

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2008 AT 6:00 PM

RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1. ROLL CALL: A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 6:00 pm in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the roll call were Councilors Stephen Corbett, Susan G. Falkoff, Jonathan Hecht, Angeline B. Kounelis, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Mark S. Sideris and Council President Clyde L. Younger. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll, Town Attorney Mark Reich and Council Clerk Valerie Papas. Councilors Devaney and Lawn arrived after the call of the roll.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 6:00 PM

3. CONVENE OPEN SESSION – 7:15 PM – All Councilors were present.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

5. EXAMINATION OF MINUTES: February 26th. Councilor Devaney moved to Table the minutes, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC FORUM – none noted.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Public Works Committee update on Storm Water Permit Compliance and Bacon

Street and a report and action on a resolution regarding Watertown Square Bus Stop – Susan G. Falkoff, Chair. The Chair recognized Councilor Falkoff who read the Committee's report (attached). It was noted that the Bacon Street design

and cost report was not ready thus rescheduled for March 18th; Howard Street parking lot was questioned and Mr. Mee will provide notes from ten years ago authorizing the lot; Mr. Mee's consultant, Stantech will speak to the issue of Storm Water Permit Compliance on May 6th. The Committee also discussed and unanimously recommended a proposed resolution to move the Watertown Square bus stop to the Delta. Councilor Falkoff read and moved the proposed resolution (attached), seconded by Councilor Devaney. Councilor Devaney provided background on the bus stop issue. She noted that the bus stop at the Delta was removed as part of the overall plan to improve the square area. She stated that no one dragged their feet on the matter but that people were not united on the issue. The resolution was adopted by voice vote. It was noted that the resolution will be forwarded to State Representative Kaprielian and State Senator Tolman.

B. Committee on Economic Development and Planning report/update on proposed Pleasant

Street road work and related matters – Jonathan Hecht, Chair. The Chair recognized Councilor Hecht who read the Committee's report (attached). It was noted that the 9 million dollar road project will go out to bid once the bond is approved by the State. The road work will improve traffic flow and the appearance of Pleasant Street. There will be new bicycle connections and planting of street trees. The committee also discussed incentive programs to encourage new commercial development. The Planning Department will continue their work in this area. Councilor Hecht also stated that preliminary drafts were provided for the Watertown Square parking study for which additional meeting will take place for review. Councilor Sideris moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Superintendent Mee stated that Mass Highway will submit a traffic mitigation plan with the concept to keep Pleasant Street open at all times and not force traffic it to side streets.

C. Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee report/update on the Capital Improvement

Program – Mark S. Sideris, Chair. The Chair recognized Councilor Sideris who read the Committee's report (attached). It was noted that on March 3rd, the Manager walked the Committee through each line item of Table 2 of the CIP and on March 10th the Recreation and Planning Directors and Superintendent of Public Works provided an overview of their department's projects. Discussions on the CIP will continue with two additional meetings scheduled for March 17th and 24th to finalize recommendations.

Councilor Sideris moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved that the CIP budget be extended an additional two weeks from March 11th to March 25th, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved to extend the Manager's submission of the budget to April 22nd, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote.

8. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATIONS FROM TOWN OFFICERS AND

EMPLOYEES:

A. Informational Presentation on Departmental Audits – Thomas J. Tracy, Town

Auditor. The Chair recognized Mr. Tracy who provided an audit report of two departments – Veterans Benefits and Commander's Mansion (attached). Mr. Tracy highlighted revenues and deficits of the Commander's Mansion. He noted that

\$100,000 of capital improvements were provided to the outside patio. He also noted that for the past two years, their operating budget has exceeded their revenues. Importance of timely deposits were stressed and improvements were made. There will be discussions in the future on how to bring revenue up.

Councilor Corbett asked if the patio improvements in the amount of \$100,000 accounted for the two years the Mansion was in the red. The Auditor stated, yes. He noted that for several years prior, the Town was forwarding monies to augment their budget.

Councilor Kounelis asked if the budget is handled in-house. Councilor Kounelis inquired if during the audit process the deposits were correlated to the actual functions. Only the deposit activity was referenced in the report. Based on the fact that the Commander's Mansion account is revenue generating and not part of the Town's general account, there is also a need to know the actual expenditures. Mr. Tracy stated that it is a combination of both. Councilor Kounelis asked when someone will intervene and address the revenue loss. Mr. Tracy stated that the report will help start those discussions.

Mr. Tracy provided an overview of the Veteran's Benefits including Chapter 115. It was noted by the Auditor that Mr. Erickson assists veterans and their families with getting benefits they qualify for. The State reimburses the town for these benefits and as the veterans' population ages, these benefits will increase and thus the need to increase the budget.

It was further noted that Mr. Erickson's submissions are on time and in order.

Councilor Kounelis commended Mr. Erickson for the job he does for the town's veterans.

The Chair also echoed these comments.

Mr. Erickson reiterated the reasons for increased benefits to veterans and thanked the Council for their assistance.

9. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A. Resolution authorizing the Relocation of existing Drainage Easements to Facilitate Drainage Improvements at Watertown Mall/Target Store. The Manager provided a brief overview of the resolution. Councilor Devaney noted that this is a win/win situation for the town. Councilor Devaney moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Lawn and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

10. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Chair asked for a motion to refer to Rules and Ordinance a change in subcommittee assignments that allow for more than three members but less than a quorum. Councilor Falkoff moved the referral, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.

11. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

The Manager noted the following communications:

1. A neighborhood meeting has been scheduled by Mitchell properties regarding the Coolidge School for Monday, March 24th 7pm at Hellenic Center.
2. The Town Hall will close at 1pm on Good Friday.
3. Yard Waste Pickup, Friday April 4th.

4. The Manager requested a referral to Economic Development and Planning regarding vacated Churchill Property. So moved by Councilor Sideris, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by voice vote.

5. Fire Chief is preparing an Assessment Needs report due by end of week with a presentation on March 25th.

6. Raylene Parsons is the new Purchasing Director.

7. The Town has received an award in the amount of \$100,000 matching grant by DCR for construction of improvement for Watertown Square Landing.

8. Snow and Ice Deficit shy \$575,000. The Manager is looking to review how to proceed.

Councilor Hecht noted that the MMA has stated that they will push for funding, but frankly it will be a tough sell due to State level budget woes and noted that the town should not give their hopes up for additional State monies.

12. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Chair asked the Manager to request that the presentation by the Chief be made to the Public Safety subcommittee prior to any presentation before the Town Council.

Councilor Kounelis asked for an update on town hall security.

Councilor Kounelis asked for a detailed update/report on a motor vehicle accident at Watertown Square regarding a municipal vehicle.

Councilor Falkoff requested the Manager provide a job description for the Town Engineering position, job posting and salary range in other communities.

Councilor Falkoff requested the Manager provide an answer to whether the town is able to or obligated to condemn dangerous buildings on federal property.

Councilor Falkoff requested the Manager explore the feasibility of instituting a Request/Answer Center Tab website similar to Arlington's.

Councilor Falkoff requested the Manager provide a status report on the installation of bicycle racks eligible for reimbursement if installed by April 30th and if the town can meet that deadline.

Councilor Devaney asked if any police personnel have had a complaint against a department head.

The Chair stated that the Council was provided that information at an executive session for which Councilor Devaney was absent due to illness.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Sideris announced that charitable grant applications are due by March 28th.

The Chair announced that the girls and boys basketball teams made it to the championship round, and asked that a letter of appreciation be sent to the school committee congratulating our athletes. Councilor Sideris moved to send a letter to the school committee congratulating the two teams for a successful season.

14. PUBLIC FORUM

Shawn McCue, President of McCues Taxi – asked that the Council consider that the taxi stand at the Delta is extremely important to seniors and the disabled. He stated that he receives 25-40 calls for that cab stand from those exiting bus 71.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Councilor Sideris moved to go into a joint executive session at 9:00 pm with the Conservation Commission to discuss the value, taking or lease of real property and that the Council will not return to open session, seconded by Councilor Lawn and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

It was noted that the Conservation Commission Chair took a roll call vote to go into executive session.

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council where a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by voice vote as amended on April 8, 2008.