



## Watertown Town Council

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

### MINUTES

#### ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Council President

Stephen P. Corbett,  
Vice President

Aaron Dushku,  
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

Kenneth M. Woodland,  
District D Councilor

Pursuant to the Call of the Council President and in accordance with Section 2.6 of the Rules and Procedures of the Watertown Town Council, the members of the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown are hereby notified of a Special Meeting of the Town Council.

**SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2014 AT 6:00PM  
RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

1. Roll Call: A Special Town Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Aaron Dushku, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Also present were Attorney Mark Reich. Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll and the Council Clerk were absent. Assistant to the Town Manager, Steven Magoon was present and sitting within the rail. Councilor Palomba arrived shortly after the call of the roll.
2. Public hearing and vote on a Petition in support of a temporary moratorium on large projects along Arsenal Street in Watertown for up to one year while a master plan for the corridor is developed and zoning is re-written with input from all stakeholders. Repairs and simple renovations to existing buildings for pre-existing uses should not be affected.

The Chair read the petition and opened up the hearing to the public.

1. Barbara Ruskin, Spring Street – spoke in favor of the moratorium.
2. Harvey Steiner, 18 Marshall Street – spoke in favor of the moratorium; and more planning and design guidelines.
3. Dave Sprogis, Chester Street and petitioner – spoke in favor of the moratorium and against the type of development along Pleasant Street.

4. Ernesta Kraczkiewicz., Charles River Road – stated that she would rather not see a moratorium but more planning quickly gotten underway so as not to have a stalling impact on good development.
5. Elaine Bean, Warren Street – spoke in support of the moratorium. She asked that the town not give developers free range to do whatever they want.
6. Elliot Freeman, Church Street – spoke against the moratorium and in support of hiring a designer to do guidelines and review plans.
7. Rena Baskin, 15 Franklin Street – spoke in favor of a moratorium and stated that the town’s development has not been successful.
8. Sharon Bauer, 62 Pearl Street – spoke in support the spirit of the moratorium to allow for more time for better development.
9. George O’Martian, 4 Bigelow Avenue - spoke in support of more windows on Elm Street buildings and against galvanized metal plantings on Arsenal Street.
10. Elodia Thomas, 67 Marion Road – spoke in support of the moratorium and the need to give more staff support to the planning department.
11. Lisa Feltner, Parker Street – spoke in concern about access to Arsenal Street and transition zones. She spoke in support of the moratorium and giving planning more power to bring in experts.
12. Marilyn Devaney, Westminster Avenue – stated that development is out of control. She spoke in support of the moratorium.

There being no further comments, the hearing was closed.

The Chair recognized Mr. Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning and Assistant Town Manager – who made a [statement and presented an alternative proposal](#) to undertake an analysis and creation of design standards and guidelines with a scope for consideration for the August meeting

He noted that, with respect to a moratorium, he has a concern about sending out the message that Watertown is closed for business and not a place to come and invest in. He noted that it can have a significant impact on prospective projects, designers, financiers, etc and spoke against pursuing it.

The Chair thanked Mr. Magoon and his staff for putting the proposal together for tonight’s meeting. The Chair stated that this proposal by the planning staff may be considered as an amendment to the moratorium proposal or as a proposal on its own.

Councilor Palomba reviewed the history of the steps in the process. He noted that we are a little late to the table as the moratorium will not stop any of the projects and that the Comprehensive Plan may not address many issues as well. He indicated that 102 Mt. Auburn Street project is done; and the Hotel project is at its final step. He spoke in

support of Mr. Magoon's proposal but noted that there is no timetable for it and asked that one be incorporated in the proposal.

Councilor Falkoff asked about the RFP process and how long will it take.

Attorney Reich stated that state statute allows for the hiring of consulting services that do not require an RFP process.

Councilor Falkoff stated that what is needed is a citizen group that would have a formal voice in the process. She is encouraged by the proposal.

Attorney Reich stated that a moratorium is a zoning change which cannot be adopted tonight – instead tonight's meeting will give us the ability to determine how to start the process.

Councilor Piccirilli spoke in support of the proposal put forth by Mr. Magoon and asked that he bring back a proposal for the August meeting that have design guidelines for the entire town.

Councilor Lenk spoke in support of fast tracking the designer guideline proposal and to look at new directions that look at the whole town and look to the town administration to add to the staff for planning and zoning departments prior to the fiscal year 2016 budget.

Councilor Dushku asked how the guidelines would have an impact when boards deliberate on a project.

Attorney Reich stated that the guidelines would be incorporated in the special permit process as part of conditions.

Mr. Magoon state that design standards would spell out some of the ideas of what we are trying to achieve while the guidelines are a further explanation of how to achieve that. Both would support the planning staff and the public.

Attorney Reich reviewed the process for the proposed moratorium; with respect to public hearings and publications by both the Planning Board and Town Council.

Councilor Dushku spoke in support of a shorter moratorium.

Vice President Corbett spoke against the moratorium as it is not in the best interest of the entire town as it sends the wrong message. He noted that the Town has worked hard to encourage redevelopment and economic growth and we should not hinder that. He indicated that our town boards have the tools to approve good projects and turn down bad projects. He spoke in support of Mr. Magoon's proposal.

Councilor Kounelis thanked the Planning Department for coming up with this proposal as a good compromise. She stated that Watertown has come a long way over the years and change is not easy. She encouraged residents to have neighborhood meetings.

Councilor Woodland spoke in support of working as a community with developers as the right approach.

The Chair stated that a moratorium is a very heavy handed approach and sends the wrong message. He noted that the proposal by the Planning staff is a better approach as it is broad and all encompassing.

Councilor Palomba asked why it took so long to move on design guidelines. He asked that additional strength be placed on it that sends a message to the appointed folks on the zoning and planning boards.

Councilor Falkoff asked; what are the implications of doing both proposals at the same time.

Mr. Magoon stated that the planning board proposal was designed to alleviate the need to do a moratorium as a moratorium will have a negative connotation.

Councilor Dushku stated that the town can control the message on what the moratorium means to businesses and developers.

**MOTION:** Councilor Piccirilli moved the proposal as presented by Mr. Magoon, seconded by Councilor Kounelis.

Councilor Palomba asked for an amendment to include timeline and deadlines for the zoning and planning boards with respect to special permits.

The Chair stated that he will be preparing a letter to the planning and zoning boards, if this proposal passes and with authorization from the Council; that will address those concerns.

**VOTE:** Upon a roll call vote, the motion was adopted by unanimous roll call vote with Councilors Aaron Dushku, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris.

**MOTION:** Motion to authorize sending a [letter](#) with assistance from Attorney Reich to planning and zoning boards notifying them on this action: So moved by Councilor Piccirilli, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by unanimous voice vote with Councilors Aaron Dushku, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris.

The Chair stated that he will be convening a meeting with all the developers and challenge everyone to attend this meeting on furthering discussions on potential developments and concerns.

Councilor Falkoff commended the Chair for once again coming up with solutions and a plan that everyone can buy into.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** Councilor Dushku moved a two month moratorium to the Planning Board, seconded by Councilor Palomba. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was defeated 3 for and 6 against with Councilors Aaron Dushku, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba voting in the affirmative and Councilors Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting against.

3. Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Special Town Council meeting, Councilor Woodland moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by unanimous voice vote with Councilors Aaron Dushku, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris.

[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 unanimous voice vote on September 10, 2014.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President