



## Watertown Town Council

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

### ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Council President

Stephen P. Corbett,  
Vice President

John A. Donohue,  
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,  
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,  
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,  
District A Councilor

Cecilia Lenk,  
District B Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,  
District C Councilor

John J. Lawn, Jr.,  
District D Councilor

### MINUTES

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2011 AT 7:00 PM  
RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

In accordance with provisions of Rule 2.6 of the Rules of the Town Council, and pursuant to the Call of the Town Council President, I hereby call a Special Meeting of the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown to be held in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 7:00 PM in order to hold a public hearing; along with Planning Board members to consider a proposed [Economic Development Study](#).

Roll Call: A Special Meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 7:00 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., John J. Lawn, Jr., Anthony Palomba, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett, and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll and Council Clerk Valerie Papas. Planning Board members John B. Hawes, Jr., Jeffrey W. Brown and Fergal Brennock were in attendance. Councilors Falkoff and Lawn arrived shortly after the call of the roll. Councilor Donohue was absent.

Steve Magoon, Planning Director provided an opening statement with respect to the Economic Development Study and indicated that the town has reached a milestone with respect to adopting a proposed strategic framework on economic development. He noted that the study tries to balance commercial and residential components in town to address jobs and resources to community services. The goal of the study is outlined as follows:

1. Promote appropriate economic development activity throughout the town

2. Identify key opportunity sites within the established commercial and industrial districts
3. Identify solutions to ongoing issues that restrict commercial investment and retail activity in certain districts
4. Develop implementation strategies, build capacity, and clarify roles and responsibilities for economic development
5. Engage the public, merchants and businesses, real estate community, Town leaders, and other stakeholders.

Lastly, Mr. Magoon thanked Senator Edward Markey and his office for helping secure the grant that paid for the study and consultant work

Kathryn Madden of Mt. Auburn Associates, Madden Planning Group and Gamble Associates - provided a power-point presentation of the Economic Development Study. Ms. Madden highlighted a Community Profile including labor and workforce; a listing of Amenities such as the Charles River; Mt. Auburn Cemetery; and the Arsenal for the Arts. Ms. Madden also highlighted areas in the study including Transit; Location and an Economic Profile.

Following the presentation, the Chair opened up the hearing to the public for comments.

1. Robert Flack, 49 Russell Avenue and President of Watertown Housing Board – read a [letter](#) of support for the strategic framework for economic development.
2. Marjorie N. Feld, 26 Ladd Street and History Professor – stated that she was impressed with the report and urged Councilors to adopt it.
3. Curtis Whitney, 43 Grandview Avenue – stated that the document was well done but urged Councilors to take the time to review the study and noted that he did not think that enough consideration was given to housing needs going forward. He noted that he was also concerned about taking away resident’s property rights and that rights should be enhanced not diminished.
4. Kathryn H. Button, 48 Edward Road – noted the many undeveloped areas in west Watertown notably parking lots. She spoke in support of an artist studio and bringing art into the vision.
5. Deb Peterson, 277 School Street and WCES member – spoke in support of the study noting its cohesive vision and framework. She asked that the town hold firm to the vision.
6. Ellen Segall, Vice President of a neighborhood coalition – stated that she was satisfied with the vision and layout. She spoke against the negative impact of big box stores.
7. William Crowley, Mt. Auburn Club – stated that the consultants did a good job. He spoke in support of incentives to help make projects better rather than set rules.
8. Barbara Ruskin, 140 Spring Street – stated that she is happy with the study. She spoke in support of an artist studio and against big box stores.

9. Joseph Previtera, 119 Spruce Street – spoke against big box stores and urged Councilors to keep page 23 in the document. He noted that the town should have higher expectations.

Mr. Jeffrey Brown, Planning Board member- stated that the process was great and that the study successfully stated the obvious things in getting key businesses; but noted that the tricky part is the re-zoning. He noted that the zoning should be kept neutral.

Councilors Corbett stated that the study may be too idealistic and that while it is great to have high standards he does not want to see the process get off track. He noted that the jest of the study was to generate economic development and that many of the points in the document actually limited development. He indicated that we should not be discouraging uses and that we need to let the private sector come forward with projects.

Councilor Kounelis asked, “where is the transition” in the neighborhoods? She indicated that the east end has a long way to go and that the study should be sensitive to current residential properties. She noted that the report is excellent, but she is concerned that it needs more work.

Councilor Palomba stated that he did not believe that the skills matched the 4 clusters. He asked, “who is the competition” and “how many clusters can we grab”? He noted the diversity in class and income in Watertown and stated that we need to provide jobs to allow people to stay here. He further noted that the report lacks attention to retail. With respect to the newer developments of 1 and 2 bedroom condominiums; he stated that we should not forget families.

Councilor Lenk stated that she supports the report as written and that it should be integrated with a comprehensive plan. She acknowledged that the town has changed over the years and that she sees the competition as Kendall Square and Waltham. She indicated that overall it is a great study that will bring dynamic sustainable growth.

Councilor Piccirilli stated that the plan is about economic development of properties. He indicated that the study manages the expectations for development for property owners and abutters. He noted that it is good guidance for the planning board. He further stated that it is about preserving what is good about Watertown and building on the strengths in moving forward with growth. Councilor Piccirilli further indicated that the town does not need to incentivize housing; nor prohibit housing but to incentivize multi-use housing. He stated that this is the beginning of a lot of work.

Councilor Falkoff stated that she concurs with Councilor Piccirilli and noted that the vision is a positive stance and disagrees with the comment on it being too idealistic. She further stated that she did not think that jobs and development need to match up and that she opposes anything that would water down this document.

The Chair thanked audience members for participating in the discussion tonight.

Planning Board member Jeffrey Brown moved to adopt the document, seconded by member John Hawes and adopted by a 3-0 vote of the Planning Board with member Fergal Brennock concurring.

Councilor Corbett moved that the document be sent to the Subcommittee of Economic Development and Planning subcommittee for further study, seconded by Councilor Lawn.

Councilor Lenk stated that she supports moving forward with the proposed document.

Councilor Lawn spoke in support of further study noting his concern with restrictions on development.

Councilor Kounelis noted her support in theory for the study but that she would like the subcommittee to address issues regarding existing neighborhoods and density.

Councilor Falkoff noted that she is ready to vote on the study tonight.

Councilor Lenk stated that the study is a small piece of a bigger plan.

Councilor Palomba noted significant challenges and that he would not like to exclude any particular type of development.

Councilor Piccirilli stated that multifamily housing can be built but with incentives to be built with mixed uses. He asked that these statement visions not be taken out.

Councilor Palomba moved a friendly amendment that the Committee report be ready for the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Chair stated that the June 28<sup>th</sup> agenda is full and that the earliest we could have a discussion on the report is at the July meeting.

Mr. Magoon noted that he will be out on vacation.

The Chair stated that the report will be placed on the August agenda if the referral is adopted.

Councilor Lawn moved to accept as a draft and refer the matter to subcommittee with a report and action on the August agenda, seconded by Councilor Palomba and adopted by a 6-2 roll call vote with Councilors Angeline B. Kounelis, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., John J. Lawn, Jr., Anthony Palomba, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett, and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative and Councilors Lenk and Falkoff voting against.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by unanimous vote with Councilors Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., John J. Lawn, Jr., Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett, and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

Addendum.

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by voice vote on June 28, 2011.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President