

**Watertown Town Council**  
**Committee on Public Works**

**Councilor Piccirilli, Chair, Councilor Donato, Vice Chair, Councilor Palomba, Secretary**  
**And Economic Development and Planning**

**Councilor Woodland, Chair, Councilor Feltner, Vice Chair, Councilor Piccirilli, Secretary**  
**Committee Report**

Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 6:00 PM

The meeting, in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law relating to the 2020 COVID-19 emergency, was conducted by Zoom and televised live by Watertown Community Access Television (WCATV). In addition, the agenda provided the public with notice of how to access the meeting online and by telephone, and that comments were invited via email.

The purpose of the meeting was to continue the discussion of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Report and specifically review the comments from the public provided since the Committee's previous meeting on December 7, 2020. At that meeting the Committee agreed to extend the timeline for comments from January 4 to January 11.

Attending the meeting were all the members of the two Committees as well as Councilor Gannon, Steve Magoon, Assistant Town Manager and Director of the Department of Community Development and Planning (DCDP), Laura Wiener, Senior Transportation Planner at DCDP, members of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Andy Campagna and Janet Jameson, Watertown Faces Climate Change member Deborah Peterson, Bob Shay, President of Watertown for All Ages, and Watertown resident Hannah Rieff.

Councilor Woodward introduced Laura Wiener who presented the *Public Comment Summary* prepared by McMahon Associates (see 1<sup>st</sup> attachment).

- a) There were 55 unique views of the Story Map and Plan as well as nine comments and three emails.
- b) The comments covered a range of issues including:
  - Motor vehicle speeds and the need for lower speed limits, increased enforcement, traffic calming techniques, and speed feedback signs.
  - More care by bicyclists to follow bicycle etiquette, use facilities appropriately, and wear more safety gear, including lights and helmets.
  - That food access be added to the list of priority locations for how bicycle and pedestrian projects are prioritized.
  - Greater emphasis should be placed on how the Plan supports efforts to address climate change by encouraging more bicycling and walking. Watertown Town Council Resolution 2019-R-2 for renewable energy was specifically referenced. This concern was voiced during the meeting by Deborah Peterson from Watertown Faces Climate Change (see 2<sup>nd</sup> attachment).
- c) The most prominent of the issues cited was the need for snow removal, both on residential sidewalks and along street edges. Some respondents were enthusiastic about the snow removal goals in the Plan while others questioned their feasibility. Watertown resident Bob Shay, the President of Watertown for All Ages, submitted a letter from the organization and the Ad Hoc

Watertown Snow Removal Committee (which includes members of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee) that outlines the need for a residential snow removal regulation. (See 3<sup>rd</sup> attachment)

- d) Also submitted during the extended review period was a lengthy email from Watertown resident Mr. Peter Barzdines, which responded to specific sections of the Plan including the Public Engagement, Issues and Opportunities, and Recommendations sections. (See 4<sup>th</sup> attachment).

While the consultants, McMahon Associates, recommended no changes to the Plan, there were two specific recommendations from the group.

- a) Inclusion of the language presented by Watertown Faces Climate Change. Janet Jameson, Andy Campagna, Councilor Donato, as well as others voiced their support for these changes.
- b) List Lissa Gifford and the Committee on Disability in the list participants in the Plan and include the Commission on Disability in *Policy Recommendation – Cultural*. Councilor Feltner made these suggested changes which were supported by Laura Wiener, Steve Magoon, and others.

The question was raised about how concerns about the Plan, such as those raised in Mr. Barzdines' email and those raised by Mr. Shay and members of the Ad Hoc Watertown Snow Removal Committee, would be addressed. It was proposed that the DCDP would be responsible for developing implementation plans for each recommendation in the Plan. DCDP's implementation plans would be referred to Town Council committees for discussion. It is at these committee hearings that specific questions related to the implementation plans could be discussed. In regards to the snow removal issue it is most likely that the DCDP would recommend that the implementation of this recommendation be addressed by the Committee on Rules and Ordinances and the Committee on Public Works.

The meeting concluded with Councilor Piccirilli making the following motion:

*That the Town Council accept the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Report, with added references to the 100% Renewable Energy Resolution, and the addition of the Commission on Disability to the report, subject to the condition that the Administration develop implementation plans for specific recommendations, for review by the Town Council, prior to proceeding.*

The motion passed 5 – 0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32 PM  
Minutes prepared by Councilor Palomba