

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2006 AT 7:15 PM

RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1. ROLL CALL: A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 7:15 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Stephen Corbett, Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney, John A. Donohue, Jonathan Hecht, Angeline B. Kounelis, John J. Lawn, Jr., Stephen E. Romanelli, and Vice President Mark Sideris. Council President Younger was absent.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chair called for a Moment of Silence in memory of the following people: Norma Cicarelli, Ruth Thibeaut, Jack Williams and David Cronin.

3. EXAMINATION OF MINUTES: January 17th, January 24th, February 1st, February 8th. Councilor Romanelli moved the minutes for January 17th, January 24th, February 1st and February 8th as written, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote.

4. PUBLIC FORUM – none noted.

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM TOWN OFFICIALS & EMPLOYEES:

A. Informational Presentation on Coalition Bargaining – Councilor Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney. The Chair recognized Councilor Devaney who provided a brief overview of a presentation regarding Coalition Bargaining. Councilor Devaney noted that she will be placing on the agenda a vote to accept Chapter 32B, Section 19 at the February 24th meeting and indicated that a vote by the Council will not automatically approve coalition bargaining, but will only open the door to explore the matter.

Councilor Devaney introduced Watertown's Insurance Advisory Committee members as follows: Bill Gildea, firefighters; Charles Dupruis, police; Nancy Scott, Town Hall; Steve Russo, Public Works; Kay Westcott, Library; Lorraine Torrielli, School Dept. Secretaries; and Duke Arone, Retirees. A letter was read (attached) in support of Coalition Bargaining with a request that the Town Council not form a task force.

Bob McCarthy, President of the firefighters Union #71 spoke in support of Coalition Bargaining.

Joe Costas, President of firefighters Union #1347 spoke in support of Coalition Bargaining.

The Chair recognized Mr. Ken Donnelly, Secretary Treasurer of Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts who provided a power point presentation of Coalition Bargaining for Health Insurance (attached).

The power-point presentation also explained how management and unions work together to reduce health care costs and explored existing Section 19 agreements with other towns.

Following the presentation, the Chair as well as councilors thanked Councilor Devaney for bringing forward the presentation on Coalition Bargaining.

B. Informational Presentation on the Town's Health Insurance Plan – Michael J. Driscoll, Town Manager.

The Chair recognized the Town Manager who provided a brief overview of a presentation regarding the Town's Health Insurance Plan. A power-point presentation was provided by Mr. Lombardi, Consultant to the Town. Mr. Lombardi reviewed the Town's current health care costs and rates and projected increases.

C. Informational Presentation by Daniel A. Loughlin, Chairman of the Board of Assessors on "How Property Assessments change and why". The Chair recognized Mr. Loughlin who provided a presentation on why property assessments increase. Mr. Loughlin reviewed the department of revenue assessment schedule with respect to reassessments and re-inspections, the assessment process with respect to lot size, neighborhood, style of house

and class. Mr. Loughlin also explained the abatement process and special property assessments such as condominiums, land assessments and mixed use (see attached assessment sheet).

The Chair thanked Mr. Loughlin for the informative presentation.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Committee on Rules and Ordinances Report on the Issuance of Proclamations and revision of Council Rules - Jonathan Hecht, Chair. The Chair recognized Councilor Hecht who reviewed the Rules and Ordinances Committee reports (attached) including the addition of a Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee, issuances of proclamations, the signing of Town Council documents and the addition of public comments. Councilor Donohue moved to adopt the reports and recommendations as read by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Devaney stated that she would like to see reinstated the former rule regarding resolutions, which allowed the sponsor of the resolution to place his/her name upon the top of the resolution.

Councilor Corbett moved the proposed changes as recommended by the Committee, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Donohue suggested that Councilor Devaney submit her change in writing and forward it to the Committee for further review.

B. Committee on Economic Development & Planning Report and action on 124 Riverside Street and a report on Proposed Zoning Changes, Parking Study and the Recycling Center – Stephen Corbett, Chair. The Chair recognized Councilor Corbett who reviewed the January 30th Committee report (attached) regarding Phase II zoning changes. He noted that concerns by the Committee were referred to the Planning Board for their consideration and that the Committee voted unanimously to bring the matter to a first reading and referral to the Planning Board tonight. Councilor Corbett stated for the record he will recuse himself if there is anything that is a direct

conflict of interest with his business, but he does not believe that that threshold has been crossed.

Councilor Corbett reviewed a parking study conducted by Walker Parking Consultants and stressed the need for a 3 tier structure in the municipal lot.

Councilor Corbett reviewed a committee report dated February 7th regarding the disposition of 124 Riverside Street noting that the Committee unanimously recommended that the property be put up for auction with proper policy guidance from the Town Council.

Councilor Donohue moved to accept the reports dated January 30th and February 7th, seconded by Councilor Romanelli and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Donohue moved that 124 Riverside Street be put up for auction and with proper policy decision made by the Council, the majority of the proceeds to benefit the Watertown Housing Partnership; an estimated \$50,000 to Watertown Economic and proper amount of dollars to cover all monies owed to the Town of Watertown, seconded by Councilor Long.

Councilor Kounelis requested a legal opinion from the Town Attorney regarding placing restrictions on the property.

Attorney Reich stated that the Town can place restrictions on the property and future development and its use, but not in perpetuity.

The Chair stated that he would take public comments at this time and recognized:

1. Michael Donham, Royal Street – spoke in support of a restriction on the demolition of the property.
2. Dori Pelli, Watertown Community Housing – outlined their assistance program and spoke in support of affordable housing.

3. Nancy Hammet, 119 Riverside Street – spoke in support of a restriction on the demolition of the property and designation for affordable housing only.

4. Will Twombly, Marion Road – spoke in support of affordable housing for young families.

5. Jane Milligan, Royal Street – spoke in support of a restriction on the demolition of the property.

6. Marion Cameron, Watertown Public School Teacher – spoke in support of affordable housing for young families.

There being no further comments, the Chair closed public comments.

Councilor Hecht acknowledged the neighbors strong affirmation for affordable housing and noted the real and immediate benefit of putting monies toward affordable housing.

Councilor Kounelis stated that the Town has a responsibility toward its existing residential base and to Watertown residents.

Councilor Romanelli concurred with Councilor Kounelis.

Councilor Devaney stated that she would like to see a balance of both needs, economic and residential.

Councilor Corbett spoke in support of an auction of the property with clear policy guidance in the normal process of budget discussions.

Councilor Lawn indicated that he would like to see the proceeds targeted toward helping the largest group of people but stated that he needs to have more information in order to make a decision.

Councilor Kouneilis moved to amend the current motion to restrict the structure from being raised for a period of 99 years.

Attorney Reich stated that the auction will be held pursuant to the Treasurers authority with policy guidance, which can be revisited at any time. He further noted that the property be inspected by the Board of Health and Building inspectors prior to auction.

Following further discussion, Councilor Kounelis withdrew her previous amendment of "99 years".

Upon a "Sense of the Council" roll call vote to have \$50,000 for economic development put into a Home Improvement Program, it was adopted by a vote of 6 for and 2 against, with Councilors Corbett and Donohue voting no.

Upon a roll call vote on the motion "for a restriction on the property against the raising of the structure, it was adopted by a vote of 6 for and 2 against, with Councilors Donohue and Romanelli voting no.

On the Main Motion to place 124 Riverside Street up for public auction with the restriction that the property not be raised, it was adopted by unanimous roll call vote, 8-0-0.

7. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A. First Reading and Referral to the Planning Board on proposed zoning changes, phase II. The Chair recognized Mr. Gregory P. Watson, Planning Director who provided an overview of

the first reading on proposed zoning changes, phase II, with respect to new definitions, mixed use and the I-3 district.

- B. Resolution requesting the Department of Conservation and Recreation address safety concerns on Nonantum Road – Councilors Jonathan Hecht and Mark S. Sideris. Councilor Hecht read a proposed resolution (attached) asking that the Department of Conservation and Recreation address the safety concerns on Nonantum Road . Councilor Devaney moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Long.

Councilor Devaney indicated that she will be forwarding a copy of the resolution to the Governor Romney tomorrow morning at her Governor Council meeting.

Councilor Long noted that the road needs immediate relief, particularly with proper signage alerting motorists of road curves ahead and other dangers.

Councilor Romanelli stated that numerous resolution have been forwarded to the MDC regarding Nonantum Road without action. He noted that a resolution is not enough.

The proposed resolution was adopted by voice vote.

8. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – none noted.

9. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

A. Brief discussion on a Massachusetts State Ethics Commission Educational Seminar. The Manager stated that several dates are still available with the District Attorney's Office. The

Chair asked for a sense of the meeting for a March 27th meeting. The motion was made by Councilor Donohue, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by voice vote.

The Chair asked for a motion to Suspend the Rules for a late agenda item. Councilor Devaney moved to Suspend the Rules to take up a resolution regarding Snow and Ice Expenditures, seconded by Councilor Romanelli and adopted by voice vote.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to expend monies in excess of available appropriations for snow and ice removal for the remainder of the fiscal year. Councilor Devaney moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

Councilor Kounelis commended the Public Works Department for their efforts during the most recent snow storm.

10. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – none noted.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Devaney announced that she will be placing on the next agenda – a vote on acceptance of Chapter 32 (B), Section 19, Coalition Bargaining.

12. PUBLIC FORUM

The Chair recognized Raymond Jette, 2 Mt. Auburn Street, owner of a chiropractor clinic – he expressed concern with the loud “chirpers” crossing signals for the sight impaired. He stated that the noise is 24/7 and is ruining his business. Mr. Jette asked that the Town put in special technology and bypass the chirpers.

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Town, the Chair asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation. The Chair stated that the Town Council will not return to open session following the adjournment of the executive session. Councilor Devaney moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:40 AM and go into executive session for the above stated purpose, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

I hereby certify that the above minutes were adopted by voice vote on March 14, 2006.

Clyde L. Younger, Council President