



# City of Medford

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION

City Hall – Room 308  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

May 26, 2017

### **Sent by Electronic Mail**

Medford City Hall  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, MA 02155

### **Re: Revised Demolition Delay Ordinance (Effective Immediately)**

To All City Departments and Boards,

The Medford Historical Commission is pleased and proud to announce that we have a newly revised demolition delay ordinance. On Tuesday, April 18, 2017, Medford City Council voted to unanimously to introduce changes to the existing Chapter 48 ordinance. This proposal was advertised in the Medford Transcript on April 27, 2017. A third and final reading was passed 7-0 in the affirmative on May 16, 2017. The revisions now having been signed off by the Mayor and City Solicitor, the ordinance is now in full effect. This revision may impact your applicants so we want to make sure you are fully apprised of the details so you can direct inquiries accordingly.

The City's demolition delay ordinance was established by vote of City Council on April 2, 1994. It is administered by the local Historical Commission. We are the official municipal body charged with preserving and protecting our historic character and heritage in order to sustain Medford's place in local, state and American history. The ordinance helps us accomplish this by providing a pause in the development and building process in order to determine if demolition is the most prudent course of action. Buildings are reviewed on an case-by-case basis and, if determined significant and preferably preserved, can invoke the demolition delay. In the two decades that have elapsed since the ordinance was passed, Medford has changed significantly. The real estate market is booming which has attracted the attention of speculative builders and developers. With little to no land available, this has put tremendous pressure on our existing housing stock. Several notable landmarks have come up for review and, even after the delay was invoked, they were demolished. The number of buildings coming up for review has tripled in the last three years. Realizing this trend should not continue, the Commission and City Council worked together in order to revise the delay to offer better protection to our historic resources.

The two critical changes passed can be summarized as follows:

1. All buildings seventy-five years or older are now subject to review by the Commission. Previously, only buildings built on or before 1900 were applicable for review. This change is now a rolling timeline. Currently it covers any building constructed on or before 1942.
2. The delay extends for a period of up to eighteen months. Previously, the maximum time was up to six months. Now with additional time, the Commission can leverage for a true analysis of all options for re-use to determine if demolition is the best course of action.

The proposed changes are included in the enclosed document 17-371, Ord. 821, Page 1417 for your review. These will be incorporated into the Municipal Codes that are located online and are publically

accessible and searchable. The ordinance will also be placed on the Commission's website following a more substantial press release.

If you have any questions regarding the revised ordinance, please feel free to reach out to me by sending an email inquiry to [HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov](mailto:HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov). I will be happy to address any comments you may have. I also welcome you to attend any of our regularly scheduled meetings on the second Monday of every month in Room 201 at City Hall.

Thank you,

Ryan D. Hayward  
*Chairman, Medford Historical Commission*

CC: Mayors Office for Distribution  
All City Departments  
All City Boards