favorable consideration on the attached “Order Accepting the Provisions of G.L. c. 40, §58 allowing for the imposition of a “municipal charges lien” on property located within the City for any local charge or fee that has not been paid by the due date.”

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

cc: Steven Magoon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development & Planning
Mark R. Reich, Esquire, KP Law

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Resolution to undertake the creation of a Watertown Square Cultural District.



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

RESOLUTION# 83

2023 – R – 83

RESOLUTION TO UNDERTAKE THE CREATION OF A WATERTOWN SQUARE CULTURAL DISTRICT

WHEREAS: the provisions of G.L. c. 10, §58A provide for the establishment of cultural districts to attract artists and cultural enterprises to a community, encourage business and job development, establish tourist destinations, preserve and reuse historic buildings, enhance property values and foster local cultural development; and

WHEREAS: the City of Watertown wishes to pursue designation of a state-authorized cultural district as provided for in G.L. c. 10, §58A; and

WHEREAS: the City of Watertown has a mixed-use geographical area that has a concentration of cultural facilities and assets, and

WHEREAS: the City of Watertown has held a public meeting as required to establish a state-designated cultural district, and

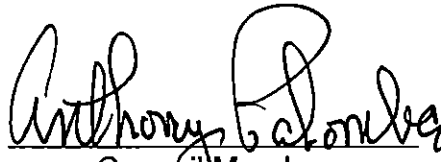
WHEREAS: the City of Watertown created a broad and diverse partnership of stakeholders committed to cultural, community, and economic development to provide oversight of the district, and

WHEREAS: the Massachusetts Cultural Council will be petitioned in accordance with its guidelines and criteria to designate said cultural district.

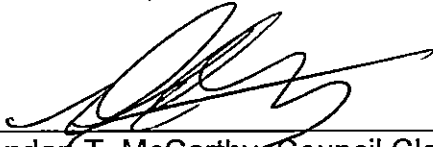
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the City of Watertown undertake creation of a state-authorized cultural district for a period of at least (5) years to be named the Watertown Square Cultural District, and in doing so agrees to:

1. foster the development of the Cultural District;
2. endorse the state-sponsored cultural district goals of attracting artists and cultural enterprises, encouraging business and job development, establishing tourist destinations, preserving and reusing historic buildings, enhancing property values, and fostering local cultural development;
3. appoint a City official to represent the City within the District partnership of said Cultural District;

4. encourage all who own property or business within the Cultural District to involve themselves and participate in the full development of the District; and
5. direct City agencies to identify programs and services that could support and enhance the development of the Cultural District and ensure that those programs and services are accessible to the Cultural District.


Council Member

I hereby certify that at a Meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of 7 for, 0 against, and 0 present on November 14, 2023.


Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk


Mark S. Sideris, Council President

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large
Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President &
District C Councilor
John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large
Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large
Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the City Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
www.watertown-ma.gov
citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

October 30, 2023

Mass Cultural Council
10 St James Ave #302
Boston, MA 02116

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Watertown Square Cultural District – Letter of Support

On behalf of the City Manager's Office for the City of Watertown, please accept this letter of support for the designation of the Watertown Square Cultural District as proposed by the 20 organizations and individuals who comprise the Watertown Square Cultural District Partnership.

Watertown has a long and storied history, back to the first people who lived here through to today's support of arts and culture. Watertown boasts a premiere regional arts center, the Mosesian Center for the Arts, as well as world class institutions like Mount Auburn Cemetery, Perkins School for the Blind, and the Armenian Museum of America. In the 2010s, the arts found a champion with the original Watertown Public Arts & Culture Committee, who produced several public murals and pushed the city to create and adopt a Public Arts Master Plan (2021). The Public Arts Master Plan provided the framework for the new Public Arts & Culture Committee and a Public Arts & Culture Planner who is embedded in Watertown's Department of Community Development & Planning.

A Cultural District builds upon past successes and a groundswell of support for the arts. The location of the Cultural District also aligns with broad city goals to enhance walkability and economic development throughout Watertown Square. The timing could not be better as Watertown continues its legacy of support for arts and culture.

Sincerely,



George Proakis
City Manager

George Proakis, City Manager
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472

October 17, 2023

Dear Manager Proakis,

A working group of 20 cultural organizations and individual artists, collectively known as the Cultural District Partnership, began collaborating on a Cultural District for Watertown in September 2022, following several efforts in previous years that demonstrated strong community backing. The Cultural District Partnership asks for a letter of support from you, before bringing the proposal to the City Council. With a letter of support, and a resolution to create a district from the City Council, the proposal will be submitted to the Massachusetts Cultural Council for review, with anticipated state designation in August 2024.

The benefits of Cultural District designation are numerous, from the Mass Cultural Council website: *“Launched in 2011 by an act of the state legislature, Cultural Districts drive economic growth, strengthen our distinctive local character, and improve the quality of life of families across Massachusetts. By supporting arts, humanities, and science organizations, Cultural Districts attract tourists and entrepreneurs, which in turn help communities foster their cultural sector and expand their tax base. And that benefits everyone.”*

As you know, Watertown has a long and spectacular list of arts and cultural assets. Watertown boasts a premiere regional arts center, the Mosesian Center for the Arts, as well as world class institutions like Mount Auburn Cemetery, Perkins School for the Blind, and the Armenian Museum of America. There are also many public artworks and historical sites to visit. Many of these assets are located in or around Watertown Square, making it the ideal location to highlight.

The key to long term success of the Watertown Square Cultural District is community input. It is with this in mind that the Partnership has determined that a public-private partnership is the necessary format to govern the Cultural District. This format leverages city resources while allowing for diverse participation across the city. In addition to broad organizational support, the Cultural District Partnership hosted a Public Meeting at the Watertown Free Public Library on October 3, 2023, that drew 46 people and is still collecting feedback through an online survey promoted through city and partner channels. A second public meeting will be held on November 1, 2023, at the Armenian Museum of America which the partnership anticipates will draw more people to give feedback on the proposal.

With your support, this initiative for improving Watertown will move forward. A copy of the proposal is included. If you have any questions, please contact Liz Helfer, Public Arts & Culture Planner.

Sincerely,

Watertown Square Cultural District Partnership (listed on back)

Cultural District Partnership:

Public Arts & Culture Planner, Department of Community Development & Planning

Watertown Farmers' Market, Department of Community Development & Planning

Watertown Free Public Library

Watertown Cultural Council

Watertown Public Schools

Project Save Armenian Photograph Archive

Armenian Cultural & Educational Center

Historical Society of Watertown

Armenian Museum of America

Watertown Business Coalition

Watertown Cable Access Corp

Mosesian Center for the Arts

Perkins School for the Blind

AANE Artists Collaborative

Mount Auburn Cemetery

World in Watertown

Watertown Center for Healing Arts

Maria Hendricks, Artist

Jack Dargon, Artist

Susan Jones, Artist

Seth Deitch, Artist

WHEREAS, the provisions of G.L. c. 10, §58A provide for the establishment of cultural districts to attract artists and cultural enterprises to a community, encourage business and job development, establish tourist destinations, preserve and reuse historic buildings, enhance property values and foster local cultural development; and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown wishes to pursue designation of a state-authorized cultural district as provided for in G.L. c. 10, §58A; and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown has a mixed-use geographical area that has a concentration of cultural facilities and assets, and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown has held a public meeting as required to establish a state-designated cultural district, and

WHEREAS, the City of Watertown created a broad and diverse partnership of stakeholders committed to cultural, community, and economic development to provide oversight of the district, and

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts Cultural Council will be petitioned in accordance with its guidelines and criteria to designate said cultural district.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Watertown undertake creation of a state-authorized cultural district for a period of at least (5) years to be named the Watertown Square Cultural District, and in doing so agrees to:

1. foster the development of the Cultural District;
 2. endorse the state-sponsored cultural district goals of attracting artists and cultural enterprises, encouraging business and job development, establishing tourist destinations, preserving and reusing historic buildings, enhancing property values, and fostering local cultural development;
 3. appoint a City official to represent the City within the District partnership of said Cultural District;
 4. encourage all who own property or business within the Cultural District to involve themselves and participate in the full development of the District;
- and

5. direct City agencies to identify programs and services that could support and enhance the development of the Cultural District and ensure that those programs and services are accessible to the Cultural District.

Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the nine member City Council for which a quorum was present, the above Resolution was adopted by a vote of ___ for and ___ against on _____, 2023.

Brendan McCarthy, Council Clerk

Mark S. Sideris, Council President

889984/WATR/0103



WATERTOWN SQUARE

Cultural District

PROPOSAL

11/1/23



Location

Centered on Watertown Square, the Cultural District extends down Main Street to Waverly Ave, across the Charles River on Galen St, and up Mount Auburn St to Common Street



Governance

The Cultural District is overseen by the Cultural District Partnership. The Partnership consists of nonprofits, businesses, individual artists, and a representative from the city.



Benefits

A Cultural District positions Watertown, particularly Watertown Square and the Main Street corridor, as a cultural destination in Massachusetts.



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Executive Summary

The Watertown Square Cultural District proposed here has been the collective effort of many individuals and organizations over many years. The development of a Cultural District is a large undertaking that requires municipal, organizational, business, and individual support. This planning process was started in 2022, following several efforts in previous years that demonstrated strong community backing for a Cultural District in Watertown.

A Cultural District is a Massachusetts state designation that a municipality must apply for through the Mass Cultural Council. The benefits of Cultural District designation are numerous, from the Mass Cultural Council website:

“Launched in 2011 by an act of the state legislature, Cultural Districts drive economic growth, strengthen our distinctive local character, and improve the quality of life of families across Massachusetts. By supporting arts, humanities, and science organizations, Cultural Districts attract tourists and entrepreneurs, which in turn help communities foster their cultural sector and expand their tax base. And that benefits everyone.”

Watertown has a long and spectacular list of arts and cultural assets. A Cultural District builds upon past successes and a groundswell of support for the arts in recent years. Watertown boasts a premiere regional arts center, the Mosesian Center for the Arts, as well as world class institutions like Mount Auburn Cemetery, Perkins School for the Blind, and the Armenian Museum of America. In the 2010s, the arts found a champion with the original Watertown Public Arts & Culture Committee, which produced several public murals and pushed the city to create and adopt a Public Arts Master Plan (2021). The Public Arts Master Plan provided the framework for the new Public Arts & Culture Committee and a Public Arts & Culture Planner who is embedded in Watertown’s Department of Community Development & Planning. All of these developments have paved the way for a Cultural District in Watertown.

The city and Cultural District Partnership members (listed on page 4) are committed to the success and sustainability of the Watertown Square Cultural District. The mission and goals they have developed, with input from numerous community stakeholders, are intended to showcase Watertown as a welcoming place and center the cultural programs that already exist here, while also making space for new initiatives. It is with this in mind that the Partnership has determined that a public-private partnership is the necessary vehicle to govern the Cultural District. This format leverages city resources while allowing for diverse participation across the city.

The key to long term success of the Watertown Square Cultural District is community input. Broad public input throughout the planning process ensures community support and annual evaluation plays a distinct role in ensuring Cultural District programming supports all stakeholders now and in the future.

Cultural District Partnership

Current Members

An asterisk (*) indicates that the organization operates/resides inside the cultural district boundary.

Map of Cultural District Partnership Members with full descriptions: <https://arcg.is/1eDO4C>.

*Public Arts & Culture Planner, Department of Community Development & Planning (public)

*Watertown Farmers' Market, Department of Community Development & Planning (public)

*Watertown Free Public Library (public)

*Watertown Cultural Council (public)

*Watertown Public Schools (public)

*Historical Society of Watertown (nonprofit)

*Armenian Museum of America (nonprofit)

*Watertown Business Coalition (nonprofit)

*Watertown Cable Access Corp (nonprofit)

*AANE Artists Collaborative (nonprofit)

*Watertown Center for Healing Arts (business)

*Susan Jones, Artist (business)

*Seth Deitch, Artist (business)

Project Save Armenian Photograph Archive (nonprofit)

Armenian Cultural & Educational Center (nonprofit)

Russell Cooperative Preschool (nonprofit)

Mosesian Center for the Arts (nonprofit)

Friends of Watertown Music (nonprofit)

Perkins School for the Blind (nonprofit)

Mount Auburn Cemetery (nonprofit)

World in Watertown (nonprofit)

Maria Hendricks, Artist (business)

Jack Dargon, Artist (business)



Artist Amir Tabatabaei with a volunteer crew to paint his mural "I See a Dream" in 2023.

Governance Structure

The Cultural District Partnership (CDP) is a public/private partnership that oversees management of the Watertown Square Cultural District. As a public/private partnership, the city will appoint a current employee to serve as City Liaison and Treasurer for the CDP, funds will be managed by the city in a standalone account, and the CDP must adhere to [Massachusetts Open Meeting Law](#). The partnership has several internally elected roles, following a traditional executive board model that includes the following officers:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- City Liaison (serving in the traditional role of Treasurer)

All elections and votes are won by a majority of current partners when a quorum is present. Partners should include individual appointments from:

- City of Watertown
- Watertown Public Schools
- Watertown Business Coalition

The ideal partnership also includes, at minimum:

- 2 individual artists
- 1 business within boundaries
- 1 resident (regardless of affiliation)
- 2 nonprofit organizations

Inclusion in the Cultural District Partnership is voluntary. The city, schools, and Watertown Business Coalition are expected to appoint a representative to the Partnership, who will represent the interests of their organization at regular meetings.

Nominations to officer (executive board) positions are by self-appointment that requires a majority vote of current partnership members to confirm. There are no term limits for partnership but term limits of four years for the officers, with the exception of the City Liaison, who has no term limit. Officers at the end of their term limit are encouraged to train their successor before their term expires. Termination of membership may occur through written resignation or a majority vote when a quorum is present.

Standing subcommittees and temporary working groups or project teams may be formed to address the goals of the Watertown Square Cultural District. Subcommittees or other groups/teams may be formed by a majority vote when a quorum is present or dissolved by the same.

Mission

The Watertown Square Cultural District supports inclusive and diverse cultural experiences that showcase the arts and strengthen the local economy.

Goals

1. Establish Watertown as a cultural destination that is welcoming and engaging.
2. Encourage public interaction with art in all its forms and from diverse culture bearers.
3. Encourage resident and visitor use of public space through inclusive cultural experiences that engage broad identities and interests in our community.
4. Promote the creation of public art that celebrates creativity and promotes conversation and connection.
5. Partner with businesses and developers to stimulate the creative economy.
6. Support and honor artists working in all genres that represent our multicultural community.
7. Preserve and amplify Watertown's diverse history.

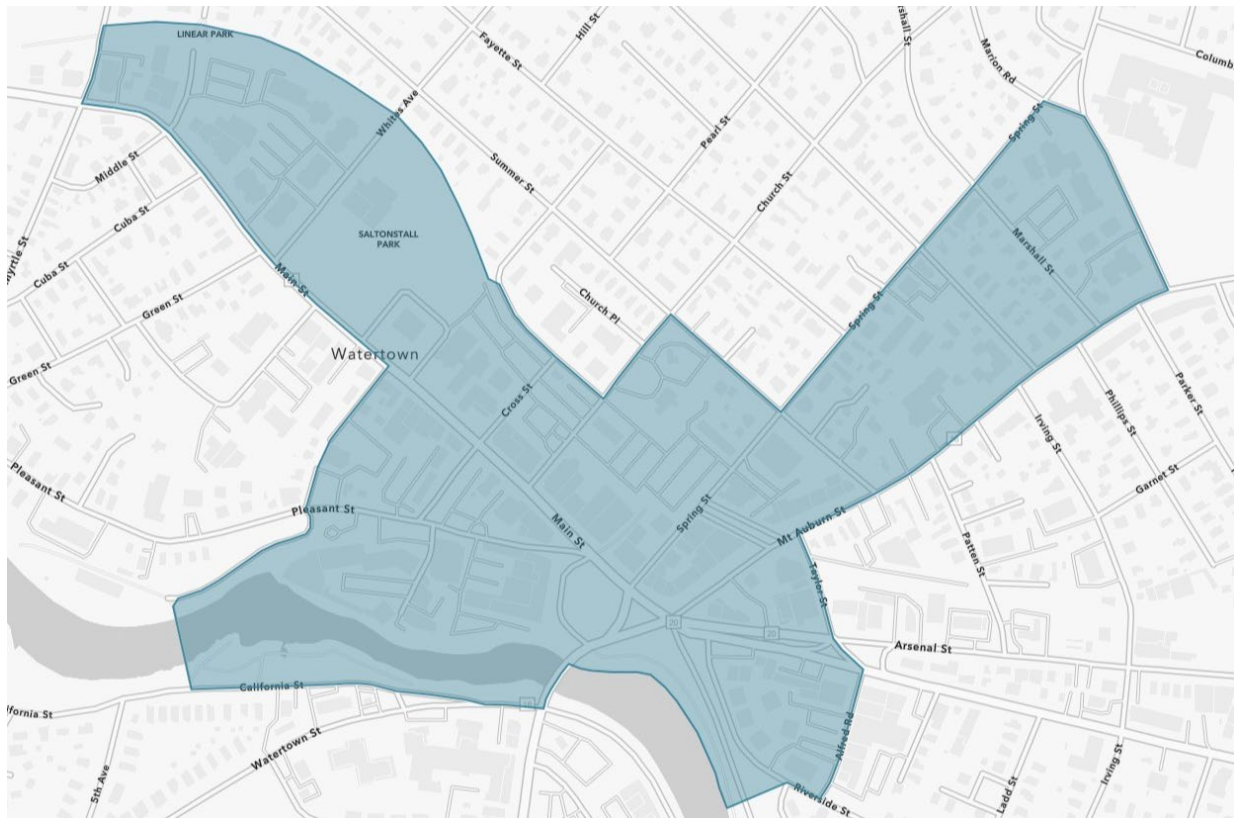


Artist James Payne installs his sculpture "Opposition" for the 2023 Community Sculpture Walk.

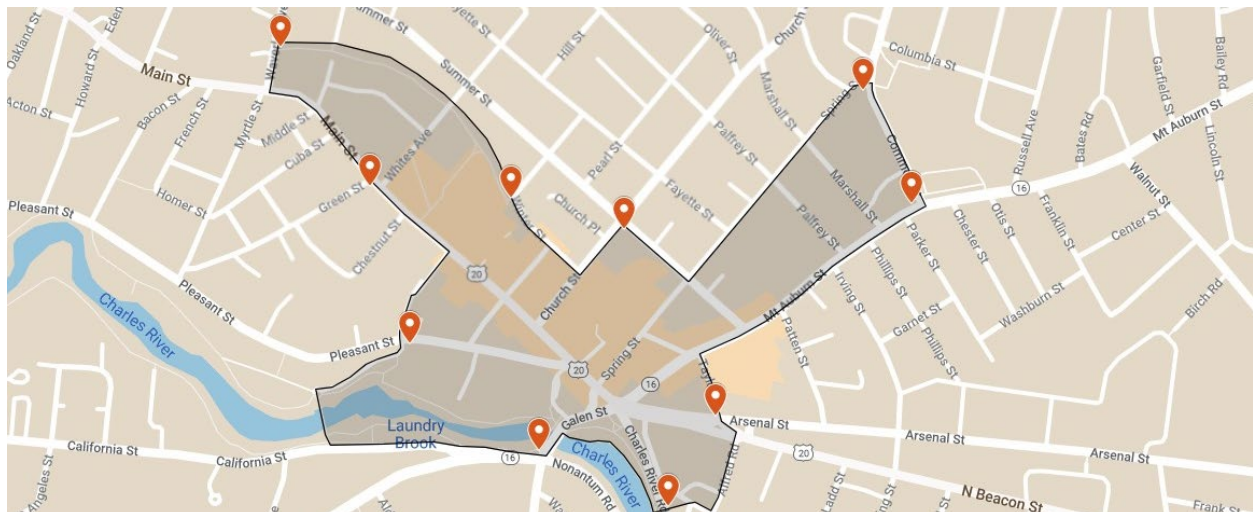
Location

The Watertown Square Cultural District extends from Watertown Square (the five-way intersection of Main Street, Mount Auburn Street, Arsenal Street, Charles River Road, and Galen Street) west down Main Street to Waverley Avenue, north to the intersection of Church Street and Summer Street, east down Mount Auburn Street to Common Street, and south across the Charles River to California Street.

Proposed Watertown Square Cultural District boundary:

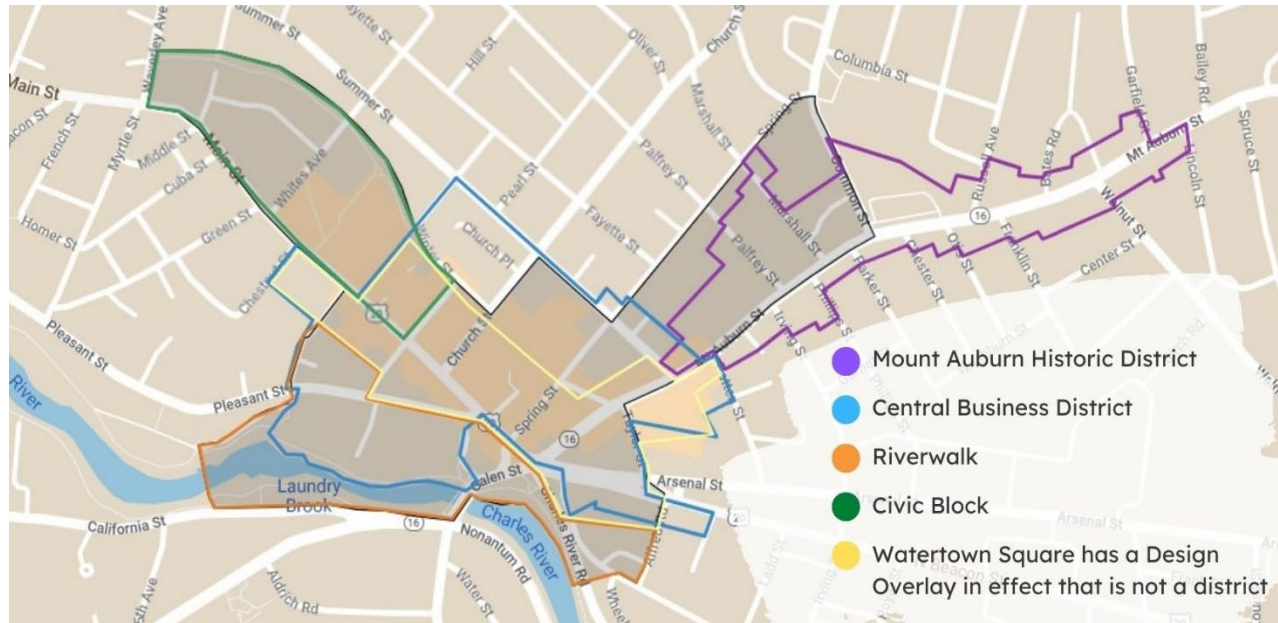


There are ten locations selected for Watertown Square Cultural District gateway signs:



District Areas

The Watertown Square Cultural District can be broken down into four, smaller, thematically linked areas.



Map of the four Watertown Square Cultural District areas.

Mount Auburn Historic District

The Mount Auburn Historic District, in purple, is an official city zoning overlay with specific ordinances enforced by the Historic District Commission. Part of the Mount Auburn Historic District falls within the Cultural District boundaries and the entirety of the Mount Auburn Historic District is celebrated for its distinctive architecture and historic assets, including the seat of the Historical Society of Watertown, the Edmund Fowle House. Learn more: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/213/Historic-District-Commission>

Central Business District

The Central Business District, in blue, is an official city zoning overlay with specific ordinances enforced by the Department of Community Development & Planning. The majority of the Central Business District overlaps with the Cultural District. The Central Business District is designed to support small businesses and recognize the density of business in the area.

Riverwalk

The Riverwalk, in orange, includes the Charles River Greenway on both sides of the river, the pedestrian bridge that spans the river just above the Watertown Dam, the Watertown dock, and two monuments along Charles River Road. Much of this area, including the trails, is managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR). Highlighting this area supports connectivity to the river.

Civic Block

The Civic Block, in green, includes many of Watertown's civic assets including the Watertown Free Public Library, Watertown Administration Building, Fire Station, Saltonstall Park, Community Path, and the post office.

Note on the Design Overlay

Watertown Square has a Design Overlay in effect, in yellow, that is not a district area but falls squarely within the Cultural District. The Design Overlay is enforced by the Department of Community Development & Planning and affects development, signage, and other visual choices by local businesses and residents. Learn more: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/220/Design-Standards-Guidelines>



c

*Exhibitors at
Watertown Pride
Extravaganza
2022 at Saltonstall
Park.*

Assets

Several categories of assets are included in the Watertown Square Cultural District. The District boundaries were chosen for the density of assets that exist, as well as the need to highlight them. *An asterisk (*) on the lists below indicates an historic site.*

See the virtual tours below for more on public art in Watertown:

- Public Art: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/590fd35a981a43caabd50baeee3c8492>
- Historical Markers: <https://watertown.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=ac36c0443659489a92878c6958aab720>

Public Art and Monuments (20)

- Mural: I See a Dream (2023), by Amir Tabatabaei with Niloufar Keyhani, Merchants Row
- Mural: A Bike Ride Through Watertown, by Gregg Bernstein and students (2013), Linear Park
- Mural: Tapestry of Cultures, by Gregg Bernstein and students (2014), Baptists Walk
- Mural: The Time is Always Right, by Ruth Henry and resident (2018), 25 Whites Avenue
- Community Sculpture Walk, rotating exhibit (2023), Community Path
- Watertown Fire Department Memorial, 99 Main Street
- *Watertown Veterans Memorial, Watertown Square
- *Civil War Monument and Saltonstall Plaza, Saltonstall Park, 149 Main Street
- *Richard Saltonstall Monument, 20 Riverside Street
- *George Washington marker (1914), 123 Main Street
- *George Washington marker (1914), Common St Cemetery
- *Time capsules, 149 Main Street
- *Coolidge Tavern marker, Watertown Square
- *Columbus Delta marker (1940), Watertown Square
- *Benjamin Robbins Curtis marker, Watertown Square
- *Thomas Mayhew marker, Watertown Square
- *Hood Rubber WWI and WW2 Monument, Watertown Square
- *Council marker, intersection of Marshall St and Mount Auburn Street
- *Meeting House marker, intersection of Common St and Mount Auburn Street
- *Thaxter Levi House (c 1815), historic private residence, 262 Main St.

Nonprofit and Public Organizations (19)

Cultural (16)

- *Historical Society of Watertown, Edmund Fowle House (1772), 28 Marshall St.
- *Belmont-Watertown United Methodist Church, 80 Mount Auburn St.
- *Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St.
- Watertown Cable Access Corp (WCA-TV), Phillips School, 30 Common St.
- Rotary Club, 47 Main St.
- Hatch Makerspace (part of the Watertown Free Public Library), 20 Summer St.

- AANE Artists Collaborative, 85 Main St.
- First Parish Church, 35 Church St.
- Watertown Boys & Girls Club, 25 Whites Ave.
- Watertown Council on Aging/Senior Center, 31 Marshall St.
- *Watertown Free Public Library, 123 Main St.
- *Watertown Administration Building, 149 Main St.
- *Saint Patrick's Church (1847), 212 Main St.
- *Phillips School, 30 Common St
- Watertown Family Network, Phillips School, 30 Common St
- Live Well Watertown, Watertown Administration Building, 149 Main St

Other (3)

- Pathfinder International, 9 Galen St.
- Watertown Fire Department, 99 Main St.
- Watertown Food Pantry, 80 Mount Auburn St.

Businesses (116)

Cultural (8)

- *Drive-By Projects (Gallery), 81 Spring St.
- *Storefront Art Projects (Gallery), 83 Spring St.
- Watertown Center for Healing Arts, 22 Mt Auburn St.
- Mindful Wellness, 56 Mount Auburn St.
- Koltun Ballet, 23 Main St.
- Comic Stop, 134 Main St.
- Kimura Jiu Jitsu Boston, 15 North Beacon St.
- MacDonald Academy of Martial Arts, 6 Riverside St.

Restaurants and Food (18)

- Not Your Average Joe's, 55 Main St.
- Molana, 5 Spring St.
- Ixtapa Cantina, 18 Mt Auburn St.
- Sichuan Cuisine, 30 Mt Auburn St.
- Meat Spot, 28 Mt Auburn St.
- Tresca's Eating Place, 25 Church St.
- *Red Leaf Cafe, in the Watertown Free Public Library, 123 Main St.
- TruFoods Kitchen, 142 Main St.
- Super Fusion Cuisine II, 54 Mount Auburn St.
- Home Taste, 58 Mount Auburn St.
- Demos Watertown, 64 Mount Auburn St.
- Tabrizi Bakery, 56 Mount Auburn St.
- La Guanaquita Market, 76 Main St.
- Ginger Exchange, 98 Main St.

- Crown Cafe, 106 Main St.
- Chulo Restaurant & Bar, 1 Waverly Ave.
- The Diner at 11 North Beacon, 11 North Beacon St.
- Bar'Cino, 47 Main St

Other (86)

- Russell Cooperative Preschool, 35 Church St
- Neugebauer Towing & Roadside, 10 Riverside St
- Sullivan Tire & Auto Service, 21 N Beacon St
- Salon JohnPeter, 131 Spring St
- Sugar and Love, 135 Spring St
- Mcadam Painting Co., 81 Spring St
- *TNT Dental Care P.C., Samuel Noyes House (r 1840), 230 Main St.
- *Winnick Building, Shamrock House (r 1850, plaque reads 1785), 170 Main St.
- *SMG Watertown Primary Care & Ob/Gyn, Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Church School (1888), 63 Pleasant St.
- *Watertown Savings Bank (1892, 1900), 60 Main St.
- *Insight Enterprises, Inc., Site of Lewando's French Dyers and Cleaners (1906), 9 Galen
- Blue Moon Smoke Shop, 80 Main St.
- *Uniforms for America, Otis Building (1889), 15-25 Main St.
- Thompson Safaris, 14 Mt Auburn St.
- JC Hair, 8 Mt Auburn St.
- Marcou Jewelers of Watertown, 13 Main St.
- Italian Design Interiors, 19 Spring St.
- Natuzzi Gallery Boston, 19 Spring St.
- Diamond Nail, 26 Mt Auburn St.
- Eastern Bank, 1 Church St.
- Salon Sabrina, 25 Church St.
- Grays Laundromat, 25 Church St.
- Beaverbrook STEP, Inc., 85 Main St.
- Thriveworks Counseling & Psychiatry Watertown, 85 Main St.
- United Cerebral Palsy, 122 Main St.
- SoHo Nails & Spa, 140 Main St.
- Town Hall Shoe Repair, 136 Main St.
- Byrne William V DMD, 148 Main St.
- Hope Elder Law, 182 Main St.
- Mavor Chiropractic, 182 Main St.
- First Path Daycare Center, in the Boys & Girls Club, 25 White Ave.
- Guy's Hair Shop, 311 Main St.
- Watertown Florist Shop, 315 Main St.
- Ricci's Beer & Wine, 331 Main St.
- Circle of Boston Nursery School, 309 Main St.
- Belleza Hair Studio, 38 Mount Auburn St.
- Atlantic Battery Company, 309 Main St.
- Greenough, 1 Brook St.

- EditShare, 3 Brook St.
- Primary Source, 63 Pleasant St.
- Associates of Dermatology, 40 Spring St.
- Munhall Energy Co Inc, 40 Summer St.
- Stick Shift Academy, 44 Spring St.
- The Residence at Watertown Square, 20 Summer St.
- Miracle-Ear Hearing Aid Center, 31 Spring St.
- Greene & Greene Optometry, 31 Spring St.
- Dyer Liquors, 40-42 Mount Auburn St.
- Attractive Nails, 68 Mount Auburn St.
- Dolce Appliance Repair, 54 Mount Auburn St.
- S & A Cigars, 52 Mount Auburn St.
- Steffi L. Shapiro MSW, 62 Mount Auburn St.
- Zhanna Lee Holistic Intimacy, 17 Spring St.
- UPS Store, 15 Main St.
- Michael Computer Repair & Tech Services, 36 Mount Auburn St.
- Watertown Sportswear, 34 Mount Auburn St.
- Boston Color Group, 6 Mount Auburn St.
- Watertown Dental, 6 Mount Auburn St.
- H&R Block, 1 Main St.
- Boston Specific Chiropractic, 3 Main St.
- All Dental Center, 21 Main St.
- *Otis Realty, 17 Main St.
- CVS, 27 Main St.
- Bank of America Financial Center, 39 Main St.
- H & K Insurance Agency, 182 Main St.
- Dr. Joseph Salusti Dentistry, 118 Main St.
- Hamilton Place, 233 Main St.
- Whitney Towers Apartments, 275 Main St.
- Lony Salon, 315 Main St.
- Martents MD, 48 Summer St.
- Culia Ki Clinic, 25 Church St.
- Sullivan Tire & Auto Service, 21 North Beacon St.
- Family physicians, 11 Mount Auburn St.
- Supercuts, 1 Mount Auburn St.
- Verizon, 3 Mount Auburn St.
- O'Reilly & Son Autobody, 32 Arsenal St.
- Maureen L. Doherty, Attorney at Law, 63 Mount Auburn St.
- Lampasona & Bloomer Electrical, 1 Summer St.
- Chase & Tolan Plumbing & Heating, 1 Summer St.
- McAdam Painting Co, 81 Spring St.
- Sugar & Love, 135 Spring St.
- The Custom Shop, 137 Mount Auburn St.
- Graphic Connections, 145 Mount Auburn St.
- Snip Plus Salon, 159 Mount Auburn St.
- Pet Haven Animal Hospital, 153 Mount Auburn St.

- Berkshire Hathaway Real Estate, 161 Mount Auburn St.

Open Space (9)

- *Watertown Dam
- Saltonstall Park, 149 Main St.
- Columbus Delta (name change pending), Watertown Square
- Community Path
- Linear Park
- Merchants Row
- Watertown Dock, on the Charles River Greenway, managed by DCR
- Charles River Greenway, managed by DCR
- Laundry Brook, managed by DCR

JUNE 21: 90-MILE PORTAGE
Original folk songs by Jamie Kallestad and Ben Cosgrove.

JUNE 28: SOUTHERN RAIL
Watertown originals with band members inducted into the RI Bluegrass Alliance Hall of Fame.

JULY 5: TWO SHOWS!
4:30-6 PM: SIX IS NINE
Watertown's "Joe Pete" Wetherbee presents his rock 'n' roll trio.

6:30-8 PM: LIGHTNING RISING
Watertown-based rock 'n' roll featuring covers from the '60s, '70s, and '80s.

JULY 12: BEANTOWN BUCKAROOS
Classic Western Swing and Country with a dash of Tex-Mex and Cajun for picante.

JULY 19: THE SANDY RIDGE BOYS
Traditional bluegrass with a twist featuring Sofia Chiarandini.

JULY 26: THE RICO BARR BAND FEATURING THE JJR HORNS
Nominated as Swing Band of The Year by the National Swing Awards, with a wide-ranging repertoire.

AUGUST 2: CLASSIC GROOVE
Motown, R&B soul with rock and jazz influences.

AUGUST 9: EZEKIEL'S WHEELS KLEZMER BAND
"They make you happy to watch them." - KG

AUGUST 16: RUTH AND BEN STRING BAND
Appalachian-style by Ruth Rappaport and Ben Wetherbee.

AUGUST 23: KIDS CONCERT! PERFECT CRIME BAND
Killer Classic Rock with rich, layered vocals and guitar chops to engage kids of all ages.

THE PUPPETEERS COOPERATIVE
Play and dance with large artist-made puppets!

AUGUST 30: THE LOVE DOGS
Howl away at the series finale with New Orleans rock 'n' roll style and a brass band parade!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:


Watertown Public Arts & Culture Committee

BRING A BLANKET OR CHAIR

LEARN MORE:



SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

SALTONSTALL PARK
WEDNESDAYS 6:30-8 PM

*Flyer for the 2023
Summer Concert Series.*

Annual Public Programs

Faire on the Square

Started in 2009, Saltonstall Park and Field, hosted by the city. An all-day event on the last Saturday of August. Showcases over 100 local exhibitors (vendors and nonprofit/public organizations) with free entertainment. Draws over 4000 visitors each year. Learn more: <https://www.faireonthesquare.com/>

Summer Concert Series

Started in 2010, Saltonstall Park, hosted by Public Arts & Culture. Free weekly outdoor concerts that run from June-August. Averaging 14 performance groups (40+ performers) and audiences of 250+. Learn more: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/761/Summer-Concert-Series>

Watertown Farmers Market

Started in 2014, Saltonstall Park, hosted by Live Well Watertown, part of the Department of Community Development & Planning. Runs seasonally from June-October with an average of 15 vendors, including 1-2 “artisan” vendors. An average of 750 people shopped at the farmers market each week in 2023. Learn more: <https://www.livewellwatertown.org/farmers-market>

YardArt Watertown

Started in 2021, hosted by an ad hoc group of residents. For the month of April YardArt encourages everyone in Watertown to exhibit their creativity on their own property, in view of the street or sidewalk. Over 140 participants annually, with thousands of residents and visitors viewing the installations. Learn more: <https://www.mosesianarts.org/yardart>

Live Well Walks

Started in 2021, Live Well Watertown hosts seasonal walks with specific conversation topics relevant to Watertown residents. Learn more: <https://www.livewellwatertown.org/watertown-moves/walk-programs-locations>

Watertown Pride Extravaganza

Started in 2022, Saltonstall Park, hosted by the Watertown Free Public Library in partnership with the Public Arts & Culture Committee. A parade and all-day celebration of Watertown’s LGBTQ+ communities. Features 20+ exhibitors and performers and draws about 1400 visitors. Learn more: <https://www.watertownmanews.com/2023/05/18/watertown-pride-extravaganza-returns-to-saltonstall-park-in-june/>

Multicultural Fest

Started in 2022, Saltonstall Park Plaza, hosted by the Watertown Free Public Library
Born out of monthly domino night, the Multicultural Fest features Watertown culture bearers for an evening of celebration and immersion that hosted 475 people in it’s first year. Learn more: <https://www.watertownlib.org/717/Multicultural-Fest>

Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration

Started in 2022, at the First Parish Church, the Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration is hosted by the Pigsgusset Initiative, a working group of Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice, and the Environment. The event centers education and features indigenous music, food, and other culture bearers.

Approximately 250 visitors experienced the event in 2023. Learn more:

<https://watertowncitizens.org/working-groups/pigsgusset-initiative/>

Memorial Day Parade

Started in the 1950s, passes through Main St, hosted by Veterans Services. A parade to commemorate veterans that includes military and civic groups. An average of 20+ groups participate and 2000+ turn out to watch. Learn more: <https://www.watertownmanews.com/2023/05/22/watertowns-memorial-day-week-schedule-includes-parade-ceremonies-at-cemeteries-poppy-social/>

Juneteenth Celebration

Started in 2021, formerly at Saltonstall Park and currently at the Watertown Free Public Library, hosted by Watertown Citizens for Black Lives. An educational event that celebrates black citizens and commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States. Learn more:

<https://www.watertownmanews.com/2023/06/07/watertown-teaming-with-belmont-for-2-day-juneteenth-celebration/>

Community Sculpture Walk

Started in 2023, along the Community Path from the parking lot behind the Watertown Free Public Library to Howard St, hosted by the Public Arts & Culture Committee. The walk enhances the use of open space, encourages public interaction with contemporary art, and creates an annual exhibition opportunity for artists at all stages of career working in a variety of mediums. Sculptures are selected annually through an open call to artists and on view for two years. Learn more:

<https://www.watertown-ma.gov/816/5211/Community-Sculpture-Walk>

Library Programming

Watertown Free Public Library has been community-based from its earliest days. Solon Whitney was named our first librarian in 1867. Throughout his 50-year career he publicly stated his firm belief that the library belonged to the citizens. This is still our basic belief today. During Whitney's tenure the 1884 building was constructed. The library hosts hundreds of free community programs through the Adult, Teen, and Childrens Departments, as well as Hatch Makerspace located at 20 Summer St. Learn more:

<https://www.watertownlib.org/>

Spring Ramble

Started in 2014, Russell Cooperative Preschool at the First Parish Church invites families for a day of fun and crafts, including a puppet show. MORE INFO. Learn more:

<https://www.russellpreschool.org/about/programinfo>

Marketing Plan

To ensure the success of the Watertown Square Cultural District, a comprehensive marketing plan was created. This marketing plan features a range of audience subgroups with the goal of reaching these groups through strategic and tailored marketing efforts.

Goal

The goal of the Watertown Square Cultural District (WSCD) marketing plan is to position the WSCD as a cultural destination to both residents and visitors by:

- Supporting the arts and artistic community
- Promoting a robust arts community
- Amplifying the diversity of Watertown
- Recognizing the history of Watertown
- Providing engagement opportunities for a wide-range of audiences including intergenerational, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary offerings

City Commitment

Watertown is committed to the creation of a Cultural District and ensuring its longevity. This includes committing resources to the Watertown Square Cultural District that include: staff time, financial oversight, outreach and promotion through city channels, and other support as deemed appropriate.

Target Audience

For all of our audiences, we are considering both Watertown residents and visitors. “Residents” are defined as individuals and organizations who live or claim an address in Watertown. “Visitors” are defined as anyone who travels from outside of the city to access Watertown businesses, events, and/or services. The Watertown Square Cultural District plans to attract audiences of residents and visitors that include families with children, young professionals, retirees, students, children and teens, nonprofit organizations, and the business community. The WSCD understands that arts and cultural interests expand beyond traditional formats. The WSCD plan to market its assets to people with these affinities, among others: art lovers, community-focused individuals, foodies, and nature lovers.

Another important distinction is the differentiation between “internal” and “external” stakeholders. For this purpose, “internal stakeholders” are members of the Cultural District Partnership, and “external stakeholders” include everyone—residents or visitors. Internal stakeholders will be committed to providing necessary evaluation metrics that will drive Cultural District planning. External stakeholders may contribute to planning efforts through public forums and voluntary participation in evaluation surveys.

Marketing Channels

The Watertown Square Cultural District will use multi-channel outreach and promotion using a combination of the following:

- Website
- Arts Calendar
- Email
- Social media
- Press releases
- Word of mouth
- Cross-promotion
- Member networks
- Signage (wayfinding, billboards, a-frame, banners, permanent)
- Paid advertising (physical, paper, online)
- Brand ambassadors
- Representation at events
- Hotel and short-term rental visitors

Activities

Community Engagement

Community Engagement includes the promotion of cultural work of organizations and individuals within the district boundaries, as well as the cultural work of organizations and individuals outside of the district boundaries if it accomplishes the mission and goals of the WSCD. It also includes outreach to Watertown's diverse communities and communities outside of Watertown, and continued engagement during and after visitors come to the WSCD.

Some current community engagement includes:

- Traditional media outlets
- Word of mouth at community and networking events
- Email updates to a growing listserv

Potential community engagement includes:

- Online directory and calendar of events
- Paid online and print advertisement
- Create a paid position for a Community Engagement Specialist

Events

The Watertown Square Cultural District will support existing and new cultural events within the district boundaries. The WSCD will also partner with organizations and individuals outside of the district

boundaries if it accomplishes the mission and goals of the WSCD. This may include financial contributions, promotion, volunteerism, or other forms of support.

Some current events include:

- Watertown Farmers Market
- Watertown Pride Extravaganza
- Faire on the Square

Potential events include:

- Indigenous History Tour
- Quinobequin River Day

Initiatives

The Watertown Square Cultural District will engage in arts and culture initiatives that promote Watertown as a cultural destination. This includes advocacy at a local and state level for changes that benefit artists and cultural organizations. These may be developed by the Cultural District Partnership or in collaboration with external partners.

Some current initiatives include:

- Utility Box Artwork
- Music in Restaurants
- Watertown Square Small Business Alliance

Potential initiatives include:

- Artist residency program
- Porchfest
- Film festival

Evaluation

The WSCD will assess baseline statistics from which to measure progress towards goals and rigorous evaluation metrics to track annual growth and develop strategies.

Current evaluation includes:

- Online survey to measure internal and external stakeholder perception of:
 - Watertown as an arts and culture destination (compared to neighboring municipalities)
 - Cultural District benefits
 - General support for a Cultural District
- Included as Exhibit A: annual online and print survey for organizations and businesses to measure:
 - Annual job/volunteer growth or loss
 - Cultural event growth or loss
 - Artist participation
 - Annual attendance and online statistics

Potential evaluation includes:

- Standard Exit Survey for individuals attending Cultural District programming for internal stakeholder use
 - Track attendance
 - Track satisfaction
 - Track gaps in services
- Annual assessment of the Watertown Square Cultural District:
 - Develop online and print survey for businesses, organizations, property owners, workers, residents, visiting artists, and visitors to:
 - Track change in perception of Watertown as an arts destination compared to neighboring communities

Community Engagement Specialist

To accomplish the goals of the Watertown Square Cultural District, the WSCD proposes to hire a consultant contracted as a “Community Engagement Specialist” to primarily conduct the Community Engagement and Evaluation components of the WSCD activities. Secondly, the Community Engagement Specialist will support WSCD Events and Initiatives.

This is someone who has strong computer graphics knowledge and is experienced with developing online content, forms, and databases. They must also possess strong writing skills. The ideal candidate has a background in the arts, administration, or business management and is passionate about the arts and building community.

- Online presence:
 - Website
 - Arts Calendar: a central location for residents and visitors to find out “what to do” in Watertown, e.g., [ArtsBoston Calendar](#).
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Email newsletter (quarterly? Monthly? As needed?)
 - Monitor email account
 - Respond to email inquiries
 - Distribute email inquiries to appropriate CDP channels
- Promotional materials:
 - Write and distribute press releases for WSCD events and initiatives
 - Develop online and print graphics for events, including flyers, posters, and banners
 - Develop an annual ad campaign
 - Coordinate PSAs and interviews with news outlets
 - Video
 - Radio

Two-year plan

Year One

1. Host first executive board election
2. Commence monthly meetings
3. Collect baseline survey results
 - a. Create baseline report
4. Develop district branding
 - a. Develop compelling messaging (i.e. “Bridging cultures”)
5. Develop online resources
 - a. Website and social media
 - b. Arts Calendar with strong user interface
 - c. Begin email newsletter
6. Develop Community Engagement Specialist consultant description
 - a. Post opening and select consultant
7. Develop system for event and initiative support
8. Implement district gateway signage

Year Two

1. Develop annual advertising campaign
2. Refine online presence
3. Develop graphics
4. Support events
5. Develop new and support existing initiatives
6. Collect annual survey results
 - a. Create annual report

Learn More

City Website

Cultural District Planning: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/1176/Cultural-District-Planning>

Scan the QR code to visit the city website.



Thank you

Thank you to all who contributed their time and expertise to the planning process:

Jason Sohigian
Nicole Gardner
Steve Magoon
Darren Farrington
Julie-Anne Whitney
Angelica Potter
Arto Vaun
Dawn Scaltreto
Connie Henry
Kristen Kenny
Doug Orifice
Andrea Santopietro
Roberta Rosenberg
Monica Fairbairn
Lois Z. Pond
Maria Meyobre
Caitlin Browne

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Mishy Lesser
Jennifer Wolfrum
Lydia McCoy
Sheri Kennedy
Tia Tilson
Maral Joulouyan

Marketing Subcommittee

Barbara Epstein
Connie Henry
Kristen Kenny
David Knoerr
Erin Webb

Mapping Subcommittee

Seth Deitch
Monica Fairbairn
Susan B. Jones
Carole Katz
Sally Young



Exhibit A

Annual Survey for Organizations and Businesses: How has the Watertown Square Cultural District impacted you?

My business or organization is: For profit, nonprofit, unincorporated, unsure

What type of work do you do? Arts and Culture, Food, Other

My business or organization is located: Inside the Watertown Square Cultural District, Outside the Watertown Square Cultural District (but still in Watertown), Outside of Watertown but doing business/serving Watertown

How many years has your business or organization been doing work in Watertown?

How many paid positions does your business or organization have?

How many paid positions has your business or organization added in the past year?

How many paid positions has your business or organization lost in the past year?

How many paid position vacancies did you have at the close of this year?

How many volunteers have you enlisted in the past year (please include unpaid interns in this category)?

How many volunteer vacancies did you have at the close of this year?

How many arts and culture activities (events or services) did you host this year?

How many new arts and cultural activities (events or services) did you add in the past year?

How many new arts and culture activities (events or services) did you lose in the past year?

How many artists have been directly engaged in your programs this year (leading workshops, participating in exhibitions, etc.)?

How many Watertown artists have been directly engaged in your programs this year?

How many people engaged with your business or organization this year?

How many people who engaged in your business or organization were from Watertown this year?

If you have a website, can you share the number of website visits logged this year?

If you have social media accounts, can you share the number of social media subscribers you have across platforms?

Do you use social media or other online advertising?

Do you use other advertising methods?

Is there any other data relevant to the Watertown Square Cultural District you would like to share?

**CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to accept the Committee on Education and School System Matters Report.

**CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to approve the Committee on Education and School System Matters Action Items to reappoint Jen Nicholson, Robert Romano, and Elaine Mello to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation's Board of Directors with terms expiring on September 15, 2026:



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

Report of the Committee on Education and School System Matters October 10, 2023

The Committee convened on Tuesday October 10th at 5:15 pm in the City Council Office. Present were Emily Izzo, chair; Nicole Gardner, vice chair; and John Airasian, secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct three interviews for reappointment to the Watertown Cable Access Corporation.

The meeting was called to order and the first candidate interviewed was Jen Nicholson. Mrs. Nicholson explained that it was a very exciting time to be on the board as there was an influx of new talent. In addition to being a voice for the schools, she has learned a lot on the technical side of things which has been enjoyable. Mrs. Nicholson serves on the Bylaws and Organizational subcommittee which is charged with reviewing bylaws, policies and employee handbook. She closed by stating there is a great variety of perspectives and an active group who truly care for the WCA-TV and its ability to thrive.

Action Item: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Airasian, to recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Jen Nicholson on the Watertown Cable Access Corporation with a term expiring September 15, 2026.
The motion passed 3-0

The second interview was with Robert Romano. Mr. Romano began by showing appreciation for the job that the Executive Director has done in a difficult period. He explained that the current group working on the board have been supportive through an arduous move and financial situation, but they all understand the importance WCA-TV brings to the community and committed to seeing it through. He feels the board as constituted works very well with the ED and her staff.

Action Item: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Airasian, to recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Robert Romano on the Watertown Cable Access Corporation with a term expiring September 15, 2026.
The motion passed 3-0

The final interview was with Elaine Mello. Ms. Mello explained that the best part of being on the board was the ability to use the knowledge she has from her experience, specifically in the construction of studios. She mentioned the current construction of the studio has been difficult to manage. Ms. Mello is looking forward to being able to sustain for the future via grants and membership.

Action Item: Councilor Gardner made a motion, seconded by Councilor Airasian, to recommend that the City Council confirm the reappointment of Elaine Mello on the Watertown Cable Access Corporation with a term expiring September 15, 2026.

The motion passed 3-0

Councilor Gardner made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Councilor Airasian and passed 3-0 at 5:55pm.

Minutes prepared by John Airasian

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Emily Izzo,
Chair

Nicole Gardner,
Vice Chair

John M. Airasian,
Secretary

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to approve the Committee on Parks and Recreation Report.

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	_____	___X___	_____
CAROLINE BAYS	___X___	_____	_____
LISA J. FELTNER	___X___	_____	_____
JOHN G. GANNON	___X___	_____	_____
NICOLE GARDNER	___X___	_____	_____
EMILY IZZO	___X___	_____	_____
ANTHONY PALOMBA	_____	___X___	_____
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	___X___	_____	_____
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	___X___	_____	_____

Motion to approve the Committee on Parks and Recreation Action Item to pause and reevaluate the design on Casey Park.



Watertown City Council

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

Committee on Parks and Recreation

Councilor Palomba, Chair, Councilor Feltner, Vice Chair, Councilor Bays, Secretary

Committee Report

November 14, 2023

The Committee convened on September 28, 2023 at 5:00 pm with remote participation. Present were Councilors Anthony Palomba, chair, Lisa Feltner, vice-chair, Caroline Bays, secretary, John Airasian, Vinnie Piccirilli, and Council President Mark Sideris. Also present were School Committee member David Stokes, City employees Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager and the Director of the Department of Community Development and Planning, Greg St. Louis, Superintendent of Public Works, Peter Centola, Director of the Department of Recreation, as well as architects from CDM Smith Scott Landgren and Glenn Howard, and residents Elodia Thomas, Bill Furtado, Peter Schwartz, Annette Farrell, Greg Salvucci, Dawn Duff, and Dennis Duff.

Councilor Palomba called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm

Signage

Steve presented the proposed signs that will be posted on all parks. Councilor Feltner proposed adding a QR code that will take people to the City's website. Councilor Bays suggested minor wording changes. We agreed that the park name would be on a different sign. Elodia Thomas read her version of the park sign (see attachment). She said signage should be simple and positive and, given the issues in Casey Park, that loud and inappropriate language should be noted as inappropriate. After discussion we agreed to keep the language with the minor amendments from Councilor Bays, the inclusion of a QR code, and the addition of Be Safe, Have Fun at the bottom (see attachment). After a brief discussion we decided to include the city seal.

Councilor Feltner made a motion that we accept the sign with the recommended revisions, Councilor Bays seconded and the motion passed 3-0. Note: Attached please find the revised sign that was developed by the Administration following the Committee meeting.

Casey Park

Glenn Howard went through some of the changes to the park. This is Phase 2 for Casey Park renovations which was proposed in 2017 and included primarily additions and improvement to

the ballpark, which is the official field for Little League baseball. The changes were the addition of prefabricate dugouts, a batting tunnel, a new backstop, bleachers, and a renovated lightening system. There were also plans to repave of the 4-square play area behind the backstop. The only changes since this the plan was originally presented were resurfacing the playground, gate improvements around the basketball courts, and adding a restroom/storage space near the bleachers

.

There were only a few comments about the renovations that the Committee was charged to review. Resident Elodia Thomas expressed concern about the placement of the batting cage and its proximity to houses. Mr. Duff thought the bathroom/storage facility should be relocated to a more central location accessible by patrons throughout the park. Ms. Thomas and other residents also felt the bathroom should be relocated. Superintendent St. Louis said the necessary water and sewage infrastructure could be done if necessary. Council President Sideris also had concerns about the proposed bathroom. He wanted to know who would be responsible for maintaining it and suggested that patrons use Parker School as an alternative

The President of Watertown Baseball, Mr. Furtado, said they have been waiting for these improvements for a long time and they need these repairs both for the coaches, players and parents. Councilor Airasian also said that as a parent of three baseball players, he feels improvements to the baseball field are needed.

A good portion of the meeting, and the Committee Chair took responsibility for this, focused on the other side of the park, particularly the hockey rink, which was not on the agenda. There were no renovations in the 2017 plan for changes to this portion of the park other than the resurfacing of the playground and the replacing the portable toilets with a permanent bathroom and storage area.

The comments below reflect the focus on the noise from the hockey rink, patrons' behavior, and who is allowed to use the rink.

1) Annette Farrell from Union Street expressed concern about the changes that were made during the 2015 renovation which have resulted in loud noise from the hockey rink including abusive and disrespectful language from the players.

2) Ms. Thomas felt Watertown youth can't use the facility because it is rented to outside groups. She is concerned about the noise residents are enduring from the rink. She felt the park should be built for our residents and ensure their happiness.

3) Peter Schwarz from Union Street (see attached letter signed by Mr. Schwartz, Annette Farrell, and Shelby Farrell) expressed distress at the negative impact the changes to the park have made on his family's life including loud noise from the hockey rink and disrespectful and aggressive players.

4) Dennis Duff (see attachment) suggested removing the rink, which is used by out of town people, and thereby creating more open space.

5) Councilor Piccirilli also expressed concerned about the rink noise, the bathroom, as well as why adults are on our facilities. He also wanted to know why, given the bad behavior, we continue to rent to people abusing the facility and disturbing the neighbors.

In response to the concern about adults using the hockey rink, Mr. Centola explained that the only time an adult league uses the rink is on Wednesdays but acknowledged there are adults who use the rink without a permit despite a permit being required. He acknowledged the City needs to do a better job of enforcing permit requirements and addressing adult intrusive behavior.

Pursuing the concern about adult behavior, Councilor Bays asked why rude and disorderly people were not kicked out. Mr. Centola said he is happy to come down and talk to people anytime but he hasn't received calls. Councilor Bays also asked what could be done to dampening the noise from the hockey rink. Mr. Howard said that the original design did not call for this, unlike the design for the rink at Moxley Park. However the City could look into retrofitting the existing rink with sound dampening board.

Mr. Centola concluded this portion of the meeting by saying that the park is used and designed for children. He will look at addressing the issues residents have complained about and ensuring the changes will have minimal impact on residents.

A Comprehensive Look.

Council President Sideris suggested that no further action be taken at this time and that we should take a more comprehensive look at the design. Councilor Piccirilli agreed with this sentiment as did Councilor Feltner who thought a pause was necessary since there are too many complaints and no community consensus.

Councilor Palomba felt that there is some work that can be done. He felt that the issues with the rest of the park shouldn't prevent us from addressing the baseball field and moving forward with the batting cages, the dugouts, the bleachers, upgrading the lighting, and repaving the four-square play area.

Councilor Bays felt that given the scope of the problems we should not approach the park improvements in a piecemeal manner especially since it could be years before we get around to addressing the other issues at the park.

Councilor Feltner made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Bays:

ACTION ITEM

Committee on Parks and Recreation recommends that the full City Council ask the Administration to take a pause and reevaluate the design for Casey Park and its use

The motion passed 2 in favor and 1 opposed with Councilor Palomba voting no.

With a unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba,
Chair

Lisa Feltner,
Vice Chair

Caroline Bays,
Secretary

24 x 36



City of Watertown

Welcome to Our Park

While enjoying the amenities, please be respectful
of the recreational facility and the neighbors.

Park Rules:

- ◆ Parks are open 8:00 am to dusk. If artificially lit, parks close at 10:00 pm.
- ◆ Please carry out what you carry in or find an appropriate receptacle for your trash.
- ◆ No dogs are allowed on fields, courts, or playgrounds unless they are on pathways or in designated dog parks.
- ◆ Loud or inappropriate language or music is not permitted. Groups must have prior approval from the Department of Recreation for amplified sound.
- ◆ All use of recreational facilities by groups is by permit only.
Contact the Recreation Department, 617-972-6494

Be Safe. Have Fun.

QR

Welcome to Victory Field

Please be considerate of your neighbors: amplified music, public disturbances, smoking/vaping, and the consumption of alcohol are prohibited.

Please carry out what you carry in and help keep our park trash free.

Leashed dogs are only allowed on the sidewalk and roadway.

Park Hours: 8:00 am to 10:00 pm

Please call 311 with any questions or concerns.

Play Smart - Be Safe - Have Fun!

City of Watertown
Welcome to Our Park

While enjoying the amenities, please be respectful of the recreational facilities and the neighbors.

Park Rules

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- All use of recreational facilities by groups is by permit only. Contact the Department of Recreation at 617-972-6494.

(QR code)

Be Safe - Have Fun!

CASEY PARK Phase 2 Committee Meeting, Thursday September 28, 2023

Sorry this is so long, but because issues have not been dealt with in a timely manner, they have to be reiterated to understand the big picture situation.

Introduction:

The hockey rink in Casey Park was forced into a residential corner, feet from our homes, changing the zoning of what was once all low-impact tennis courts to the high-impact hockey arena with loud and inappropriate noise, parking and safety issues. We need park signage, noise remediation, more frequent police presence, a reduction in the lighting hours to 9pm — not more development for more competitive sports instead of a peaceful, beautiful green space for all — especially our community — which Casey Park is no longer.

The hockey rink at Casey was never finished being built from 9 years ago, has never had the noise insulation installed or had the outer panels put on, or had the safety netting put on correctly. The new Moxley rink was built with these upgrades from day one, the way I have asked the town multiple times to fix the Casey rink due to the noise which exceeds the EPA and town's own noise regulations. I have recorded between 92 and 97dB for the booming pucks hitting wood and banging reverb of pucks hitting metal. When the puck/biscuit hits the single inner layer backboard a few feet from my property line, it makes a noise close to an M-80 with the accompanying reverberation repetitively echoing off the back of my house.

During a meeting at Casey Park, the aggressive hockey players that day began purposely aiming and shooting the pucks at us, including Peter Centola and Lisa Feltner, making loud acoustic bangs with the pucks hitting inches from our heads. We were standing where the Women's Bathroom was planned on going, again near our homes. Hopefully I have convinced the Committee that the bathroom should not go near the hockey rink because of inappropriate behavior leading to privacy and safety issues. These rinks should go into a dedicated skate park away from homes because of the nature of the sport.

Casey Park hockey rink was also built incorrectly, the rink has never held water to make ice in the winter, though the town has tried many times. There have never been signs displaying the hours and rules. Boomboxes are used almost daily, along with fights, injuries, flying pucks with glass and shingle damage. People begin using the park at around 6-7am and sometimes the party doesn't end until 11:30 pm after some games. It was eight years of pucks flying into my yard almost daily until I could convince the town to finally put up another one piece netting a few weeks ago (instead of two lateral pieces that funneled the puck directly into our yard). I'm not sure why it took that many years of asking, emailing, phoning and letters to the Committee and Parks Dept. The difference between the way we have been treated at Casey versus the quick construction with noise abatement measures at Moxley is striking.

Despite our calls for noise abatement and signs, pickle ball courts were added to the tennis courts a few weeks ago as well, adding another layer of noise to the 8 abutting homes with small children and the many homes that can hear the noise in our Aldrich, Union, Capital streets neighborhood but do not know about these meetings. The most distressing aspect of this is the screamed swears when players miss a goal, a basket, or a point and the inappropriate lyrics that you can hear in my videos of the park. It has become ubiquitous. It is loud, angry and stressful, and has become persistent and daily.

"F" bombs, C bombs, MF bombs, P-bombs screamed when there are fights or injuries (documented in the audio). During an hour of hockey sometimes hundreds of times, next to a kid's playground and our homes with small children and the handicapped like my daughter who has autism, you can repeatedly hear "F*CK!" screamed in anger. Last Sunday September 24th at 8am was particularly noteworthy. I am told I should call the police, but that would be impossible because of the frequency it now happens, plus retribution which has happened in the past against me for speaking out.

The able-bodied players use the handicapped parking space and ramp to park in because of the very limited parking situation. Police do not patrol or give tickets when called so there has been no deterrent to using these handicapped spaces. To his credit, Peter Centola did see this during the Casey Park meeting and asked the hockey players if they could move their cars. This is what started the angry attack on our group, including Peter and Lisa Feltner. I believe she was the only City Commissioner there that day and I hope she can explain what happened. This type of behavior

is not uncommon (though not all are disrespectful of others). Leagues are at the top of the list of those who do not care who they bother with bad behavior. Scheduling eight or ten teams in a league (ex: June 18, 2023) into a space built for two teams makes our lives unbearably loud, having garbage and things like vapes tossed into our yards. These seem to be people outside of Watertown, scheduling and paying the Parks Department for rink time at citizen's expense.

Please stop overdeveloping Casey Park. We, the abutters are asking that another batting tunnel or dugouts not be installed at this location which would cover the hopscotch pad and that little open green space that is used by girls and small children. Replacing the benches and small bleacher seating unit for baseball/softball would be fine if parents who are now using blankets and beach chairs require this, but we want green space as well for people who are not into competitive sports. Women and girls in particular are now told that if we want to use the parks, we need to join these (men's) sports teams. Please leave space for walking in the grass, picnicking, sunning, kite flying, sledding, flowers, trees, NOISE BUFFERS, because Casey Park was built in a pond basin which carries noise from one end of the park to the other, with echoes.

I have uploaded a number of recent video/audio to YouTube that highlights the loud noise and disruption that we deal with in our backyard. The bangs, clangs and booms from the pucks hitting metal and wood, the heavy doors which are not noise-insulated, the players kicking and hitting the wood panels over and over with their sticks and skates, and the excessive swearing needs to be addressed and I am begging for relief from this Commission.

When I grew up here as a child, I had direct access to the park from our yard. There were more tennis courts where the hockey rink is now, and the full area which was one big space with no fencing, just a small rounded bump-up at the edges, was flooded and made into an ice skating "pond". Girls in the winter were given half the area to ice skate and the other half for boys to play hockey, sharing respectfully. Now there is no space for girls skating, hockey has become too aggressive and dangerous to share a space, and the hopscotch pad, which could be a colorful and unique space for our communities' kids including a sensory park for our autism community, is being taken away again with no space earmarked for women and girls to replace the ones taken away.

Conclusion:

Take the money earmarked for this new expansion, that would increase noise in an already overdeveloped and overused park, and use it for putting up signs to inform about the City Park rules, into finishing the exterior hockey rink walls with the noise insulation (done at Moxley) covered by noise-reduction outer panels that was never finished. Insulate the rink doors so they do not slam! every time they are opened and closed (hundreds of times a day). Put up padding behind the backboards (*see footnotes) and padding on the metal poles (*see footnotes), landscape the back portion of the rink with a wall of tall pine bushes that abuts our homes which would remediate noise and also beautify. There should also be noise buffers within the park because of the pond basin amplification of noise.

My understanding is that the public bathroom will be moved to the corner of the basketball court closer to Watertown St if the Port-a-Johns which have worked fine in the past are replaced with this expensive option. The hopscotch pad is used by kids despite being neglected by the town, it should be updated and maintained. We have other batting tunnels in town, we do not need another one here in our small park. I can think of other parks which have lots more room, parking and no residential abutters where this would be more appropriate.

Our community would like volleyball netting and open space, but keep sledding in the winter. Also please consider closing the parks at 9pm instead of 10pm, the same as Moxley Park has already done, with the Dark Skies compliant lighting. With increased population usage Casey Park has become too loud late into the nights. Play these videos on a loop from 8am to 10pm everyday in the background of your life and see what kind of impact a badly rezoned area makes to your family and neighbors.

Please calibrate your audio to my voice to match the Real Life level of noise, my cell phone mutes the audio so you have to turn it up; when you hear the puck hit the backboard, it should be at the 95dB range (recorded from my deck). Appreciated.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sKTIT1rSXc> Sat. June 18, 20203 (not May) later in the day

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/0oX2AgxTJrI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx9iDlmAtgs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwkOJp9j0NY>

My YouTube channel with 10 currently uploaded videos: <https://www.youtube.com/@SqueakyWheel-hj2rb>

I implore you to turn up your volume and bass to hear the shock wave after the booms, to listen to the excessive swearing in the audio and honestly ask if you'd want this in your backyard every day for your daughter to listen to, your children to grow up with, these inappropriately screamed swears invading your every day, night and holiday even with the windows closed, and people climbing your fence and walking around your property to shag their balls that fly into your yard. It would be great if the town replaced the ugly chain link fence and black plastic tarp they put in my yard with a nice, tall, unclimbable, privacy wood fence.

Please do not approve the short-sighted and exclusionary Phase 2 plans for Casey Park as written before finishing the work that needs to be done — to make it a livable and beautiful park for all well into the future.

Annette Farrell

annetteafarr@gmail.com

Hello City Councilors,

I have owned 68 Aldrich Road for over 40 years!
For many years the park was peaceful and pleasant.

I just want to speak again to the unwarranted noise and poor behavior by out-of-town hooligans playing in the street hockey rink as being unacceptable, and why are we catering to out-of-town groups anyway?? Parks should be preserved for Local residents!

My suggestion for the best way to remedy this situation is to allow the street hockey for Watertown residents only; therefore REMOVE the street hockey rink at Casey Park, while allowing street hockey to continue at Moxley Field new hockey rink..,

The Casey Park should be used for Green Open Space !!!
And not for dogs either !!! Many dog owners bring their dogs to the street hockey rink when not in use and the dogs are inside the rink.
They allow the dogs to run unleashed inside the rink!!

The bathroom location suggested by the recreation dept, will be very poorly located. It should be centrally located within the park.
A handicapped person using park facilities and coming from the former Parker school (end of the park) will have an extremely long and difficult journey to reach the facilities.

Please put these comments into your meeting tonight.
I will be on Zoom.

Thank you very much, Dennis J. Duff

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to accept the Committee Rules & Ordinances and Committee on Public Works Report and its Action Items.



Watertown City Council

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

Committee on Public Works

Councilor Piccirilli, Chair, Lisa Feltner, Vice Chair, Councilor Palomba, Secretary

Committee on Rules and Ordinances

Councilor Gannon Chair, Councilor Airasian, Vice Chair, Councilor Feltner, Secretary

Committee Report

November 14, 2023

The meeting took place on Monday, September 25 at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers on the second floor of City Hall. It was a hybrid meeting which allowed for the public to join via Zoom. It was also being recorded by Cable Access TV. The public was able to submit comments by email to apalomba@watertown-ma.gov.

Those attending included all the members of the Committee on Public Works and the Committee on Rules and Ordinances (see above) as well as City Council President Sideris and Councilor Gardner. Also attending were Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager and Director of the Department of Community Development and Planning, Michael Albano, Zoning Code Enforcement Officer, and Andy Campagna from the Bicycle Pedestrian Committee. Joining on Zoom were Greg St. Louis, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works, Dean Martino, Susan Flint from Watertown for All Ages, Joan Gumbleton, and Cindy Wentz.

PLEASE NOTE: The meeting lasted nearly 3 hours and 30 minutes. The minutes represent an effort to report on key discussions and decisions. Please visit

<http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/show/2772?site=3> to view the full recording of the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to continue discussion in order to make recommendations on a Sidewalk Snow Shoveling Ordinance.

Councilor Piccirilli asked that the Committees refer to the Sidewalk Snow Shoveling Exemptions – Regulations for Watertown Ordinance draft dated 12/13/22 from the Administration (see the attachment). It should be noted that the Exemptions are appearing in the Regulations and not in the Ordinance because it allows for changes to be made based on new information without amending the Ordinance.

There are two major reasons for allowing an exemption –

- 1) The applicant must be over 65 years of age or have a disability
AND
- 2) be income eligible.

In addition “all members of the household or residential structure must qualify”.

(Please see the draft for specifics about income limits and proof of disability.)

There was also an exemption that the City Manager or designee could make for unusual or extenuating circumstances, such as corner lot where snow has been piled.

In response to a question about what exemptions other communities have in their snow shoveling ordinances, Mr. Magoon noted that Belmont only allows an exemption if the owner is going to be

absent for more than five days and that Newton does allow for exemptions based on hardship and health and based on financial or religious circumstances.

Discussion Among Members of the Committees

There was little discussion regarding the issue of age or disability, but significant discussion regarding the income requirement and the requirement that all members of the household or residential structure must also be over 65 years of age or have a disability AND be income eligible.

Regarding the income limits, there was a suggestion that an owner who is renting apartments may not be eligible for an exemption because they are running a business and therefore might not meet the income requirements. However it was pointed out that even if this is so the expenses of running a business may exceed the rental income and thus the owner may still qualify. It was suggested that the income limits be a combination of income and assets which is what the Assessor uses when determine if a senior qualifies for a tax exemption. Finally, there was the question of how “income” is calculated by HUD – is it total income or adjusted income. This discussion did not result in any changes to the draft Regulations.

There was more discussion regarding the requirement that all members of the household qualify for an exemption. During the discussion we learned that tenants are not responsible for shoveling any area rather it is the owner who is responsible, by state law, to clear the path between the house and the sidewalk and the driveway. The Ordinance would now make the owner also responsible for clearing the sidewalk in front of their property. We also learned that a personal care attendant cannot be considered a member of a household as they are usually an employee of an agency. In addition it was clarified that a condo association would be responsible for shoveling and would not be exempt and the association would be ticketed if the sidewalk was not cleared.

A key issue was whether anyone in the household, who does not qualify for the exemption, could be responsible for shoveling the sidewalk. For example, if a son or daughter is living with their mother who owns the property and who is 65 years of age or has a disability and meets the income limits, then there would be no exemption, since not everyone in the household qualifies.

Related was the concern of what is meant by “residential structure”. If a father and mother live on the first floor of a two family house and their daughter and her family live on the second floor, but do not pay rent, can the house be exempt. In such a situation, which is not usual, the property would not be exempt since the Regulations reads “All members of the household or residential structure must be qualified.” (Note: While there is a definition in the Ordinance for “small residential property”, there is no definition for “household” or “residential structure”.)

Eventually, Councilor Feltner made a motion to strike the words “or residential structure” from 1D which was seconded by Councilor Palomba. Following additional discussion and a statement by Councilor Gannon that his ultimate goal throughout the process is to make Watertown a more walkable city and that exemptions should not be given easily, the motion passed 4 in favor and 1 opposed, with Councilor Gannon voting against the motion.

The members of the Committees agreed to three additional changes to the Regulations.

- 1) Under Application – #4 the Committees agreed to add the Commission on Disabilities, the Watertown Police Department, and the Department of Public Works.
- 2) Under Application – #3 the Committees agreed to add the words “to be appointed by the Manager” at the end of the first sentence.
- 3) Under Application – #5 The Committees agreed to add the words “to household receiving an exemption” after the word, “assistance”.

Councilors Feltner and Gardner raised a concern about the narrowness of #2 under Application as it could be read to imply that applications can only be made in September and October and did not take into account a variety of possibilities such as someone became disabled after those dates. It was decided that the Administration could address these and other similar situations and that the intention was to get as many applications as possible submitted so a list of exempt properties could be developed and ready to be distributed to the departments listed above. It was noted that resident Cindy Wentz agreed with Councilors Gardner and Councilor Feltner that #2 was not clear and would be interpreted to mean applications were only accepted in September and October.

The discussion on the exemptions concluded and the Committees moved on to a number of specific questions that had been brought up at an earlier meeting.

1) The first question was addressed to the Administration regarding how exemptions would be managed, particularly where there is an exemption on a sidewalk that has a high volume of users or is on a busy road. Mr. Magoon spoke about the volunteer program through the Recreation Department and Senior Services, but noted that there are more requests for help than there are students to help. Another suggestion was to pay students but upon discussion with the Recreation Department it was determined that there are not a lot of students willing to work in the winter months during school. There was also consideration of hiring snow removal crews. However at this time the Administration has not approved spending money to shovel the walks of exempt properties, in part because there is no data yet on how many exemptions there will be. Continued discussion included the following suggestions:

- a) Estimate the cost of hiring crews based on the square footage that would need to be shoveled and the number of anticipated exempt properties.

- b) Appeal to neighbors to help those whose properties are exempt and possibly creating a “Help Your Neighbor” campaign.
- c) Call on the many civic groups in the City to have their members be responsible for a certain number of exempt properties.

Mr. Magoon offered that he would speak with the Administration and others and come up with a one-page statement about the approach that will be followed to address this particular problem and share it with the Committees.

2) The next question was about enforcement. After a discussion with the Committee members and Mr. Magoon there was consensus that:

- a) There should be a robust awareness/education campaign about the new Ordinance using the City’s social media platforms, the web pages of individual departments, and the outreach capacities of civic groups – Watertown Business Coalition, Watertown Community Foundation, etc.
- b) The City does not have the resources to actively look for those individuals who do not comply with the Ordinance and that enforcement will continue to be complaint driven.
- c) That the City’s main goal on all code-related issues is compliance not punishment.
- d) That it is possible to go through the first winter only issuing warnings except for those individuals who are continually in violation of the Ordinance.
- e) That the City, depending on the availability of staff, would re-inspect properties that have been issued a warning and if the walk has not been shoveled they would issue a ticket.
- f) Enforcement personnel hope to have hand-held devices that would produce the ticket at the location and would flag a property that has already been warned or ticketed. Presently this is not possible.
- g) The Administration will develop a one-page statement about how enforcement would work during the first year the Ordinance and share it with the Committees.

3) The next issue had to do with the shoveling of sidewalks abutting city property. We received a list of all bus stops and crosswalks cleared by the Department of Public Works as well as a list of school sidewalk routes that are cleared (see the attached lists and related memo from Superintendent St. Louis). Councilor Piccirilli noted that there are a significant number of sidewalks abutting city properties and asked how these walks would be cleared and what department would be responsible for doing it. He also was concerned about snow plow operators leaving large piles of snow on the corners and crosswalks of intersections. Superintendent St. Louis said that DPW does shovel the walks abiding city property but may not do it until a day or two after the snowfall. He also stated that if DPW was to shovel all the walks abiding City properties in the 24-hour period required by the Ordinance it would require more personnel and additional financial resources.

4) There was a discussion of properties that do not naturally abut a resident’s property (for example on Arsenal Street near Toyota), that are under the control of DCR (for example on Wheeler Street), and that are simply not tended to by DPW (for example on Cozy Street). The Committee agreed to request that DPW create memo that includes a complete inventory of all city-owned streets, state properties, and special situation such as the Arsenal Street example (above), prioritize the inventory based on factors such as level of use, offer a strategy of how to clear those priorities, and include an estimate of what resources would be needed to do so. There were two additional requests to this memo:

- a) Clarify and update two lists of sidewalks that DPW says are plowed – “Bus Stops and Crosswalks to be Cleared” and “School Sidewalk Routes”, and
- b) Address the problem of snow plow operators plowing corners of intersection in such a way that result with high piles of snow at the crosswalk and the corner of the intersection.

5) Councilor Gannon identified a mistake in the Ordinance in E under Section 96.99 Penalty such that 35.05 should read “36.06 of the code”.

6) Regarding a concern raised at the last meeting, it was stated that the opinion of the City’s attorney was that the word “anyone” that appears in Section 96.99(C) under Section 96.99 Penalty in the Ordinance does not need to be changed to “abutting property owner” (see the attached memo from KP Law).

Discussions of Motions

The Committees turned their attention to possible motions. The following motion was put forth by Councilor Feltner and was seconded by Councilor Gannon.

Three Part Motion/ACTION ITEM

- a) The Committees ask the Administration to have KP Law review the final draft of the proposed Ordinance.**
- b) The Committees ask the Council President to bring the proposed Ordinance forward for a first reading after the KP Law review.**
- c) The Committees ask the City Council to endorse the Regulations to the Ordinance.**

However before the vote on the Motion, we heard from resident Dean Martino who asked if he would be liable if someone was injured on the his sidewalk since he will now be responsible for shoveling it and could be ticketed if he does not. He was assured that he would not be liable. The liability rests with the property owner and the property under the sidewalk belongs to the City. He was also informed that he is responsible for clearing his sidewalk more than once if necessary within the 24-hour period and that he is not responsible for any damage to the sidewalk from salt he might use. Mr. Martino also asked whether students could fulfill their community service requirements by being part of the Recreation Department and Senior Services program that matches students with residents who need their sidewalks shoveled. He was told that this does happen. Finally, he pointed to the sidewalk on Main Street in front of Saltonstall Park that is not shoveled regularly.

The Committees also heard from Andy Campagna who was concerned about the probability that snow will not be removed from many of the exempt properties and that we need to manage our expectations and be prepared to address this problem. He further suggested that if the Committees are going to review the implementation of the Ordinance after the first year that the decision should be formalized. He was assured that a motion regarding revisiting the Ordinance will be presented tonight.

The Committees then voted in favor of the three-part Motion 5 – 0.

Councilor Feltner made a motion that was seconded by Councilor Palomba.

Motion/ACTION ITEM

The Committee on Public Works and the Committee on Rules and Ordinances shall review the data after the first winter but prior to May 30 to evaluate the results of the program and propose possible changes to the Ordinance and the Regulations.

Prior to voting on the motion there was a recommendation to include a date by when the data will be available and what data specifically should be required. The Committees agreed to add “but prior to

May 30” to the motion (see above). The Committees also felt confident that the Mr. Magoon understood the type of data that the Committees would need in order to properly evaluate the program.

The Motion passed 5 – 0.

Councilor Palomba made a motion that was seconded by Councilor Airasian.

Motion/ACTION ITEM

The Committees agreed to refer to the Committee on Public Works a discussion of the how the clearing of sidewalks abutting municipal and state own properties, as well as sidewalks in unusual situations, will be addressed; and a discussion of snow plowing at the corners of intersections.

The Motion passed 5 – 0.

Councilor Palomba made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Councilor Gannon and was passed 5 – 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:53 PM.

The Minutes were prepared by Council Palomba

Sidewalk Snow Shoveling Exemptions

DRAFT: 12-13-22

Regulations for Watertown Ordinance, SUBCHAPTER II Snow and Ice Removal

§ 96.26 Removal of snow and ice on sidewalks by abutting property owners

Exemptions

1. The Watertown City Manager or designee (probably should name a designee) may exempt certain property owners who reside at an address within Watertown from the requirements of § 96.26 Removal of snow and ice on sidewalks by abutting property owners for one or more of the following reasons.
 - a. reasons of physical and financial limitations that prevent them from clearing snow from abutting sidewalks.
 - i. Applicants must be over the age of 65
OR have a disability
 - ii. AND be income eligible
 - b. Income limits are set at 50% of median household income as determined by HUD and updated from time to time. Acceptable proof of income includes a copy of SNAP EBT card, MassHealth Card, fuel assistance authorization, Watertown property tax exemption, or other income limited program, or your most recent tax return showing gross household income.
 - c. Proof of disability that would prevent snow removal activities includes information from a doctor or other health care provider, or SSDI documentation.
 - d. All members of the household or residential structure, must be qualified.
2. The City Manager or designee may also exempt property owners and properties from the requirements of § 96.26 for other unusual or extenuating circumstances including physical constraints of the specific property that make it unreasonably difficult to clear snow or for temporary circumstances that impact a property. This is for unique circumstances that are not found in other locations in the City.

Application

1. Application for Exemption is available online or from the Council on Aging. Call 617 972-6490.
2. Application can be made in the months of September and October of each year.
3. A denied application can be appealed to a Hearing Officer. A decision of the Hearing Officer is final.
4. Certified exemptions will be kept at the Council on Aging and the Zoning Office for enforcement.
5. The Recreation Department may be able to provide shoveling assistance, which is arranged on a first come first served basis.

HUD Income Limits 2021

Household size	1	2	3	4	5
Very Low Income (50% of median)	\$47,000	\$53,700	\$60,400	\$67,100	\$72,500

WATERTOWN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUS STOPS AND CROSSWALKS TO BE CLEARED

ARLINGTON STREET

203 ARLINGTON STREET	CROSSWALK
NICHOLS & COOLIDGE HILL ROAD	CROSSWALK
ARSENAL	CROSSWALK

ARSENAL STREET

MILLER'S ALE HOUSE	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
AT SARRIS AUTOMOTIVE	CROSSWALK
HOME DEPOT	CROSSWALK
RESIDENT INN MARRIOTT	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
ACROSS FROM FRIENDLIES	BUS STOP
ACROSS FROM WATERTOWN MALL	BUS STOP
WATERTOWN MALL	CROSSWALK
NEXT TO OMNI FOODS	BUS STOP
ARSENAL MALL FRONT ENTRANCE	CROSSWALK
WATERTOWN MALL REAR ENTRANCES	CROSSWALK & OPEN CORNERS
AUTO ZONE	CROSSWALK
440 ARSENAL STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
SCHOOL STREET AT ARSENAL STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
TOYOTA OF WATERTOWN	BUS STOP
LOUISE	CROSSWALK EACH SIDE
BEECHWOOD	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
187 ARSENAL	CROSSWALK
N BEACON PARK	BUS STOP
160 ARSENAL STREET	BUS STOP
IRVING STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
EDISON PLANT	BUS STOP
TAYLOR STREET (FIRESTONE)	CROSSWALK
AT SQUARE	CROSSWALK

GALEN STREET

AT SQUARE	CROSSWALK
NONANTUM	CROSSWALK
WATERTOWN ST	CROSSWALK
97 GALEN ST	BUS STOP
MORSE ST	CROSSWALK
BOYD ST	EACH BUS STOP

WATERTOWN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

BUS STOPS AND CROSSWALKS TO BE CLEARED

BELMONT STREET

NEAR DUFF ST	BUS STOP AT EACH SIDE
TOWNLY ROAD	CROSSWALK
SYCAMORE STREET	CROSSWALK
CIRCUIT LANE	CROSSWALK
ORCHARD AND WAVERLEY	CROSSWALK
ORCHARD AND CARROLL	4 CORNERS

MT AUBURN STREET

17 MT AUBURN	BUS STOP
TAYLOR STREET	CROSSWALK
SUMMER STREET	CROSSWALK AT BUS STOP
PATTEN STREET	BUS STOP - EACH SIDE
IRVING STREET	CROSSWALK
133 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
COMMON STREET	CROSSWALK
195 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
WALNUT STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
254 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP
271 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP - EACH SIDE
305 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP - EACH SIDE
348 MT AUBURN STREET	CROSSWALK
361 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP - EACH SIDE
WINTHROP	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
SCHOOL STREET	CROSSWALK
465 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP
EACH BRANCH LIBRARY	CROSS WALK
535 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
ELTON AVE	CROSSWALK
7-11 MARKET	BUS STOP
TOWN DINER	BUS STOP
BIGELOW AVE	CROSSWALK
ARLINGTON STREET	CROSSWALK
705 MT AUBURN STREET (TUFTS BLDG)	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
781 MT ABURN STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
805 MT AUBURN STREET	BUS STOP
CAMBRIDGE LINE	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK

WATERTOWN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

BUS STOPS AND CROSSWALKS TO BE CLEARED

WATERTOWN STREET

194 WATERTOWN STREET	BUS STOP - EACH SIDE
STOP & SHOP ENTRANCE	CROSSWALK
HYBERNIANS	BUS STOP - EACH SIDE
FIFTH AVE	CROSSWALK
65 WATERTOWN STREET	BUS STOP
50 WATERTOWN STREET	BUS STOP
AT BUS STOP SHELTER NEXT TO RIVER	BUS STOP

MAIN STREET

ACROSS FROM LONGFELLOW RD	BUS STOP
ACROSS FROM EDWARD RD	BUS STOP
683 MAIN STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
MAIN STREET AT EVANS	BUS STOP
625 MAIN STREET	CROSSWALK AT BUS STOP
590 MAIN STREET	CROSSWALK AT BUS STOP
POLICE STATION	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
MAIN STREET AT PILGRIM ROAD	CROSSWALK
476 MAIN STREET	BUS STOP
MAIN STREET AT LEXINGTON STREET	4 CROSSWALKS
MAIN STREET AT DUNKIN DONUTS	BUS STOP
E.C. SHAW (FRENCH STREET)	BUS STOP
MAIN STREET & WAVERLEY AVE	4 CROSSWALKS / BUS STOP
MAIN STREET AT WHITES AVE	BUS STOP
ST PATS	2 CROSSWALKS / BUS STOP
TOWN HALL	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
POST OFFICE	CROSSWALK
ACROSS FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT	BUS STOP
85 MAIN STREET	CROSSWALK
MAIN STREET & CHURCH STREET	CROSSWALK
MAIN STREET & PLEASANT STREET	BUS STOP / CROSSWALK
WATERTOWN SQUARE	ALL CROSSWALKS & BUS STOPS
MAIN STREET AT MT AUBURN STREET	CROSSWALK

NORTH BEACON STREET

ALFRED	CROSSWALK
IRVING STREET	CROSSWALK
BEECHWOOD	CROSSWALK
LOGAN FURNITURE	CROSSWALK

SCHOOL SIDEWALK ROUTES

<u>STREET</u>	<u>AREA TO BE DONE</u>	<u>DONE</u>
WESTMINSTER AVE	SCHOOL SIDE , MAIN ST TO BANCROFT ST	
BANCROFT ST	SCHOOL SIDE, WESTMINSTER AVE TO WAVERLEY AVE	
WAVERLEY AVE	ONE SIDE, ORCHARD ST TO MAIN ST	
ORCHARD ST	ONE SIDE, COMMON ST TO LEXINGTON ST	
WARREN ST	ONE SIDE, WAVERLEY AVE TO TOWN LINE	
COMMON ST	ONE SIDE, ORCHARD ST TO COLUMBIA ST	
COMMON ST	BOTH SIDES, COLUMBIA ST TO MT AUBURN ST	
CARROLL ST	SCHOOL SIDE, ORCHARD ST TO LOWELL AVE	
LOWELL AVE	SCHOOL SIDE, CARROLL ST TO GEORGE ST	
YORK AVE	PARK SIDE	
GEORGE ST	SCHOOL SIDE, ORCHARD ST TO WILSON AVE	
BOYLSTON ST	SCHOOL SIDE, MT AUBURN ST TO CONCORD RD	
CONCORD RD	SCHOOL SIDE SIDE, FULL LENGTH	
CHAUNCEY ST	SCHOOL SIDE, CONCORD RD TO HANCOCK ST	
HANCOCK ST	SCHOOL SIDE, FULL LENGTH	
WINTHROP ST	SCHOOL SIDE, FULL LENGTH	
MAIN ST	BOTH SIDES, WATERTOWN SQ TO WALTHAM LINE AND AROUND DELTA AND BRIDGE	
NORTH BEACON ST	PERKINS SCHOOL SIDE, WATERTOWN SQUARE TO BEECHWOOD AVE	
MT AUBURN ST	BOTH SIDES, WATERTOWN SQUARE TO CAMBRIDGE LINE	
GALEN ST	BOTH SIDES, WATERTOWN SQUARE TO NEWTON LINE	
WATERTOWN ST	ONE SIDE, GALEN ST TO NEWTON LINE	
	SALTONSTALL / LINEAR PARK	
	MERCHANTS ROW	
FILLIPELLO PARK	GROVE ST TO ARLINGTON ST	
SULLIVAN PARK	MT AUBURN ST TO END OF PARK	



Councilor Tony Palomba <councilorpalomba@gmail.com>

[Watertown] Snow Shoveling Ordinance - draft regulations

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

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 11:02 AM

To: "Gannon, John" <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>, "Feltner, Lisa" <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>, John Airasian <jairasian@watertown-ma.gov>, "Palomba, Anthony" <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

FYI

From: St. Louis, Gregory <gstlouis@watertown-ma.gov>

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 10:40 AM

To: Magoon, Steve <smagoon@watertown-ma.gov>; Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>; Mark R. Reich <mreich@k-plaw.com>

Cc: Proakis, George <gproakis@watertown-ma.gov>; Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>; Cookson, Michael <mcookson@watertown-ma.gov>

Subject: Re: Snow Shoveling Ordinance - draft regulations

1) The priority list of sidewalks and corners they clear.

Snow & Ice | Watertown, MA - Official Website (watertown-ma.gov)

Snow & Ice | Watertown, MA - Official Website

Information about snow and ice.

www.watertown-ma.gov

These are all detailed on the Snow and Ice webpage.

DPW clears and salts linear path from Church St to Waverly

(Gravel path at Howard does not get cleared as it is not paved)

(Commercial properties clear linear path School St to Irving St.

2) The priority list of city-owned properties they clear.

Property and Buildings clears and salts walkways at all school and municipal locations.

DPW opens up the parking lots and public sidewalks at the end of the storm and

salt all school parking lots and municipal parking lots.

3) The list of state-owned properties they clear.

MBTA: SHOULD clear the Bus Stops loading areas

DOT: SHOULD clear the bridge at Galen and bridge at Main

Plow Main Street Waltham to Bacon

DCR at the Square through Charles River Road to Brighton

DCR Nonantum from Galen to Newton
DCR /DOT to clear Arsenal @ Brighton Bridge
DCR /DOT to clear N. Beacon @ Brighton Bridge
DCR clears linear path from Arsenal Street to Cambridge

Greg

Gregory M. St. Louis, PE, LEED AP BD+C
Superintendent of Public Works
124 Orchard Street
Watertown, MA 02472
gstlouis@watertown-ma.gov
O: 617.972.6420 ext.13117

From: Magoon, Steve <smagoon@watertown-ma.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 10:16 AM
To: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>; St. Louis, Gregory <gstlouis@watertown-ma.gov>; Mark R. Reich <mreich@k-plaw.com>
Cc: Proakis, George <gproakis@watertown-ma.gov>; Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>
Subject: RE: Snow Shoveling Ordinance - draft regulations

Both Tony Mancini and I will be attending. Thanks

From: Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 10:11 AM
To: Magoon, Steve <smagoon@watertown-ma.gov>; St. Louis, Gregory <gstlouis@watertown-ma.gov>; Mark R. Reich <mreich@k-plaw.com>
Cc: Proakis, George <gproakis@watertown-ma.gov>; Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>
Subject: Re: Snow Shoveling Ordinance - draft regulations

Steve & Greg & Mark

The meeting is tonight at 6:30 pm <https://watertownma.portal.civicclerk.com/event/5411/files>

Mark: In the Committee report, we need KP Law to attend the meeting given that there were two requests for legal opinions made during the meeting and there could be more. Having KP Law present to render a ruling could save time and be more efficient. Can KP Law provide answers to the questions raised at the last meeting, in writing, for tonight's meeting? Can you confirm someone from KP Law will attend tonight?

Greg: In the Committee report, we requested that the Department of Public Works provide the following information:

- 1) The priority list of sidewalks and corners they clear.
- 2) The priority list of city-owned properties they clear.
- 3) The list of state-owned properties they clear.

Can you please provide answers in writing for tonight's meeting? Can you confirm someone from DPW will attend tonight?

Steve: I assume someone from DCDP will attend tonight also.

Let me know.

Thanks

Vinnie

From: Magoon, Steve <smagoon@watertown-ma.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, December 13, 2022 1:52 PM

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

Cc: Mark R. Reich <mreich@k-plaw.com>; St. Louis, Gregory <gstlouis@watertown-ma.gov>; Proakis, George <gproakis@watertown-ma.gov>; Wiener, Laura <lwiener@watertown-ma.gov>; Schreiber, Gideon <gschreiber@watertown-ma.gov>

Subject: Snow Shoveling Ordinance - draft regulations

Councilors, attached is a draft of the regulations that tries to capture all of the discussion items identified at our last work session. I have also included both Mark Reich and Greg St. Louis on this, as you requested information from each of them when we hold our next meeting. For Mark you asked that he respond to the ability to lien properties for unpaid fines and that it may be beneficial for an attorney to attend the next work session. You also asked that DPW provide a priority list of the sidewalks, city properties, and any State property that we clear of snow. Let me know if there are any questions. Thanks

Steve Magoon

Acting Deputy City Manager, Director, Community Development and Planning

Watertown Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Office 617 972-6417

Cell 617 987-1136

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).

[Watertown] Snow Shoveling Ordinance - draft regulations

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

Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 2:38 PM

To: "Gannon, John" <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>, "Feltner, Lisa" <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>, John Airasian <jairasian@watertown-ma.gov>, "Palomba, Anthony" <apalomba@watertown-ma.gov>

FYI

From: Mark R. Reich <MReich@k-plaw.com>**Sent:** Monday, September 25, 2023 12:28 PM**To:** Piccirilli, Vincent J <vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>; Magoon, Steve <smagoon@watertown-ma.gov>; St. Louis, Gregory <gstlouis@watertown-ma.gov>**Cc:** Proakis, George <gproakis@watertown-ma.gov>; Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>; Sideris, Mark <msideris@watertown-ma.gov>**Subject:** RE: Snow Shoveling Ordinance - draft regulations

Councilor –

I have reviewed the report from the joint meeting of the Committee on Public Works and the Committee on Rules and Ordinances held on October 17, 2022 which was attached to your e-mail. That report presented two questions for consideration by the City Attorney.

1. "Committee members indicated that they felt the draft did incorporate the changes. However, Councilor Piccirilli raised a concern about the wording in Section 96.99 Penalty (C), specifically whether the word "anyone" should be changed to "abutting property owner" so as to be consistent. There was a short discussion of the issue and a determination that KP Law should be consulted on how best to proceed."

Please note that §96.99(C) provides for enforcement of §96.26 of the Ordinance, which addresses the removal of snow and ice by private persons in the Business District. The provisions of §96.26 govern actions by private persons not limited to abutting property owners, stating in part, "Every person in charge or control of any building or lot of land within a business district and used for business purposes in the city fronting on or abutting a paved sidewalk, whether as owner, tenant, occupant, lessee, or otherwise, shall remove and clear away, or cause to be removed and cleared away, snow and ice..." §96.26(B)(1)(a). Thus, enforcement may be taken against any "private person", which term is defined in §96.26 as "Every person, partnership, corporation, joint-stock company, or other entity, whether as owner, tenant, occupant, lessee, or other agent." In my opinion, this definition is broadier than "abutting property owner" as it addresses individuals who may be in violation of the Ordinance and who are not abutting property owners. In my opinion, revisions would be required to §96.26 if the intent is to limit enforcement to "abutting property owner". Otherwise, in my opinion, the word "anyone" is appropriate as it addresses any private person violating the Ordinance. However, consideration may be given to amending the Ordinance to revise the references to "person" as it appears in §96.26 as the definition of "private person" includes but is broader than "person".

2. Returning to the issue of enforcement, there was a discussion about scofflaws, that is someone who refuses to pay their fines. The Committees requested an opinion of KP Law about adopting state regulations that would allow the City to put a lien on the property or apply the unpaid fees to the property owner's tax bill.

- 2.

The provisions of G.L. c. 40, §58 allow for the imposition of a "municipal charges lien" on property located within the City for any local charge or fee that has not been paid by the due date. This statute is subject to consideration by the

City Council, with the municipal charges lien for each type of charge or fee to be undertaken pursuant to a separate vote of the City Council. I have drafted an Order for consideration by the City Council which includes a variety of City charges for which municipal charges lien may be imposed based upon non-payment, including snow and ice enforcement charges. That Order appears on the agenda for the City Council meeting tomorrow night.

Please note that the below e-mail was the first notice I received of this meeting. Unfortunately, based upon this late notice and the pending Jewish holiday, I am unable to attend tonight's meeting. I hope that the above opinion addresses the issues being raised.

Thank you.

Mark

Mark R. Reich, Esq.

KP | LAW

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Boston, MA 02110

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mreich@k-plaw.com

www.k-plaw.com

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[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to accept the Committee on Personnel and City Organization Report.



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

Committee of the Personnel and City Organization Meeting October 30, 2023

The Committee convened at 5:30 pm on Monday, October 30, 2023 in the Council Chambers

Present were Caroline Bays, Chair; John Gannon, Vice Chair; and Nicole Gardner, Secretary. Also present were City Manager George Proakis, Assistant City Manager Emily Monea, and joining by zoom, Micheal Albano.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the qualities for the role of City Clerk with the City Manager.

Chair Bays called the meeting to order at 5:33pm,

The meeting began with a discussion of the many varied responsibilities embedded in the role, including all election matters, city census, vital records, claims, licensing, appropriation orders, and maintaining city records in perpetuity. The job description is appended to these minutes.

Chair Bays asked the committee for their thoughts on important skills and experiences for this role.

Councilor Gannon said he would value

- Familiarity with relevant Massachusetts laws (e.g. permitting, record keeping, duties of recording, etc.)
- Prior experience in a clerk's office
- Customer service skills and orientation
- Ability to work with diverse community members

Councilor Gardner said that in addition to those already noted, she would value

- Integrity and courage of convictions
- Attention to detail / quality
- Process management
- Grace under pressure
- Team management
- Communications

Chair Bays said that in addition, she would value

- Familiarity with Watertown
- Team player
- Collaborative working style since many stakeholders are in different City departments

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made

1. Under Clerk Murphy, enormous progress was made in digitizing, organizing, and making available to the public an overwhelming number of records, It is important that the department not lose momentum (however the short staffing will make this challenging).
2. The department is down two people right now, and it is very difficult to hire for the positions. This may be alleviated somewhat when the compensation and classification study is implemented. The work of this department is very broad, and carries high impact of failure. Watertown is not at market in current compensation.
3. One major work item outstanding is to index the City's records from 1978 forward.

At 5:52 p.m. Councilor Gardner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Gannon. Approved unanimously.

Report prepared by Nicole Gardner

Attachments:
Job Description for City Clerk

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Caroline Bays,
Chair

John G. Gannon,
Vice Chair

Nicole Gardner,
Secretary

TOWN CLERK

Definition

The Town Clerk is responsible for the direction of election activities, maintenance and preservation of official town records and official documents, as defined by Massachusetts General Laws and the Home Rule Charter; other related work, as required.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.

Responsible for ensuring the accuracy, filing, and issuing of the town's vital records, including birth, death and marriage records; ensures the accurate recording of Uniform Commercial Code filings and business certificates; responsible for records management and providing a legal and accurate records of town actions.

Ensures compliance with the Commonwealth's Public Records Law and the disposition schedule; ensures compliance with the Open Meeting Law; ensures compliance with rules and regulations of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission and the State Fire Marshal's office.

Ensures the accessibility of all municipal polling places; responsible for managing all details and procedures for elections, including final tabulations and reporting of results; supervises the processing of voter affidavits and maintenance of permanent voter records.

Serves as the town's burial agent; serves as secretary of the municipal corporation and official keeper of the records.

Administers the oath of office to elected and appointed town officials.

Performs similar or related work as required, or as situation dictates.

Supervision

Works under the administrative direction of the Town Manager and the policy direction of the Board of Election Commissioners, in conformance with applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and relevant municipal policies; statutory duties and responsibilities are defined by applicable state laws; duties require the exercise of considerable judgment and discretion.

Supervisory Responsibilities

Supervises four full-time administrative employees, one part-time employee and election workers.

Work Environment

Work is performed in typical office conditions; the workload changes according to scheduled events, including elections and Town Meetings; may be required to work additional hours.

The employee operates standard office equipment and voting machines.

The employee has regular contact with the public, other municipal departments, and state agencies to provide information in person, by telephone, fax, e-mail and in writing.

*Watertown, Massachusetts
Town Clerk*

The employee has access to personnel files, collective bargaining negotiations, legal proceedings and impounded records.

Failure to comply with statutes could result in monetary loss or legal repercussions.

Recommended Minimum Qualifications

Education and Experience

Bachelor's Degree; three years of municipal administrative experience, including records management; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Knowledge, Ability and Skill

Knowledge of state, local and federal statutes and regulations applicable to the duties and responsibilities of a Town Clerk's office; knowledge of office procedures and records management; familiarity with budget process and implementation.

Ability to interact tactfully and appropriately with the general public and the press; ability to establish and maintain working relationships with town departments and state agencies; ability to establish and maintain record keeping systems; ability to handle multiple tasks and meet deadlines; ability to manage details accurately.

Public relations and customer service skills; organization skills; oral and written communication skills.

Physical Requirements

Minimal physical effort is generally required. The employee is required to stand, walk, sit, speak and hear, and use hands to operate equipment and move ballot boxes. Vision requirements include the ability to read and analyze documents and use a computer.

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to accept the Committee on Economic Development & Planning Report and its Action Item.



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 & Planning Meeting Date: September 27, 2023

The Committee convened on Wednesday September 27, 2023 at 6:00 pm in the Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room, with remote participation by Zoom. Present were Lisa Feltner, chair; John Gannon, vice chair; and Vincent Piccirilli, secretary. Staff present were Steven Magoon, Assistant City Manager/Director of Community Development and Planning; Gideon Schreiber, Assistant Director of Planning; Antonio Mancini, Zoning Enforcement Officer; George Proakis, City Manager (by zoom). Also present were Council President Mark Sideris, and Councilors John Airasian and Emily Izzo. See Attachment A for other attendees.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss revising requirements for Community Meetings for large projects.

Mr. Proakis spoke about the genesis of this referral, which was regarding the reuse of an existing building on Manley Way that did not meet the requirements for a Community Meeting, but did one voluntarily, noting the input from the meeting was very helpful. He noted that Somerville only added Community Meetings to its Zoning Ordinance after many years of doing them informally. He addressed the issue of Developer Conferences, noting that Somerville does not have Developer Conferences open to the public, and he is not aware of any municipality that does. He added that it does not make sense to have these open to the public, because the purpose is to have an open exchange of ideas that need refinement before moving forward, and sometimes developers do not proceed with a project after getting input from staff. He said it's important to get the right public feedback at the right time to be meaningful and effective.

Next, Mr. Magoon provided a memo about Community Meeting Requirements (Attachment B – *note the last sentence of the second paragraph of this memo contains a typo; it should read "...10,000 square feet of non-residential."*) regarding Section 9.03(b) of the Zoning Ordinance (Attachment C).

Key discussion points:

- The recommendation of DCDP is to amend the regulations to cover building conversion, not just new construction, and not change the language of the zoning ordinance.
- In the 2nd paragraph, the words "of new development" should be deleted.
- Throughout the regulations, change 10 days or 2 weeks to "10 business days".
- For item 2, include a recommended list of documents that must be provided, such as floorplans, site maps, several rendering perspectives, etc.

The Chair opened up public comments:

- George Skuse spoke about his concerns with the process. (see email, Attachment D)
- Marcy Murningham spoke about the principles of transparency and engagement in the Charter Preamble, thus item 6 should better reflect this.
- Dennis Duff spoke about the Developer Conference, and how does the public know what was decided.

- Linda Scott spoke about her concerns with the process. (see email, Attachment E)
- Rita Colafella spoke about her concerns with public meetings. (see email, Attachment F)
- Elodia Thomas spoke about her concerns including materials not being provided 2 weeks in advance, that developer meetings with staff could be open to the public for observation-only, DCDP should be doing reports of the meetings not the developer to balance perspectives, a summary sheet should be provided at each meeting with all the changes made to the plans, some people don't get to ask questions due to lack of time and Zoom meetings are inadequate, and aggregated noise from multiple projects needs to be addressed; this committee referral only came about due to residents' concerns, not staff.
- Jacky van Leeuwen spoke about negative comments don't reflect the whole community, and wonders if the threshold of 4 units is considered best practice for housing developments.
- Joan Gumbleton spoke about her concerns with the process. (see email, Attachment G)
- Jamie Gordon spoke about developers limiting participation at zoom meetings, and that all emails sent about a project should be provided to the Planning Board and ZBA.
- Sam Ghilardi spoke about not providing more meetings when it's just the same people showing up, and the need to find a better way to engage the broader public, such as renters.

- ➔ **Action item:** Councilor Piccirilli made a motion, seconded by Councilor Gannon, to recommend the City Council endorses the changes to the regulations for Community Meeting Requirements, as follows:
1. In the 2nd paragraph, the words "of new development" will be deleted.
 2. Throughout the regulations, change 10 days or 2 weeks to "10 business days".
 3. For item 2, include a recommended list of documents that must be provided.

The motion was voted 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Report prepared by Vincent Piccirilli

Attachments:

- A. List of other attendees
- B. DCDP memo dated September 27, 2023
- C. Section 9.03(b) of the Zoning Ordinance
- D. George Skuse email
- E. Linda Scott email
- F. Rita Colafella email
- G. Joan Gumbleton email

Attachment A – Other Attendees

* On Zoom

Elodia Thomas

Clyde Younger

Jaime Gordon

Linda Scott

Dennis Duff

Rita Colafella

Joan Gumbleton

George Skuse

Carolyn Gritter

*David Stokes

*Jacky van Leeuwen

Marcy Murningham

*Rachel Kay

*Sam Ghilardi

*Josh Rosmarin



CITY OF WATERTOWN
Department of
Community Development and
Planning
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617 972 6417
Fax: 617 972 6484
www.watertown-ma.gov

To: Committee on Economic Development and Planning
From: Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager of Community Development & Planning; Gideon Schreiber, Assistant Director of Planning
Date: September 27, 2023
Re: **Community Meeting Requirements**

At the request of the Honorable City Council DCDP staff reviewed the current community meeting requirements and identified suggested changes to expand which projects will require a community meeting and make the process more defined.

The current language within the Watertown Zoning Ordinance includes a threshold for having an initial community meeting, which is triggered for **new development** with four or more residential units or for non-residential projects of 10,000 s.f. or more ([Section 9.03\(b\)](#)). The Ordinance, under [Section Two](#), does not specifically define what new development is. In the first part of Section 9.03 there is a reference that **any project** requiring Site Plan Review (SR) or Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SP/SR) under [§ 5.01](#) Table of Use regulations shall follow all requirements within the section. Staff has reviewed the language and reference, and suggests that for the purpose of community meetings, the words, “new development” could be interpreted to also encompass “conversions” as used in the Use Table. Conversions is defined and specifically, by including conversions, the requirement would then extend to all projects that require Site Plan Review or Special Permit with Site Plan Review and have the threshold of 4 residential units and/or 10,000 square feet of non-commercial.

This option would expand the applicability and would not require a zoning amendment. It could be implemented using the existing application and handouts. Attached as Appendix A is an example of a handout provided to projects that trigger the community meeting requirement.



City of Watertown
Department of Community Development and Planning
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472

COMMUNITY MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The Watertown Zoning Ordinance, [Section 9.03\(b\)](#) requires a community meeting (referenced in the Watertown Zoning Ordinance as a public information meeting) for certain projects needing Special Permit with Site Plan Review or Site Plan Review approval. This required community meeting is intended to give a project team the opportunity to introduce initial project concept plans to the public and receive comments and questions prior to the formal application and public process before the Planning Board and/or the Zoning Board of Appeals.

For projects with **four** or greater residential units, or for non-residential projects with **10,000** square feet of new development or greater, a petitioner/applicant shall hold one Community Meeting (the DCDP Director may require a second meeting) at least **10 days prior** to the formal zoning application to the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals.

The applicant must:

1. Coordinate the meeting date and location of the Community Meeting with Department of Community Development and Planning staff (DCDP) and the City Councilor who represents the district where the project is proposed;
2. Submit project materials to DCDP **two weeks** in advance of the Community Meeting;
3. Confirm the meeting time and place of the Community Meeting with DCDP staff
4. Provide notice no less than **two weeks** prior to the Community Meeting;
5. Distribute an enhanced 500' notice to property addresses and a 300' notice to property owners (a copy of the notice must be submitted and approved by DCDP before distribution);
6. City Staff will also announce the meeting by posting the Petitioner's notice on the Town website calendar and using the city email notification system;
7. Submit a written summary of the Community Meeting to the City Planning and Zoning Staff within **a week** of the meeting. The report must include comments received and answers provided at the meeting.

a Solar Energy System Assessment, as required under Section 8.05. The Petitioner shall indicate, in writing, what actions/outcomes will be taken with a copy of the assessment, to DCDP.

- (b) The Planning Board shall hold a hearing on the proposal to examine the standards set forth in subsection (c) below as part of the formal application process. Prior to said hearing, a Preliminary Developer's Conference shall be held with representatives of the developer and City Departments and Committees listed in subsection (a) above, to determine and discuss questions, impacts, potential problems, etc., with said site plan, and to provide guidance to the developers in completing the formal application and site plan submission. Each department shall submit an analysis of the formal application and site plan to the Director of DCDP within 30 days.

For projects with four or greater residential units, or for non-residential projects with 10,000 square feet of new development or greater, the Petitioner will conduct a public information meeting no less than 10 days prior to submission for Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals approval. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the public to understand and comment on the specifics of the project, the details of such project shall be made available to the public, through submission to the Department of Community Development & Planning, no less than 14 days prior to the public information meeting. The Petitioner shall coordinate planning this meeting with the Department of Community Development & Planning and the City Councilor who represents the district where the project would be built. The meeting shall be announced by the Petitioner no less than two weeks prior to the meeting. The required advertising by the Petitioner shall include a notice distributed to abutters and abutters to abutters within 300' of the site. Upon confirmation of the meeting time and place with the Department of Community Development and Planning, said Department will also announce the meeting by posting an announcement on the City website, with the City Council and using the City Email notification system. Within one week of the meeting, the Petitioner shall submit a summary of what was discussed at the meeting to the Department of Community Development & Planning. At the discretion of the Director of Community Development & Planning, a second public information meeting may be required in instances of large projects with a community impact, or a project with circumstances that would necessitate a second meeting.

No application shall be complete, shall be accepted by the Director of DCDP, nor be submitted to the Planning Board for consideration unless and until all information specified in § 9.03(a) is submitted in a form deemed to be sufficient and complete by the Director of DCDP, and until reports on the application are received from all relevant City Departments and Committees as defined in subsection (a) above; provided, however, that if a department fails to provide such analysis within said 15 day period, the DCDP's review shall proceed without the report of such department, and the Director of DCDP may determine such application to be complete notwithstanding the failure of such department to submit its report. Said reports shall be incorporated into the submission to the Planning Board.

- (c) The Planning Board shall review the formal application and site plan and then prepare a written report on the proposal considering, among other things, the ten criteria listed below. When a proposal requires a Variance or Special Permit with Site Plan Review in accordance with § 5.01 and the Board of Appeals is the SPGA, this report of the Planning Board shall be submitted to the Board of Appeals in accordance with the provisions set forth below. The Board of Appeals shall not grant the Special Permit or Variance until this report has been submitted. When a proposal requires a Special Permit with Site Plan

Changes to Community Meeting Requirements (for 9/27/2023)

George Skuse <george.skuse@gmail.com>

Wed 9/27/2023 6:51 AM

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

<vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov>

Cc:Sideris, Mark <msideris@watertown-ma.gov>

Councilors of the Committee on Economic Development and Planning,

As you're considering changes to the Zoning Ordinance related to **Community Meetings**, I'd like to suggest that:

- Any project requiring either a Site Plan Review or a Special Permit should be required to have a Community Meeting.

Also, I'd like to propose the following to define the expectations of Community Meetings. Some of these are modeled after other cities, while some address issues I've witnessed:

1. The applicant must provide options for people to attend the meeting in-person and virtually. The meeting can be conducted as a single hybrid meeting that allows community members to attend in person or remotely, or as separate in-person and online meetings.
2. The applicant must coordinate with Watertown's Cable Access Corp to record and broadcast all meetings (whether in-person, hybrid, or virtual).
3. Require city staff to take official minutes of the meetings and require the applicant's written summary of the meeting to describe how they've responded to issues raised.
4. DCDP should produce a set of guidelines to assist applicants in running successful Community Meetings. See Cambridge's ([pdf](#)) as an example: https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/ZoningDevel/PlanningBoard/pbrules2022/cddpreappeceguidelines_adopied_20221025.pdf

In some cities (Somerville for example), **Preliminary Developer Conferences** (occurring *before* a Community Meeting) are coordinated by an appointed body and subject to Open Meeting Law. In Watertown, these meetings are currently internal and private. As access to these conferences would increase transparency and allow for better preparation for Community Meetings, I'd propose that the ordinance be amended to:

1. Allow the public to attend the Preliminary Developer's Conferences (defined in [§9.03\(b\)](#)).
2. Require that the dates of upcoming Preliminary Developer's Conferences be posted.
3. Ensure that minutes for the Preliminary Developer's Conferences are recorded, retained, and published.

Finally, as last-minute submissions make it difficult for the public to provide informed comments, I'd like to suggest:

1. For any Community Meeting, or hearing by the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals, all materials and presentations to be referenced by the applicant or city staff must be made available online 10 days prior to the meeting via the city's website.
2. For any presentation or proposal by the applicant (including those at a community meeting or hearing) any changes to previously presented plans or proposals should be fully annotated for the Boards and the public to easily review.

Thanks again for your time and consideration,

George Skuse, 43 Pilgrim Rd

Municipal employee; all comments are my own personal opinions and not made on behalf of another.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

CDD Guidelines for Pre-Application Early Community Engagement

The Planning Board requires, in Section 5 of the Planning Board's Rules, that projects seeking a Special Permit conduct a pre-application early community engagement process including at least one community meeting hosted by the Applicant. These guidelines provide additional suggestions and ideas for making the community meeting(s) as inclusive, meaningful, and productive as possible.

Early community engagement is an important part of project review that provides opportunities for community members to learn about a potential development project prior to any formal public hearings, allows interested parties to have a dialogue about the major concerns and issues that may be associated with a project, and provides useful feedback to the Planning Board to inform the Board's future review, when required.

The extent of outreach and engagement may vary depending on the location, scale and impact of the project, as well as the communities that are being engaged. Early Community Engagement options may include:

- Meetings with established neighborhood groups (where applicable)
- Open houses
- Informative and/or interactive websites
- Distributing information through e-mail, mailings, flyers and on-site postings
- Informal conversations with interested parties.

Applicants should center equity and inclusion in their engagement by following the approach suggested in CDD's Community Engagement Handbook. The "Public Meetings" chapter in the Handbook has detailed recommendations on how to host community meetings.

1. Applicants are encouraged to schedule a meeting with CDD staff before initiating a pre-application Early Community Engagement process to identify historically excluded and underheard communities, create an appropriate list of contacts, and decide on an appropriate combination of notification methods.
2. Community meeting(s) should be accessible to all who want to attend. They should be held at a location that community members frequently go to and at a time that is convenient for most community members to attend, with both in-person and virtual options to participate. Additionally, Applicants should schedule community meeting(s) in coordination with existing neighborhood groups and community-based organizations to avoid any conflicts.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

3. Community meeting(s) should be advertised by mail or e-mail no less than two weeks prior to the meeting date and should be located on-site or in close proximity to the site of a proposed project.
4. An appropriate list of community members who should be directly notified should include:
 - a) Abutters;
 - b) Nearby residents;
 - c) Community groups in the project's neighborhood and adjoining neighborhoods. (A running list of existing neighborhood and community groups is available on the CDD website: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/planud/neighborhoodorganizations.aspx>);
 - d) Community-based organizations; and
 - e) Leaders and stakeholders from historically excluded and underheard communities.
5. In addition to targeted notification, outreach methods could be expanded to inform and engage a wider range of community members who might be interested in a project. Possible methods of notification may include:
 - a) Informative and/or interactive websites;
 - b) Neighborhood and other e-mail lists;
 - c) Social media; and
 - d) Posters or signs posted on-site or at other locations frequented by community members such as places of worship, hair salons and barber shops, playgrounds, convenience stores, check-cashing sites, and laundromats.
6. Community meeting(s) can take many different formats. A typical format of community meeting(s) includes a short presentation about the proposal followed by a Q&A session and discussion session. Community meeting(s) could also include an "open house" format allowing community members to come in and out at different times to review the proposal and ask questions. Community meeting(s) are meant to provide opportunities for community members to receive information, ask questions, and provide comments in real time. The community meeting(s) can be conducted in a hybrid format that allows community members to attend in person or remotely, or as separate in-person and online meetings. When planning a virtual meeting, refer to the section "Examine Technology Access and Privilege" on page 114 of the Handbook for recommendations on an inclusive approach.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

7. Throughout the pre-application community engagement process, the following information should be presented along with other information that might be relevant to the specific project. If the community engagement process has multiple phases, more general information might be presented for discussion at an earlier phase, with more detailed plans presented at a later phase.
 - a) An initial site analysis addressing site opportunities and constraints, the uses of all adjacent buildings, traffic conditions and major environmental considerations, and the zoning of the site and adjacent properties;
 - b) A drawing of existing site context indicating topography of the site and the location of structures and prominent landscape elements on or abutting the site;
 - c) Photos showing the facades of adjacent buildings, trees on the site, general streetscape character;
 - d) A three-dimensional zoning envelope study that illustrates the maximum allowable floor area and building bulk under current zoning;
 - e) A description of the Applicant's objectives with regard to the site development including tentative program mix; and
 - f) Preliminary massing studies, plan(s) and rendering(s).
 - g) Information about how to attend any relevant Planning Board hearings and provide comments to the Planning Board.
8. It is strongly recommended that presentation materials be developed using the "Plain Language Checklist" in the Handbook and made available online for community members who were unable to attend.

Tonight's Committee on Economic Development and Planning Meeting, advance notes

Linda <linda.scott3@comcast.net>

Wed 9/27/2023 11:59 AM

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

Dear Councilors Feltner, Gannon and Piccirilli,

Here is an advanced copy of what I plan to say tonight. Thank you so much for your speedy response to this critical issue!

Tonight we will be speaking about boring stuff. Process issues. Boring, and yet little by little as the door has slowly closed, the public is left more and more out of the process and in the dark.

I'm not going to ascribe any ill will involved in this, but it seems clear that one by one the building blocks of communication between the people of Watertown and their government (in this case the Department of Community Planning and Development (DCDP)), have been crumbling.

Often, the phrase that's used when something goes awry in Watertown is, "We're a city now." Those words should not lull this community into accepting poor service or inadequate communication.

Tonight it's all about process and some of the ways that that can be improved for better understanding.

As you know, a few months ago, I was curious about the process for the Planning and Zoning Boards to receive citizen input. I sent certified letters to each of the Planning Board members weeks before the meeting on the issue I was addressing would be heard by them.

I mailed these letters across the street at the Post Office. Assuming that was that, I attended that meeting, only to find that my "community input" sat there, unopened, having been delivered to the board members that evening, although these certified letters had been sitting in the DCDP office for almost three weeks.

Some of the suggestions are things that have been "lost along the way," and some are based upon my observations with accompanying solutions.

For instance, I really support returning to the system where there is a preliminary meeting. I know that the public can't speak at those meetings, but it would give Watertown residents time to really think about the project before the developer's meeting when they can speak.

The issue of when and how the Planning and Zoning Boards (and the public) get project information is critical. That spills over into the public's ability to know what's going on. For instance, I've been to multiple meetings where the developer plops down newly redesigned projects onto the Board members' table the night of the meeting that it is being discussed, leaving the Board members scrambling to catch up and the public in the dark.

That could be easily solved by giving the developers a strict deadline...they won't be on the agenda for that next meeting unless ALL information has been submitted to the Board at least 10 days before the meeting. Otherwise, they can just wait until the next meeting, when they have a completed plan to present. This has the added benefit of supporting our hardworking Planning and Zoning Board members.

These plans tend to be voluminous. If/when they are changed, it's not unreasonable for the developers to be expected to have some kind of reference sheet that draws people's attention to something new. With this, there has to be some sort of consequence for leaving some changes unmentioned.

In order to have the most community participation possible, the meetings need to provide on-site as well as zoom options and be stored and readily available for the community to watch and rewatch, if necessary. It would also be good if the members of the boards were able to at least review the meeting videos to get a better idea of what community members are saying.

A very recent communication issue is your public on-line notice for this meeting. The agenda seems to not reflect enough information to stand out to folks. I've been told that this is the result of a new IT template. Maybe this is a quick and easy one to fix?

We absolutely need community meetings for all projects that require a site plan and/or a special permit, no matter the size or amount of construction to be done. Here's an example of why this is important.

At the Manley meeting (a meeting not required by the current ordinance), a citizen pointed out a problem with the plans that would allow the Manley building to discharge storm water into Walker Pond. It was pointed out by a citizen that the quality of that water among other issues needs further clarification, and yet, in Steve Magoon's response to me on the process he mentions that:

"Based on comments [on the Manley project] received through the initial staff review, the project has now incorporated significant updated stormwater improvements and provides a substantial reduction of pavement, after the city determines that the existing loop roadway around the exterior and rear of the site was not necessary for public safety."

Without community scrutiny, this potential issue would probably not have been caught.

There are more things that can be done. I'm sure that you have received more ideas to remediate these issues via email.

Citizens and government can work in tandem to make things right. They just need transparent structures, rules and procedures that allow this to happen.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Linda Scott

Re: [PDF] Still Muted: The Limited Participatory Democracy of Zoom Public Meetings | Semantic Scholar

Rita Colafella <colafella@gmail.com>

Wed 9/27/2023 8:22 PM

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

Please attach my comments as well.

I understand the desire to align building conversion public meeting requirements with our current new construction public meeting requirements. However In practice, these meetings don't empower community members equally. Researchers at BU have found that most public meetings are unrepresentative of the larger municipality, skewing older and more likely to be a homeowner, which is a challenge for a city like Watertown, where we are split roughly 50:50 owner:renter and the average age is 38. The same 15 to 30 show up, and that's 0.08 percent of the city population. Rather than requiring more of the same unrepresentative meetings, the city should re-evaluate the necessity, purpose and goals of required community meetings. For those concerned about changing community meeting requirements or formats, there are still opportunities for public comment at both the planning board and the Zoning Board of Appeals, where large projects (like the Watertown Mall) are often continued across multiple meetings, providing ample opportunity for citizen input. I think the city is putting the cart before the horse. Tangential, I think the the thresholds should be lowered.

Rita Colafella

56 Cuba Street

On Wed, Sep 27, 2023, 7:59 PM Rita Colafella <colafella@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi.Vinnie,

Here is the BU study. Please attach to the notes.for the Department of Community Development & Planning Meeting

Thanks,
Rita

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Still-Muted%3A-The-Limited-Participatory-Democracy-of-Einstein-Glick/3a86193db9baf1a3c85d0475aec60bf0f7ce474b>

Still Muted: The Limited Participatory Democracy of Zoom Public Meetings

Katherine Levine Einstein*

David Glick†

Luisa Godinez Puig‡

Maxwell Palmer§¶

November 2, 2021

Abstract

Recent research has demonstrated that participants in public meetings are unrepresentative of their broader communities. Some suggest that reducing barriers to meeting attendance can improve participation, while others believe that such changes will be produce minimal changes. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted public meetings online, potentially reducing the time costs associated with participating. We match participants at online public meetings with administrative data to learn whether: (1) online participants are representative of their broader communities and (2) representativeness improves relative to in-person meetings. We find that participants in online forums are quite similar to those in in-person ones. They are similarly unrepresentative of residents in their broader communities and similarly overwhelmingly opposed to the construction of new housing. These results suggest important limitations to public meeting reform. Future research should continue to unpack whether reforms might prove more effective at redressing inequalities in an improved economic and public health context.

*Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Boston University. kleinst@bu.edu.

†Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Boston University. dmclick@bu.edu.

‡PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Boston University. luisagp@bu.edu.

§Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Boston University. mbpalmer@bu.edu.

¶Author names are in alphabetical order.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced municipalities across the country to implement emergency health, economic, and social policies. It also required them to adapt formerly routine functions including in-person public proceedings on important policy issues such as housing and policing. After a brief pause, municipalities moved these meetings to online platforms. Prominent politicians, activists, and media believe that this shift significantly changed the composition of participants by lowering barriers for many people. For example, in a 2021 op-ed, the *Boston Globe* called for making such changes permanent: “allowing people to participate remotely has proved to be a big improvement, broadening the pool of participants” and two Boston City Councilors introduced an ordinance that would do so.¹ Whether this optimism about online meetings’ effect on participation is justified is an empirical question with important scholarly and policy implications. In this paper, we ask whether reducing participation costs diminishes political inequality. We collect novel administrative data about participation in post-COVID-19 online housing meetings for which potential participants do not have to leave their homes. Critically, these data are directly comparable to published findings about pre-COVID-19 in-person meetings (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019). These questions, and our answers to them, sit at the intersection of literatures about public meeting structures (e.g. Collins 2021), housing politics (e.g. Hankinson 2018), and the effect of reforms on fundamental political participation (e.g. Barber and Holbein 2020).

Making important decisions through local participatory institutions is appealing in many ways. However, recent research (e.g. Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019) has rigorously documented considerable demographic inequalities in participation in traditional public meetings and large skews in the positions that government hears through them. Recognizing such concerns, others have suggested reducing barriers and using alternative formats (including online) to improve participation (e.g. American Academy of Arts and Sciences 2020, Strategy 3). Such ideas are intuitive. Among other things, participating in-person likely means leaving one’s home for a couple of hours in the evening, traveling to a government building, and sitting through chunks of a boring meeting while waiting for deliberation on the issue

on which you would like to participate. For many, it also requires finding child care, taking time off of work, sacrificing scarce leisure time, or other serious obstacles.

While online formats present their own challenges (see below), they seemingly mitigate many of these obstacles. Thus, the COVID-19 induced shift to online meetings provides an opportunity to directly test whether online formats change participation, and to more generally evaluate whether tangible barriers are the driver behind previously observed participatory inequalities. We do this by creating and analyzing data from online meetings in the same municipalities featured in Einstein, Glick and Palmer (2019). To preview our findings, we find that participatory disparities largely persist in online forums. As in traditional meetings, participants are older, whiter, and more likely to be homeowners than voters in their broader communities. Changes in local meeting institutions alone, then, do not appear to dramatically shift the composition of participants and remedy troubling disparities in who participates.

The broader literature provides reasons to expect that reducing participatory barriers may help promote civic engagement and political participation (Norris et al. 2000). Recent studies of mail-in voting, for example, suggest that reducing the costs to participation may increase it (Barber and Holbein 2020; Thompson et al. 2020) among a more representative subset of the population (Bonica et al. 2020). The internet may similarly play an important role in facilitating political participation from underrepresented groups. Some research suggests that it can increase political engagement by supporting the recruitment of disengaged populations (Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal 2007; Gil De Zuniga, Puig-I-Abril and Rojas 2009). Online forums reduce the costs of participation as they requires less time, physical inconvenience, and monetary costs compared to in-person meetings (Tolbert and McNeal 2003; Jung, Kim and De Zúniga 2011). Skilled internet users may be part of previously disengaged groups in offline political interactions (Krueger 2002). What’s more, online public meeting participation requires minimum levels of technical competency, which does not alienate current participants (Jung, Kim and De Zúniga 2011; Best and Krueger 2005).

Taken in concert, these studies find that making it easier to participate increases overall turnout—in some cases among underrepresented, less privileged, groups.

There is, however, also reason to doubt that changes to meeting institutions can remedy deep inequities in participation. Internet and computing access is not equally available across all communities (Anderson and Kumar 2013). Moreover, even if moving online does decrease the *costs* of participation, it does not necessarily increase *interest* or *engagement* with politics—two important drivers of participation (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Evidence from campaigns and voting reveal that outreach efforts that do not tackle interest or engagement gaps often fall short. Enos, Fowler and Vavreck (2014), for example, show that Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) efforts from campaigns that do not explicitly target low-income voters can actually increase participatory disparities. Burden et al. (2019) find that same-day registration reduces participatory disparities, while early voting may, in fact, exacerbate them—a finding echoed in Berinsky (2005). Indeed, many local governments adopted public meetings around land use decisions in an effort to combat the political power of developers—a policy reform that in practice just empowered a different privileged group: older, white homeowners (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019). What’s more, longstanding racism in housing policies (Rothstein 2017; Trounstein 2018) may lead to lower levels of trust in government—which, in turn, may depress political participation; simply changing meeting modalities cannot redress longterm distrust. In short, without increasing political interest, engagement, or trust among less privileged groups, reducing the time it takes to participate by moving online may not bring out new voices or improve representativeness.

Definitively disentangling these alternative explanations is confounded by external events: the move to online meetings coincided with a global pandemic and a growing protest movement over racial injustice. It is impossible for us to fully parse out in these longitudinal data whether shifts in participation are due exclusively to institutional changes in the meeting structure or a global change in political participation due to the political, economic, social, and public health context. Indeed, the ongoing public health and economic crises had dispro-

prtionate impacts on renters, lower-income individuals, and Black, Hispanic, and indigenous people. These effects may have dramatically reduced these groups' time and capacity to engage in any kind of political participation, including online forums. As a countervailing force, growing public interest in promoting racial justice may have spurred some of those same groups to participate more in online forums than they would have otherwise.

Even without being able to fully separate the causal effect, we believe these results offer scholars and policymakers important insights. The shift to online meetings does not appear to significantly worsen disparities—despite the digital divide. But, it also does not improve representation—even in the face of the broader political mobilization of groups traditionally underrepresented at local political meetings. Disparities are still substantial despite easy, low-cost participation and high levels of general excitement about local politics. Our evidence shows that reformers concerned about demographic disparities and skews in what government hears should not rely on online meetings as a solution. More generally, it suggests that practical barriers are not the primary source of participatory disparities and that other attempts to improve participation through logistical solutions are unlikely to make a big impact.

Housing Meetings

We focus on public planning board and zoning board meetings in 97 cities and towns in Eastern and central Massachusetts. These meetings shape the allocation of new housing units. Because of stringent land use regulations in the United States, most housing proposals involving the construction of more than one unit of housing must go through a rigorous approval process before a planning or zoning board; these meetings typically invite members of the public to participate. Previous research has shown that these participants are advantaged relative to their communities across a variety of traits. Moreover, they are overwhelmingly opposed to new housing—depressing the construction of new units, especially

in privileged places. These neighborhood meetings consequently have a profound impact on overall housing supply and access to housing in high-opportunity places (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019).

Understanding whether online meetings change these problematic dynamics is thus of enormous substantive importance. What’s more, there are methodological advantages to focusing on these meetings. Because Einstein, Glick and Palmer (2019) studied these same communities, we are able to use their data as a benchmark against which we measure political participation in online forums. As Einstein, Glick and Palmer (2019, see for demographic profiles) explain, while these communities are geographically limited, they constitute a mixed set of people and places, including homogenous and affluent communities, diverse and deindustrializing milltowns, dense inner-core suburbs, and more outlying and rural areas. Massachusetts offers significant advantages in studying participation in public meetings: a wide swath of communities have interpreted state open meeting laws as requiring the inclusion of names and addresses of *all participants* in meeting minutes (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019). This allows researchers to *precisely* match participants with administrative data.

We built a database of real participants who spoke virtually about proposals for more than one unit of housing between March-September 2020.² For each participant, we gathered their address and coded their views. We then matched participants’ names and addresses to a Massachusetts voter file from L2, which also matched voters to property records and estimated race using an algorithm similar to (Imai and Khanna 2016). This allows us to identify demographic characteristics of attendants (including age, race, gender, homeownership, partisanship, registration date). While we sought meeting minutes for the same 97 cities analyzed in Einstein, Glick and Palmer (2019), only 87 cities had uploaded minutes as of our data collection.³ In some cases, minutes did not report any public comments or participation. We were ultimately able to match participants to voters in 76 cities and towns.

Results

Overall, we were able to match 798 commenters making 1,078 comments to the voter file. Our main result is captured through the very simple demographic comparison in Table 1. Moving housing approval meetings online did *not* remedy systemic skews in participation. Online meeting participants were more likely to be white (13 percentage points gap), over the age of 50 (22 percentage point gap), and homeowners (25 percentage point gap) than voters in general. These differences are remarkably similar to the in-person disparities (Einstein, Glick and Palmer 2019).

[Table 1]

In Table 2, we estimate models using the full voter file to assess the relationship between a variety of traits and participation simultaneously. The dependent variable is an indicator of whether the resident participated in a housing development meeting. We estimate additional models with town level controls (column 2) and town fixed effects (column 3). Consistent with the basic demographic comparisons, white residents, older residents, and homeowners are consistently and significantly more likely to participate. Unlike in the in-person context, partisanship also appears to be a strong predictor of participation in public meetings. Republicans were less likely to participate than Independents and Democrats, all else equal.

[Table 2]

What do the Boards Hear in Online Meetings?

In addition to demographic skews in who participates, Einstein, Glick and Palmer (2019) show that participants in in-person forums oppose the construction of new housing. We find that online meetings do not change this dynamic. A mere 13 percent of online participants supported the construction of new housing (compared with 14 percent of in-person meeting participants); 61 percent were opposed, and 26 percent expressed neutral views. In Figure 1, we plot the percentage of comments that were supportive of housing proposals by town.

Each circle represents a municipality, and the size of each circle corresponds to the number of comments in the data. In two communities, about half of the comments were supportive. In another five places, roughly one quarter of comments were supportive. In the rest, fewer than 20 percent were supportive, and in 14 of the 36 towns, no comments supported development.

[Figure 1]

In Table 3, we investigate which demographic groups, if any, disproportionately support or oppose proposals. Homeowners dominate both the supporters and opponents, though they skew towards opposition. Women in contrast were relatively more likely to support proposals than oppose them. Interestingly, the finding for in-person meetings was the opposite: women who participated skewed toward opposition. Logit models predicting commenters' position based on their traits. Table 4 show that, for the comments we have coded, supporters are less likely to make many comments; as in in-person meetings. Frequent commenters are significantly less likely to support the construction of new housing. We also find that, as in the descriptive data, women are more likely to make supportive comments, and homeowners are less like to do so.

[Table 3]

Notably, the vast majority of comments across all demographic groups are opposed to multifamily housing development. Figure 2 plots the percentage of comments in support of proposed developments by homeownership, race, gender, and political party. Support was low across every category, with a maximum of 21%.

[Table 4] [Figure 2]

Conclusion

Our results preliminarily show that online meetings—despite their ostensible convenience—are no panacea for eliminating participatory inequalities. While there are some modest differences, the overwhelming finding here is one of similarity between online and in-person

forums. Participation gaps remain substantial, and, in some instances, are actually larger. This is especially striking—and disconcerting—given broader societal conversations about racial injustice that coincided with the shift to online meetings. Despite growing public interest in systemic racism in local governments and protests against police brutality, Black, Hispanic, and Asian residents remained essentially unheard. More broadly, it suggests that practical reforms such as changing meeting timing or venue are unlikely to yield more equitable participation without accompanying mobilization that enhances residents’ sense of efficacy and interest in meeting proceedings.

There are some glimmers of hope, though, for those who aspire to improve local participatory disparities. Our estimates may represent the high end of inequalities in online forums. COVID-19 placed a disproportionate burden on Black and Hispanic people, and on renters. It also imposed new childcare burdens and other uncertainties on younger families. These are the same groups that are underrepresented in online and in-person participation. It may be as the global pandemic wanes, those groups will have more time and inclination to participate in online forums. More immediately, online forums are new. Many people are likely unaware of their existence, and advocacy groups are likely still developing mobilizing strategies in the physical distancing era. What’s more, many of the projects presented at these online forums were already in the pipeline, potentially making them predisposed to the same participatory disparities of the in-person era just via a new channel. Finally, the continued overrepresentation of older residents is certainly troubling from a political equity perspective; however, it offers some reassurance that differences in digital literacy are not massively preventing older residents from participating in online forums.

The limited efficacy of this structural reform does not mean that we should eschew reform in general. For example, online meetings do nothing to address the *length* of a meeting, which may be a significant dissuader for participation—especially for relatively low interest community residents. A shift to shorter meetings might have a more potent effect.

Importantly, our research just focuses on housing policy. Other policy arenas, especially

those which more naturally attract broader participation, may experience different public meeting dynamics in the Zoom era. Policing and education, for example, may be more amenable to political organization and equitable online participation. Indeed, recent research suggests important differences between public meetings in housing policy and education (Collins 2021).

New projects and new strategies both have promise to make online meetings more representative. Changing the meeting format, though, is no substitute for engagement and mobilization by the government and advocacy groups. Simply moving a three-hour zoning board meeting online will not seemingly enhance community members' sense of efficacy or interest in participation.

Notes

1. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/05/27/opinion/pandemic-taught-us-better-way-do-public-business/>
2. Even though Massachusetts imposed a temporary housing moratorium in the late spring, active discussions about housing construction at these meetings continued.
3. This 13 percent drop in meeting minute availability between 2017 and 2020 suggests potentially important capacity and transparency obstacles stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. We include information about the medium in which online meetings were conducted in our appendix.

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Author Biography

Katherine Levine Einstein is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Assistant Director of Research at the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University. She has published multiple peer-reviewed journal articles and is a co-author of *Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis* (Cambridge University Press). She is a member of the *Urban Affairs Review* editorial board and a 2021 recipient of the Clarence Stone Scholar Award from the American Political Science Association.

David Glick is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Boston University and a Fellow at the Policy Lab at Brown. He has published in a variety of peer reviewed journals and is a co-author of “*Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis*” (Cambridge University Press).

Luisa Godinez Puig is a PhD Candidate of Political Science at Boston University. She has published in *Urban Affairs Review*, *Public Health Reports* and *Electoral Studies*.

Maxwell Palmer is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Boston University. He has published multiple peer-reviewed journal articles on American political institutions, local politics, and representation, and is a co-author of *Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis* (Cambridge University Press).

Appendix

We summarize the ways that municipalities adapted institutional participatory procedures. Almost three-quarters (70 percent) relied on Zoom. Nearly half (47 percent) provided phone call options. A smaller number of local governments broadcast their meetings through television channels (16 percent), Facebook Live (5 percent), or the government’s website/YouTube channel (16 percent). Only 6 percent required participants to register before meetings. Figure 3 provides more details on local government online meeting procedures. Participants were able to express their concerns in different ways within these platforms. 81 percent of cities allowed commenters to speak via video conferencing or phone. More than half of the cities also allowed chat comments (58 percent) and two thirds provided an option for emailing input (66 percent).

[Figure 3]

Fw: Com. on Economic Dev. & Planning Mtg. 9/27/23 - My Comments

Joan Gumbleton <gumbletonj@aol.com>

Thu 9/28/2023 7:21 AM

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

Dear Councilor Piccirilli,

As you requested, here are the comments I made at last night's meeting regarding Community Meetings.

I am disappointed that only three changes were made to the documents and those were the ones proposed by the three Councilors and Mr. Magoon. A couple of us addressed the need that developers and the city staff coordinate that Watertown Cable news should be present to record and broadcast all Community Meetings to encourage residents to get informed and possibly participate in future meetings.

Also brought up by a few people was the idea of providing minutes of all these Community Meetings, not just published by the developer but also by involving city staff to make sure the facts are indeed factual and not missing key details and that there can be follow-up actions based on comments prior to going before the Planning Board.

I hope these issues can be raised with the appropriate city staff and get implemented so that we can get the message out that transparency is the goal in Watertown.

Regards,

Joan Gumbleton

Some excellent points were presented tonight on why we need to have Community Meetings when buildings are changing uses. With so many labs coming into Watertown, it is critical that people know where they are and what they are doing and how they may be effected and it is also good to know changes in other businesses around us.

People need to have project info available earlier in the process. Wouldn't it be beneficial for everyone so time and money aren't spent unnecessarily? There are cases when the packets aren't ready much in advance of a meeting.

Minutes of Community Meetings are important as Planning and Zoning Boards need to hear input from all who take or took the time to attend these meetings and use that input in their decision making. That way it can't be said that only input from a few people is being heard.

Some people who attend the Community Meetings feel more comfortable in a less formal setting. They may not want to speak on Zoom or at meetings in City Hall or to write letters or emails. People feed of of other people's comments.

Recordings by Watertown Cable are important also so people can view these meetings as their time allows. People have busy lives but yet want to be informed.

To have city officials or board members present at these meetings, if possible, is important so they get to interact with meeting attendees and understand their feelings and concerns early on in the process to create the best plans possible. We need to encourage more people to engage in discussions with their elected officials so they feel their opinions matter. If they can't be at a meeting, to be able to review minutes or cable tapes would be valuable.

We found out at the Manley Community Meeting, which wasn't originally planned to happen, that some people do want to be involved in the process, especially if it is in their neighborhood but also from other areas of the city. We have some highly intelligent and well educated people who can interject ideas that the DCDP staff and the rest of us don't think about. If not for the Community Meeting, there could be a lot of issues after the fact that can be addressed now.

Adding this step in the development process seems to be a no brainer if we want to move forward with smart developments that fit into our community and to make people feel valued.

As far as timing for participants speaking at meetings, many people have expressed that the two-minute rule is not long enough at the Council meetings. Many residents have suggested a five-minute rule if people feel it's necessary, but in some committee meetings that may not be long enough.

Thank you,

Joan Gumbleton
32 Falmouth Rd.

CITY COUNCIL ROLL CALL VOTE
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

	YES	NO	PRESENT
JOHN M. AIRASIAN	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CAROLINE BAYS	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LISA J. FELTNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
JOHN G. GANNON	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NICOLE GARDNER	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
EMILY IZZO	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ANTHONY PALOMBA	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
VINCENT J. PICCIRILLI JR.	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
MARK S. SIDERIS, COUNCIL PRESIDENT	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Motion to accept the Committee on Human Services Report and its Action Item.



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

Committee on Human Services Monday, October 31, 2023

Members Present: Councilor Tony Palomba, Chair; Councilor Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and Councilor John Gannon, Secretary

The Committee on Human Services held a public meeting on October 31, 2023, at 5:45pm to consider the appointment of James Mello as a member of the Watertown Housing Authority for a term expiring May 15, 2028.

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Palomba called the meeting to order at 5:50pm and introduced the other committee members present: Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and John Gannon, Secretary. Also present during the course of the meeting were James Mello and Jackie Vanleeuwen.

2. Interview of James Mello as a Member of the Watertown Housing Authority for a Term Expiring May 15, 2028.

James Mello is a resident of the Watertown Housing Authority (WHA) development known as the Joyce Munger Apartments, located at 100 Warren Street, Watertown. Mr. Mello is applying for the WHA tenant representative position. He currently serves as president of the development's tenant association. As such, he has had the opportunity to work with tenant associations for all WHA developments and has visited all of the WHA properties. He looks forward to taking his service to a new level by serving as a member of the WHA. Having helped tenants across all WHA developments, he is well versed in the issues of the WHA. As goals for his service to the WHA, he will advocate to have authority meetings conducted in person, to better allow tenants a voice at meetings, and he would like to see more transparency and openness in WHA meetings, including seeking to have meetings broadcast on Watertown Cable Access TV. He will make a fine representative for WHA residents.

Councilor Bays moved that the Committee recommend that James Mello be appointed to the WHA as the tenant representative, seconded by Councilor Gannon. The vote to approve the nomination was 3-0.

Councilor Gannon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Bays. The vote was 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

Action Item 1. Confirmation Mello for appointment as the tenants representative to the Watertown Housing Authority for a term to expire on May 15, 2028.

Meeting minutes prepared by
John Gannon, Secretary

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba
Chair

Caroline Bays,
Vice Chair

John G. Gannon,
Secretary



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the City Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager 

Date: November 8, 2023

RE: Agenda Item – Proposed Proclamation designating a Hero Square in honor of WWII (KIA) Veteran, Vincent Ranucci

Attached please find a proposed proclamation from Patrick George, Director of Veterans' Services requesting consideration to designate a Hero Square in honor of WWII (KIA) Veteran, Vincent Ranucci at the intersection of Nichols Avenue and Bigelow Avenue.

I respectfully request the attached proposed proclamation be placed on the November 14, 2023, City Council Agenda.

Thank you for your favorable consideration and action on this matter.



TOWN OF WATERTOWN

Veterans' Services
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
Phone: 617-972-6416
Fax: 617-972-6403
www.watertown-ma.gov
mcomeiro@watertown-ma.gov

Watertown Veteran Memorials and Dedications

This policy covers the issuance and presentation of Memorials and Dedications in the community to include sidewalk signs, Street dedications, Square dedications, Stones, Plaques, Parks and Buildings.

To be considered for a Veteran Memorial or Dedication, the individual to be honored must meet the following requirements:

- Watertown resident at the time of enlistment into the Armed Forces
 - Veteran Killed in Action (KIA)
- Or**
- Medal of Honor Recipient

The Process for Veterans Memorials and Dedications

- All requests for Veterans' Memorials must be submitted through the Veteran's Services Officer.
- A member of the family must make a written request indicating the name of the Veteran, service, rank and area of designation along with proof that the veteran was a Watertown resident at the time of enlistment, killed in action (KIA), or a Medal of Honor Recipient. Examples include: newspaper clipping, telegram, notice of death, DD-214 stating the veteran was killed in action, etc.
- The Veteran's Services Officer will verify the applicant's eligibility.
- The Veteran's Services Officer will forward the completed request to the Town Council.
- The Town council shall approve or disapprove any Memorial or Dedication by resolution.
- The Town Manager, upon approval by the Town council, shall implement the Memorial or Dedication requested.
- The name is then placed on a permanent list of Memorial dedications tracked by the Veteran's Services Department.
- The Veteran's Services Officer shall be the caretaker of all Veteran Memorials.

Mail the application and all supporting documents to:

ATTN:
Watertown Veterans' Services Department
Memorial and Dedications
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Watertown Soldier Meets Death in Italy

WATERTOWN, March 9.—After serving 15 months in the Mediterranean area, Pvt. Vincent J. Ranucci, 27, was killed in action in Italy Feb. 2, according to a telegram received



PIVET VINCENT J. RANUCCI

from the War Department by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ranucci, 7 Randall st.

A rosary necklace was received from his mother two days after the word of his death came before the telegram came in which he said he was and was arrived Feb. 2, when notified Jan. 21. He leaves his parents, he is married to Mrs. S. M. Thomas V. Ranucci, formerly Ranucci, a Watertown, and four sisters, Frances, Lillian, and Fred. Ranucci, and Mrs. Donald Hancock of Cambridge.



VINCENT J. RANUCCI
PVT 68 COAST ARTY REGT
MASSACHUSETTS FEB 2 1944



Vincent J. Ranucci

World War II



Service # 31136743

Rank Private, U.S. Army

Unit 68th Coast Artillery Regiment

Entered Service From Massachusetts

Date of Death February 2, 1944

Buried Plot G Row 9 Grave 14
Sicily-Rome American Cemetery
Nettuno, Italy

 Purple Heart

Purple Heart

Vincent J. Ranucci

ARMY REGISTRATION CARD



100-300000-1000

Vincent J. Ranucci

31136743

Boston Massachusetts

27 Jun 1942

Branch Immaterial - Warrant Officers, USA

Army

White

Middlesex County, Massachusetts

Enlistment for the duration of the War or other emergency, plus six months, subject to the discretion of the President or otherwise according to law.

Civil Life

Selectees (Enlisted Men)

Grammar school

Semiskilled machine shop and related occupations, n.e.c.

Single, with dependents

1916

Pennsylvania

0399

3.125

World War I

World War II

HEADSTONE INSCRIPTION AND INTERMENT RECORD

HEADSTONE (Front) (Name, Rank, Organization, State, Date of Death, Grave No.)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
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 XXXX

VINCENT J. RANUCCI
 PVT 68 COAST ARTY REGT
 MASSACHUSETTS FEB 2 1944
 14

HEADSTONE (Rear) (Service Number)

31135743

NETTUNO 520E

CHILD	AGE	SEX	DECORATIONS	ROW	COL	CHAPT	SECTION	APR
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NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN

MR. JOSEPH RANUCCI
 7 NICHOLS AVENUE
 WATERTOWN, MASS.

173

AH



George J. Proakis
City Manager

CITY OF
WATERTOWN
Office of the City Manager

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6465
citymgr@watertown-ma.gov

To: Honorable City Council

From: George J. Proakis, City Manager 

Date: November 8, 2023

RE: Agenda Item – Proposed Proclamation on the Dedication of a Flagpole in
Memory of the late Fire Chief Mario A. Orangio

Attached please find correspondence from Fire Chief Ryan A. Nicholson regarding a request to dedicate a flagpole at Station 3, 270 Orchard Street, in memory of the late Fire Chief Mario A. Orangio.

I respectfully request the attached proposed Proclamation be placed on the November 14, 2023 City Council Agenda.

Thank you for your favorable consideration and action on this matter.



WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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RYAN A. NICHOLSON

Chief of Department

Memorandum

To: City Manager George Proakis
From: Chief Ryan A. Nicholson
Date: October 31, 2023
Subject: Fire Department Flagpole Dedication

In November of 2017, Chief Mario A. Orangio passed away from occupational cancer. The Watertown Fire Department wishes to honor and memorialize his service to this community by dedicating the flagpole located at Station 3, 270 Orchard Street, in his name.

When promoted to Captain in 2001, Orangio held the position of EMS Coordinator. As Chief he worked tirelessly to upgrade our ambulance service to the ALS level, which we were able to accomplish prior to his untimely death.

Given that our Medic 1 unit operates from Station 3, and Chief Orangio's commitment to fire-based EMS service, we find it fitting that this particular location be dedicated to him. Chief Orangio's passing from occupational cancer, I believe, also makes him a good candidate for a memorial.

The men and women of the Watertown Fire Department thank you for your consideration.

Mr. President & City Councilors

On Tuesday, October 17 a presentation was made to “improve the square” called the Watertown Square area plan. A major part of their presentation was based on a theory that traffic could improve in Watertown Square if you reduce all streets intersecting at the Square down to one lane.

Before committing to a plan that defies logic, let’s put their claim to the test. We can do this at little cost. Let’s run a pilot for 30 days, if it appears to be working, let’s extend the pilot for an additional 60 days making sure it can work during a snowstorm.

As an aside, since Route 20 and Route 16 are state roads, MA Highway may reject the plan. That would throw a monkey wrench in the whole plan. It’s time to back up a plan built on speculation with evidence.

- Russ Arico