

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2007 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, John J. Lawn, Jr., Stephen E. Romanelli, Vice President Mark S. Sideris, and Clyde L. Younger, Council President. Also present were Valerie Papas Council Clerk, Michael J. Driscoll Town Manager and Mark Reich Town Attorney.

The Chair called a Moment of Silence in recognition of the passing of former Councilor Frederick L. Pugliese. Councilor Devaney spoke with respect to Mr. Pugliese as a former Councilor, friend, father and husband and read a Governor's Council Proclamation in his honor, which was adopted by voice vote.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. EXAMINATION OF MINUTES: December 12, 2006. Councilor Sideris moved the minutes of December 12th, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.

4. PUBLIC FORUM – none noted.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Budget & Fiscal Oversight Committee report on the Development of the Fiscal Year 2008 budget - Jonathan Hecht, Chair. Councilor Hecht read the Budget & Fiscal Oversight Report (attached) and reviewed a draft document entitled Town Council FY 08 Budget Policy Guidelines. There was discussion regarding an item within the draft document which was not discussed by the Committee (an increase in Councilors health insurance premium) and an item which was referred to committee, discussed and not included in the draft document (an assistant to the Manager). The Chair requested that the report and draft document be

referred back to committee for full discussion before being adopted. Councilor Hecht stated that the Council can have full discussion on the draft document tonight in order to expedite the policy guidance document and in keeping with the self imposed deadline of January 23rd.

Councilor Donohue stated that he referred the health premium item to the subcommittee for discussion and agreed that the discussion on the matter could take place tonight.

Councilor Kounelis, Budget & Fiscal Oversight Committee member moved to refer the report and draft document back to committee for further discussion at the committee level stating that she was surprised to see the health insurance item within the document as it did not receive any discussion. Councilor Sideris concurred with the matter being referred back to subcommittee and indicated that he refer a matter to the subcommittee, an assistant to the Manager/Planning Dept, which received discussion but was left out of the draft document.

Councilor Devaney also spoke in support of the matter being referred back to subcommittee and stated that it is more important to have a good working document, than meet a self imposed deadline. She also spoke in support of having all subcommittee meetings tape recorded.

Councilor Hecht questioned why the report cannot be adopted as it reflects what was discussed by the committee and is separate from the draft document. He also questioned why the Council cannot strike the health insurance premium increase from the draft document and adopt the document as amended.

Upon a roll call vote on the motion to refer the matter back to the Budget & Fiscal Oversight Committee, it was adopted by a vote of 5 in favor and four against, with Councilors Devaney, Kounelis, Romanelli, Sideris and Younger voting in the affirmative and Councilors Hecht, Donohue, Lawn and Corbett voting against.

Economic Development & Planning Committee report on Scope of Traffic & Safety Improvements to Coolidge Square and the Planning Process for Pleasant Street - Stephen Corbett, Chair. Councilor Corbett provided a verbal report regarding Scope of Traffic & Safety Improvement to Coolidge Square and indicated that the subcommittee reviewed in greater detail the scope of the work. Mr. Watson and Mr. Benevento as well as committee members Corbett, Kounelis and Donohue were present. It was noted that the project may expand to streetscape improvements. The Committee recommended moving forward with Phase I of the project which entails a traffic and safety study.

Councilor Corbett stated that the subcommittee also met to further discuss the Pleasant Street Corridor and indicated that they are looking to generate a recommended vision statement of how Pleasant Street will evolve over the long term. Councilor Corbett further noted that they would like to produce a draft document prior to the zoning updates, include all abutters and the public at large to the work sessions.

Councilor Corbett stated that on December 13th the subcommittee had a joint meeting with the Planning Board and reviewed the proposed zoning ordinance amendments with no conclusions being reached as more meetings are planned.

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

Councilor Sideris moved to Suspend the Rules in order to take up a late agenda item transfer, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved the adopted the transfer in the amount of \$58,850 to fund Phase I of the Scope of Services for Coolidge Square, which includes an Agreement for Professional Engineering Services, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

6. PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS FROM TOWN OFFICIALS:

A. Informational Presentation on the accomplishments to date and upcoming projects/goals of the Watertown Cable Access Corporation – Mr. Steven Aylward, President and Stephen Singer, incoming President. The Chair recognized Mr. Aylward who elaborated on the Corporation's projects and goals which included increasing the coverage of local events, especially school sports. It was noted that the programs are run by volunteers and there is always a need for more public involvement. Mr. Aylward stated that having the studio in the high school was the wisest decision the Town has made and that they have been extremely pleased with the outcome.

Mr. Aylward indicated that the Corporation has been timely in filing their monthly statements with the Town Clerk, are proud of their diverse programs and support the rotation of Presidents.

Mr. Steve Singer, incoming President was introduced and discussed the Corporations future goals which include enhancing their website, and increasing local programming.

Councilor Devaney welcomed Mr. Aylward and Mr. Singer and thanked them for their dedication and great success and congratulated them for their establishment of closed caption for the hearing impaired. Councilor Devaney requested coverage for the Planning Board and Licensing Board meetings.

There as a brief discussion regarding expansion of local ads on the channel and the need for more volunteers.

Councilor Romanelli asked for a late agenda item regarding the reappoint of Mr. Aylward to the Corporation. Councilor Devaney moved the matter, seconded by Councilor Sideris.

Councilors Hecht and Corbett stated that they will vote in favor of the appointment but in the future would like to see appointments go through the proper channels of a posted subcommittee.

The Motion for a late agenda items was adopted by voice vote..

Councilor Sideris moved the reappointment of Mr. Aylward to a three year term to expire on September 15, 2009, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

- B.** Informational Update on the Proposed Coolidge School Reuse Project – Bart J. Mitchell, President Mitchell Properties, LLC. The Chair recognized Mr. Mitchell who reviewed a list of ten key milestones toward the construction project for the Coolidge School which included zoning approval, Watertown Housing Partnership funding, Historic Tax Credits, Federal Historic Tax Credits, Ground Lease, Construction Drawings, Mass Housing Construction Loan, Construction Price and Closing Process (document attached).

Councilor Kounelis stated that she lobbied to support the Mitchell Property Proposal but that this is not the same project that was supported by the East End residents. She noted that she is uncomfortable with the numbers and indicated that the rent figures may not be

achievable in this market. She asked if Mitchell Properties cannot make the figures work, how will the company be able to absorb the loss and requested that he submit how much Mitchell Properties can absorb before they need relief.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he did not get involved in this project to lose and that they have used reasonable judgment and have not understated the expenses. He noted that though the market in the east end may be soft, people like living in refurbished, historic buildings and will pay more for the amenities such as new appliances, historic features and other amenities in discussion such a zip car.

Councilor Romanelli stated that he too shares the concerns with Councilor Kounelis and hopes that this project will find a way to meet its projections.

Councilor Lawn stated that the project is a great housing alternative for seniors, noting in unit laundry facilities.

Councilor Devaney stated that her major concern is that Watertown residents cannot legally be given first preference and asked for a list of other housing project by Mitchell Properties showing their rate of success in marketing to local residents.

The Chair stated that he is not against the project but is too aware of the Town's experience with the Brigham Housing Project and stated that he is not willing to subsidize this project at the expense of others.. The Chair requested that Mr. Mitchell provide bench marks along the way.

Councilor Devaney moved to have the project targeted for 65 and older residents. There was no second.

7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Chair reviewed discussions that he had from the Assistant Attorney General regarding a previous ruling by Town Attorney Reich that prevented the Conservation Commission Board

from joining the Town Council in executive session because of a failure of the Conservation Commission to post a separate executive session notice. It was noted that only three members of the Board were allowed into the executive session so as not to have a quorum. It was stated by the Assistant Attorney General that no separate posting notice was required by the Conservation Commission as its members were not planning to vote or deliberate on matter for which an executive session was called.

8. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Perkins School for the Blind Free Jazz Concert, January 10th at 7pm at the campus.
2. Invitation - Safe Routes to School meeting – January 16th at 7pm at the Middle School.
3. Optional Tax Exemption first reading on January 23rd Town Council Meeting.

9. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Councilor Devaney asked for a report back on why the hourly salaries of the Crossing Guards have not been increased.

Councilor Romanelli suggested that the Crossing Guards salaries be added to the to the Budget & Fiscal Oversight Committee's draft FY 08 budget document.

Councilor Romanelli asked why the Town needed contractors, instead of using our own equipment and crew, to sand the roads after a very minor snow dusting.

Councilor Kounelis asked the manager to report back if any informal meetings have taken place with respect to a Recycling Center, stating that she is on that Committee and no meetings have been posted for any such meetings.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced the 400th win for Eileen Donohue, Field Hockey Coach and noted that the Girls Field Hockey Team has won their Middlesex Championship titled again this year.

11. PUBLIC FORUM

Ruth Thomasian, Trees for Watertown Chair – provided a brief update on the Committee and their mission. Committee members Anna Clark and Roger Simpson were also introduced.

12. ADJOURNMENT

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Councilor Sideris moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 pm in order to go into executive session to discuss the value of real property and litigation and noted that the Council will not return to open session, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.