

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 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, Angeline B. Kounelis, Jonathan Hecht, John J. Lawn, Jr., Mark S. Sideris, and Clyde L. Younger Council President. Also present were the Council Clerk, Valerie Papas, Town Manager Michael Driscoll, and Town Attorney, Mark Reich. Councilor Romanelli was absent.

A <Moment of Silence was called for the passing of Police Dispatcher, Mr. Michael Annis; Veteran and longtime resident Russell Buchanon; and resident and business owner, David Stein.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. EXAMINATION OF MINUTES: November 14th and 28th. Councilor Devaney moved both sets of the minutes; (November 14th as amended), seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

Ms. Connie Crystal, 66 Morse Street – spoke in concern over the intersection of Mount Auburn and Main Street as being too dangerous to cross and asked that town administrators address the problem of a pedestrian cross signal coinciding with a green arrow right turn. She asked, who has the right of way.

Councilor Sideris moved to Suspend the Rules in order to bring forward agenda item 9A, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote.

A. Informational Presentation and Award of Re-Accreditation to the Watertown Police Department by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission.

The Chair recognized Ms. Donna Taylor Moore, Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission who presented the Watertown Police Department with a formal Re-Accreditation. She noted the high standards and the vigorous process the department must go through for such accreditation. Police Chief Edward P. Deveau stated that he was proud of this accomplishment and acknowledged the efforts of Justin Hanrahan and David Sampson as pioneers of this process.

The Chair asked for a motion to send a letter of thanks to the department. Councilor Sideris moved the request, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved the Suspend the Rules in order to bring forward agenda item 8A, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

A. Committee on Public Safety report and action on the dedication of a flag pole – Mark S. Sideris, Chair.

Councilor Sideris read the Committee's report to support the request by Fire Chief Orangio to dedicate a flag pole in honor of deceased Fire Chief Robert O'Reilly. Councilor Devaney moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote. Councilor Devaney read a proclamation honoring former Chief O'Reilly and presented said proclamation to family members, Janice and Steve O'Reilly. The O'Reilly family members thanked the Council for recognizing and honoring their father. Councilors Sideris moved to accept the proclamation and dedication of flag pole, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved to bring forward agenda item 9B, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote.

B. Informational Presentation on Fire and Health Departments' efforts regarding hazardous material inspection and incident response protocols - Mario A. Orangio, Fire Chief and Steven J. Ward, Director of Public Health.

Fire Chief Orangio provided a brief report of the Danvers, Massachusetts chemical explosion followed by a slide presentation on Hazardous Materials and Emergency Preparedness (attached). Mr. Steven Ward, Health Director discussed the departments initiatives and regulations with included educational and inspection programs.

Councilor Kounelis thanked Mr. Ward and Chief Orangio for the presentation and inquired about how smaller companies are regulated with respect to chemicals. Mr. Ward noted that the Licensing Board, Building Department and general awareness by the company of the town's regulations all contribute to a safer community.

Councilor Corbett inquired about recent gas explosions. Chief Orangio stated that Keyspan has stringent programs and that human error lead to the gas explosions.

Ms. Ann Bonfiglio, 31 Clarendon Street - asked that a list of hazardous chemicals presented tonight be mailed to her home.

5. PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTE: On a proposed ordinance adjusting the compensation of the Council Clerk. The Chair read a proposed ordinance adjusting the compensation of the Council Clerk's salary. The Chair opened up the hearing to the public. There being no comments, the hearing was closed.

Councilor Sideris moved the ordinance, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

The Chair asked for a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to real property. Councilor Sideris placed the matter on the Table, seconded by Councilor Donohue.

There was discussion regarding the absence of a posting notice from the Conservation Commission in order to join the Council in a joint executive session. Councilor Hecht indicated that a possible solution might be to invite less than a quorum of the board to join the Council as their guests. Attorney Mark Reich concurred with Councilor Hecht's suggestion. Adopted by unanimous roll vote.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 8:30 pm – 9:10 pm

7. RECONVENE OF OPEN MEETING AT 9:10 PM.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Committee on Public Safety report and action on the dedication of a flag pole – Mark S. Sideris, Chair. Previously taken up and voted.

B. Brief Update on the Charitable Ad Hoc Committee's Guidelines and Ground Rules – Mark S. Sideris, Chair. Councilor Sideris provided a brief update on the Committee's progress with respect to guidelines and ground rules. It was noted that the Committee should be bringing forward new recommendations in the very near future for the Council's consideration. Councilor Devaney moved to accept the update, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote.

C. Police Building Committee update – John J. Lawn, Jr. Chair. Councilor Lawn read the Committee's report which outlined a list of items the Committee has discussed and held public meetings on including finalizing the RFP. It was noted that 10 proposals were submitted on September 7, 2006 and the evaluation criteria were ranked. The Committee selected three finalists based on their past performance. Negotiations of the Fee will be negotiated by the Manager.

Councilor Sideris moved to accept the written report (attached), seconded by Councilor Corbett and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Devaney made an inquiry regarding sketches or drawings of the police building. Councilor Lawn noted that there is no design or drawings as of yet as the architect has not been chosen.

The Chair asked that the Committee forward any drawings to the Council as soon as they are available.

9. PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY TOWN OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES:

A. Informational Presentation and Award of Re-Accreditation to the Watertown Police Department by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. Previously taken up.

B. Informational Presentation on Fire and Health Departments' efforts regarding hazardous material inspection and incident response protocols - Mario A. Orangio, Fire Chief and Steven J. Ward, Director of Public Health. Previously taken up.

C. Informational Presentation on the developments of a Scope of Services for analysis and design for traffic associated with improvements in Coolidge Square – Gerald S. Mee, Jr., Superintendent of Public Works, Gregory P. Watson, Community Development and Planning Director and Rich Benevento, Edwards and Kelcey, Inc. Mr. Rich Benevento provided a presentation to the town council which included a set of project goals; existing conditions/needs assessment; and agreement for professional services (attached).

Mr. Benevento stated that Coolidge Square's last improvements were over twenty years ago.

Councilor Kounelis requested that the Council move forward with this quickly. She noted that the Administration has document (scope of service study) dated July 2006 which was not forwarded to the Town Council. Councilor Kounelis also stated that with 500 additional Tufts employees joining the Mount Auburn Street headquarters, the safety improvements are imperative.

Councilor Sideris stated that he was happy with the 3 phases of scope of services and asked that the Administration get moving with Phase 1.

Councilor Corbett stated that the 3 phases makes sense and asked Mr. Benevento if the work is warranted and can the improvements justify the expense.

Mr. Benevento stated that he first needs to understand what the problems with the square are first and then seek a solution.

Councilor Devaney made an inquiry regarding the Arlington/Nichols/Crawford intersection which had been slated for improvements by the State. Mr. Benevento stated that those improvements are still pending.

Councilor Lawn thanked and applauded the efforts of Councilor Kounelis and stated that he can live with this project as presented in three phases.

Councilor Donohue inquired what the timeframe would be. Mr. Benevento stated that traffic counts could begin the first of the year. There were further discussions on traffic and pedestrian counts taken at different times of the year as well to better reflect a better accuracy of the business district.

Maureen Ryan, Maplewood Street – thanked Councilor Kounelis, Mr. Mee, and Mr. Watson for all their help and stated that she is confident with improvements Coolidge Square can be a vibrant and safe pedestrian shopping area.

Dennis Duff, Spruce Street – suggested that Mr. Benevento look at removing the island and pole at the intersection of Bigelow/Mt. Auburn. He further stated that raised planting beds also be installed throughout the square.

Councilor Hecht moved to refer the scope of service to the committee on Economic Development and Planning for a once over. Councilor Sideris moved to request the Manager find funding in the amount of \$58,850.

The Chair asked the Council move forward with the scope of services while the Manager finds the money.

Councilor Kounelis agreed to restudy the scope of services in committee and proceed as quickly as possibly.

Councilor Lawn requested by Mr. Benevento attend the subcommittee meeting.

It was further decided by voice vote that the Manager would return with a transfer of monies in January.

10. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Chair thanked the Perkins School for the Blind Chamber Choir, Carolers from the production of the New Rep Theatre, Watertown Children's Theatre and the Arsenal Center for the Arts production of Charles Dickens A Christmas Carol, Roberta Miller and all the employees who contributed to the Holiday Party.

The Chair asked for a motion to Suspend the Rules for a late agenda item. Councilor Donohue made the motion, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Lawn provided a verbal update with respect to a subcommittee meeting earlier this evening regarding the disposition of the branch libraries. Councilor Lawn read a letter from Roberta Miller regarding the Watertown Community Foundation offer to facilitate the public hearings with respect to the disposition of the branch libraries. The Town Council will still make the final decision on the matter, Councilor Lawn noted.

Councilor Donohue moved to approve Watertown Community Foundation's facilitating said public hearings and have the Council President appoint 3 members of the public to the committee, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote. Councilor Devaney voted No.

The Chair announced that on Friday, December 15th at 8pm and Sunday at 3 pm, the Watertown Cable Channel will re-broadcast the showing of A Veteran's Story in honor of the passing of Russell Buchanon.

11 COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

1. 3rd quarter tax bills will go out on or about December 15th.
2. Agenda item for January meeting, updated Wetland's Ordinance, with a first reading.
3. Agenda item for January, audit report to date from the Cable Advisory Committee.
4. Agenda item for January, update from Bart Mitchell on the Coolidge School.

12. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Councilor Kounelis inquired whether or not there have been unofficial meetings regarding a Recycling Center. She noted that she is on the Recycling Committee, to which the matter was referred to and was not notified of any meetings but has heard of such rumored meeting.

Councilor Kounelis requested an update on the status of water bill adjustments.

Councilor Lawn requested that Councilor Devaney provide an update or status regarding a previous presentation on prescription drugs program from Canada.

Councilor Donohue asked what the status is of a Cable Access van parked on Columbia Avenue at night, noting the winter parking ban.

The Chair indicated that the van in question will be parked in the lot at night.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Lawn announced an upcoming Special Town Council Meeting to be held on Thursday, January 4th at 7pm at the Library.

14. PUBLIC FORUM – none noted.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Councilor Sideris moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 pm, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote.

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the minutes of December 12, 2006 were adopted as written by voice vote on January 9, 2007.

Clyde L. Younger, Council President