

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 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, Angeline B. Kounelis, John J. Lawn, Jr., Jonathan Hecht, Vice President Mark S. Sideris and Council President Clyde L. Younger. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll, Town Attorney Mark Reich and Council Clerk Valerie Papas. Councilor Romanelli arrived after the call of the roll.

At the request of Councilor Devaney, the Chair called for a Moment of Silence to commemorate the bombing of Pearl Harbor and to remember the following people: Dom Yerardi, Lou Allegro and Phillip Darch.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. EXAMINATION OF MINUTES: November 27th. Councilor Sideris moved the minutes as amended, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved to Suspend the Rules in order to bring forward the remaining agenda items prior to the Council's vote to go into executive session, seconded by Councilor Corbett and adopted by voice vote.

10. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

The Chair thanked the Perkins School Choir, under the direction of Arnie Harris and town employees who made the Christmas Party a lovely and joyful event.

The Chair asked that a budget item, World of Watertown miscellaneous and printing expenses of approximately \$5,000, be referred to Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee. Councilor Kounelis moved the matter, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.

Update on the Council's role vis-à-vis the Election Recount: The Chair read his President's Report (attached) regarding the recent election recount results. He made note of the pending litigation process investigating the election-day activities and subsequent recount process. The Chair stated that the Council will conduct their own investigation into this matter after the court case hearings and Superior Court decision.

Councilor Devaney stated for the record that she is not undertaking any litigation.

Recognition of Councilor Stephen E. Romanelli for his twelve years of dedication

and commitment to the citizens of Watertown: The Chair read a proclamation recognizing Councilor Stephen E. Romanelli for his twelve years of service to the community as District "C" Councilor. The Chair reflected on the early years and current friendship with Councilor Romanelli.

Gifts of appreciation were presented to Councilor Romanelli for his years of dedication service.

Mr. Romanelli thanked the residents of Watertown and stated that it has been his honor to serve them over the past twelve years.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- A. Proclamation/Resolution addressing a request of the Massachusetts Municipal Association to sever ties with the Anti-Defamation League.

Councilor Devaney introduced Aricca Kirkazarian, 96 years old Armenian Genocide survivor. Ms. Kirkazarian spoke on her earlier childhood experiences regarding the genocide.

Upon a request for a legal opinion and with respect to both the proclamation and resolution, Attorney Reich stated that the previous matter was Tabled and a motion is required to take the matter off the Table.

Councilor Sideris stated that a proclamation is a document used to honor or recognize and is not the proper form with respect to making a statement on the Anti Defamation League. He further stated that Rule 9.2 proclamations, resolution shall not recognize any particular sponsoring councilor. Councilor Sideris noted that he and Councilor Hecht drafted a compromise resolution on the matter addressing the MMA, which carries more weight than a proclamation. Councilor Sideris read the resolution (attached).

Councilor Donohue moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Devaney for discussion purposes only.

Councilor Devaney stated that her message was not included in the drafted resolution and asked for her language to be included.

Upon a roll call vote, the resolution was adopted by a vote of 8 for and 1 against with Councilor Kounelis voting no.

6. PUBLIC FORUM: The Chair recognized:

1. Ms. Melkonian thanked the Council for their vote on this matter and stated that she is proud that Watertown is standing firm and bold on this message to the MMA.

Councilor Kounelis stated for the record that she voted against the resolution because she wanted portions of Councilor Devaney's proclamation incorporated into the resolution and not because she was against the agenda item.

2. William Patterson, 27 Kondazian Street – stated that he is dismayed and angered over the Manager’s suit over the recount noting the Town Manager’s recent actions are outrageous and an abuse of his power. He stated that the recount issue is between two candidates.

3. Ernesta K. Krackiewicz, 77 Riverside Street – spoke on the disorganization and the resulting discrepancies of the recount day. She noted that she is joining the legal complaint as she feels the recount results in precincts 4&5 are not credible. She further asked that the town carry out reforms to ensure fair elections in the future.

4. Alex Liazos, Palfrey Street – spoke on the importance of installing the bus stop at Watertown Square as soon as possible, noting in particular the safety for our elderly and the disabled.

5. Ruth Thomasian, 323 Arlington Street – spoke on the recent meetings with Trees for Watertown on a number of issues regarding the planting of more trees and their budget.

8. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A First Reading on a proposed Zoning Map Amendment. The Chair recognized the Town Manager who provided a first reading on the proposed Zoning Map Amendment regarding 140 Pleasant Street and its referral to the Planning Board. It was noted that the matter will come back to the Town Council for action following a hearing process by the Planning Board.

B. Proclamation to establish a dedicated telephone line at the Department of Public

Works to report pot holes and related matters – Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney. The Chair recognized Councilor Devaney who withdrew her agenda item from consideration due to problems with Public Work’s telephone lines.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Committee on Budget and Fiscal Oversight report and action on the Fiscal Year 09 Budget and Policy Guidelines and a report on new Senior Tax Exemptions – Jonathan Hecht, Chair.

Councilor Hecht read the Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee report (attached).

The Chair asked that a friendly amendment be included in the Fiscal Year 09 Budget and Policy Guidelines to consider tax credits, grants and/or financing for Pleasant Street commercial based and qualified entrepreneurs. Councilor Sideris moved to include the additional item with input from the Town Attorney and MMA and to be shared with the Economic Development and Planning Committee, seconded by Councilor Lawn and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Hecht moved to refer the matter to the joint committee of Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee and Economic Development and Planning Committee, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Hecht spoke on the process to adopt the guidelines and asked that Councilors rank the items and forward their rankings to the Manager's Office. Councilor Sideris moved to accept the policy guidelines and moved the process as suggested by Councilor Hecht, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.

11. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER:

1. The Town Manager referred to correspondence regarding Fiscal Year 2008 tax rates being certified by the Department of Revenue and the process of tax abatements.

2. Formal update on quarterly water billing in January.

3. Acknowledged the departure and years of service by Ms. Nooshi Roberts and Gerard Cody.

The Chair asked that letters be sent to Ms. Roberts and Mr. Cody thanking them for their years of service and wishing them well in their future endeavors. Councilor Sideris moved the matter, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by voice vote.

12. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Councilor Kounelis stated that the following items are still pending: Wells Avenue lot survey; update on the CAP program; department audits and after hours security for the Town Hall.

Councilor Devaney stated that the following items are still pending: Information on law suits against the town and/or; complaints against supervisors or department heads; vacancy of a town engineering position.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Kounelis made note of a neighborhood meeting on December 13th regarding the Aggregate project, which she will not be able to attend due to another scheduled meeting.

Councilor Devaney made note that the bus stop in the square will be going forward.

14. PUBLIC FORUM: None noted.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Councilor Sideris moved to go into executive session at 9:15 pm in order to discuss strategy with respect to litigation and real property and the Council will not return to open session following the adjournment of the executive session, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.