



City of Medford

HISTORICAL COMMISSION
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

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

Medford Historical Commission Annual Report 2016

Membership:

Ryan D. Hayward, Chair (Term Ex. 12/1/2019)
Doug Carr, Vice Chair and Secretary (Term Ex. 12/1/2019)
Daniel J. Menezes, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2017)
Richard T. Northrup, Esq., Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2017)
Abigail Salerno, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2017)
Benjamin Johnson, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2018)
Jennifer Keenan, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2018)

Suanna Crowley, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2017 and resigned 10/19/2016)
Gretchen Pineo, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2016 and resigned 9/16/2016)

Meetings:

Second Monday of every month, except noted holidays, 7PM, Room 201, Medford City Hall.

Meeting Dates: January 11, February 8, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, September 21 (special meeting), October 17 (moved for holiday), November 14, December 12.

Contact:

Email: HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov

Activities of the Commission:

- The Commission's subcommittee worked with community members to place the Community Preservation Act on the local ballot. The measure passed and we appointed Commissioner Doug Carr as our representative to the CP board.
- The Commission completed an initial survey of historic properties in the East Medford

Neighborhood, as an ongoing part of long overdue citywide survey. Survey highlights include: (1) a comprehensive list of all buildings constructed prior to 1900 (and therefore subject to the Commission's review prior to demolition) and the 150 properties surveyed on various Massachusetts Historical Commission form A (area) and B (building), and (2) an essay on land use history in the neighborhood. The survey also includes (3) a final report and several interim phase reports, all completed with a \$30,000 budget, which comprised a grant from the state and matching funds from the City.

- Received a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and matching funds from the City totaling \$20,000 to continue survey work in East Medford. East Medford contains the largest amount and greatest density of pre-1900 structures in the City (900) and the Commission elected to continue survey efforts by recording the oldest extant buildings. Work is currently underway to describe 90 properties through Massachusetts Historical Commission forms A and B. A consultant has been hired and work is halfway completed.
- The Committee used surplus funding from prior Survey and Planning Grants to fund a long overdue Survey Plan for South Medford and Medford Square South. These important neighborhoods were not documented during the 2010 Survey Plan. A consultant was hired to execute the project. Preliminary recommendations were provided and the Commission is currently working to finalize the survey plan.
- Applied for and received a Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission totaling \$30,000 for work in Medford Square South. This grant application was made using recommendations from the Survey work and Survey Plan. Medford Square South is currently targeted as part of the Medford Square Master Plan, so the Commission felt it prudent to record buildings here. Similar to East Medford, this neighborhood also contains large tracts of early buildings. Work will begin at the start of the next fiscal year.
- The Commission expended our entire annual budget at just over \$10,000, with funds used primarily to retain professional specialists to research and record buildings subject to demolition delay review. We are requesting a small increase to \$15,000 beyond the City's Survey and Planning match of \$15,000 with a grand total of \$30,000.
- Worked with the purchaser-developers of various properties to preserve historically important buildings and structures about the City with irregular degrees of success. See the demolition delay section below for more specifics on each individual project.
- The Commission has begun the process of revising the City's demolition delay ordinance. Our review of the existing bylaw brought to light several deficiencies which could easily be corrected with new language. Working with attorney, and former Commissioner, James Kossuth, we developed a new bylaw for review by City Council. The largest change moves the time from six months to twenty four. The remaining language clarifies timelines, and the requirements for lifting the delay. A subcommittee on Demolition Delay was formed and reviewed our proposal in August. At their request, we created a FAQ list for the public to explain the changes. We will work with the Council to finish these changes in the coming year.
- The Commission worked with the Medford Public Library to create a permanent home for our archives. Working with our board members, we successfully procured storage to hold documents

long scattered throughout the City. We are currently working with the Historical Society to recover documents erroneously donated by prior board members. We also have secured, and plan to protect, our collections of local historic images and architectural plans. We will continue to process and archive the documents as time permits.

- Maintained a regular online presence by keeping our website up to date with the latest agendas, meeting minutes and blog postings. We will continue to refresh this on a monthly basis.
- Filled all the Commission's vacant seats and opened this year with a full board.
- The Commission worked with the Office of Community Development under an accelerated timeline to provide feedback on the Riverside Plaza project. We also worked with their consultant to develop a sign for the area.
- Continued to work with MassDOT on the Cradock Bridge project. We requested different granite to match the existing bridge more closely. Our request was not acknowledged but the granite color was changed to more closely resemble the original.
- We reviewed minor changes to the Woods Memorial Bridge project. Located on the Malden River in the Wellington neighborhood, the structure was the last drawbridge and historic span on the waterway. The replacement, currently under construction, required the demolition of the earlier bridge to improve the functionality of the road above. The historic bridge was documented by MassDOT before work began. An interpretive sign and gear from the bridge will be placed in the adjacent park after construction is completed.
- The Commission was updated on the current situation of the Peter Tufts House by John Anderson of the Medford Historical Society. The MHS Board of Directors has resolved to sell the building, citing their own inability to properly manage the resource. Given the City's role in acquiring the property (sueing Historic New England and providing some funding to the Historical Society) the Commission felt this was not an appropriate action. The Commission plans to float the idea of acquisition as a long-term CPA goal.

New Inventory Forms:

The Commission added the following properties to the historical inventory as part of individual projects, including the demolition delay:

- Glenwood Pipe Yards (area form)
- Powder House Building
- 18 and 20 Woods Edge Road (2 forms)
- 252 Main Street
- 25 Franklin Street
- 523, 541 and 551 Winthrop Street (3 forms)
- 65 Summer Street
- 43-45 Irving Street
- 6 Rockwell

- 419 Riverside Avenue
- 13-15 Linden Street
- 40-46 Linden Street
- 403 Riverside Avenue
- 4-6 Court Street, 17 Everett Street, 236 and 240-244 Salem Street (area and 1 individual form)
- 142-144 Riverside Avenue
- 37 West Street
- 49 Mystic Avenue

Summary of forms added under the East Medford Phase I Survey and Planning Grant project:

- 5 Massachusetts Historical Commission area forms and 88 building forms covering 150 properties altogether.

Site Plan Review:

The Office of Community Development solicited, and the Commission provided, comments on the following requests for site plan review:

- 330 Boston Avenue
- 500 Salem Street
- 244 Central Avenue
- 252 Main Street
- 61 Locust Street
- 7 Canal Street
- 4-6 Court, 17 Everett, 236 and 240-244 Salem Street

Community and Section 106 Project Reviews:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission and other local organizations solicited, and the Commission provided, comments of the following projects:

- Peter Tufts House Renovations
- Riverside Avenue Plaza and Signage
- Cradock Bridge Restoration
- 21 Touro Local Historic District
- Medford Public Library
- Algonquin Gas Line
- 574 Boston Avenue Cell Tower
- Brooks Estate Carriage House

Demolition Delay:

The following properties reviewed and actions:

- 18-20 Woods Edge Road – The Commission reviewed an application for demolition of the Clark Carriage Barn. Erected prior to 1889 and possibly before 1875, the building was **found**

historically significant and preferably preserved. The owner resolved to alter their plans for demolition and incorporate the building into a new addition on the property. The Clark Carriage Barn was not demolished.

- 515, 523, 525, 541 and 551 Winthrop Street – The Commission sent notice to the property owners that the proposed development slated for the properties might be applicable to the demolition delay process. The owners responded by submitting paperwork for five properties slated for demolition as part of a new subdivision. 515 and 525 Winthrop Street were determined built after 1900 and not subject to review. 523, 541 and 551 Winthrop Street were determined to have been built on or before 1900 and applicable to review. The Commission **found 523, 541 and 551 all to be historically significant and preferably preserved.** During the demolition delay, the owners worked to come up with alternatives to demolition including looking at renovating and moving the historic structures. After working together beyond the delay, the development was modified into a much smaller development. 523 was not demolished; 541 and 551 Winthrop Street were. The developers hired Myron Stachiw to document the buildings prior to removal.
- 45 Irving Street – The owner of this property submitted paperwork to comply with a court order to demolish the property. Known as the Kakas Guest Cottage, the building was built prior to 1900 and subject to review. The building was found **historically significant and preferably preserved**, invoking a six month demolition delay. The owner and applicant elected to do nothing and waited for the time to expire. They also would not allow the Commission to document the structure. The Kakas Guest Cottage was demolished after the demo delay expired.
- 6 Rockwell Avenue – The Commission sent notice to the owner that this well preserved example of Queen Anne architecture would be subject to review for demolition. The Owner submitted paperwork the following month. Known as the Carbonneau House, it was erected circa 1880 and determined both **historically significant and preferably preserved.** The six month delay was invoked. Efforts made by the Commission to find a person to renovate, restore or move the house were unsuccessful and the house was documented by Myron Stachiw before demolition. The Carbonneau House was demolished after the demo delay expired.
- 107 Jerome Street – Following an inquiry by the Building Department into the date of construction, the Owner’s architect filed paperwork for review. The building was known through prior research to have been built about 1880 and associated with local architect and builder Moses Mann. The Commission found the building **historically significant and preferably preserved**, invoking the demolition delay. Taking into account the owner’s living situation, the board hired Myron Stachiw to document the building and, upon completion of field work, the delay was released. 107 Jerome Street remains standing but is slated for demolition.
- 403 Riverside Avenue – The Commission received an application for review for this circa 1880 building. Known as the Denney-Moreau House, the building was found **historically significant and preferably preserved.** It currently has a demolition delay on the property and will be documented at the end of the process.
- 142-144 Riverside Avenue – This property changed hands over a year prior to Commission review. The owner met with the Building Department and the Historical Commission to review

conditions. The owner renovated the building to make it habitable and has then submitted paperwork for demolition citing the desire to develop the parcel further. The Commission found the building to be an early example of Federal architecture. Known as the Ells House, it is importantly associated with the adjacent shipbuilding industry. It is an extremely rare resource and important to the commission. The Commission determined the Ells House to be **historically significant and preferably preserved** and we have invoked a demolition delay which is currently underway.

- 252 Main Street – The Commission reviewed historical and architectural history of the circa 1855 Francis Kidder House. It was determined the building was applicable for review but was **not historically significant**. The building is slated to be demolished for new apartments.
- 419 Riverside Avenue – The Building Department inquired as to the applicability of the delay to this building. Research completed shortly thereafter indicated the building was a pre 1855 structure and applicable for review. The applicant filed paperwork and the Commission determined the building to be **not historically significant**. Because of its age, the Commission elected to document the building and it was demolished shortly afterwards.
- 49 Mystic Avenue – The Commission determined that the building was built prior to 1900, but, due to the substantial and nearly comprehensive alterations to its fabric during its life, and especially in the last 30 years, it was determined to be **not historically significant**.
- 13-15 Linden Street – An inquiry from the attorney of the owner prompted the Commission to research this building to determine applicability. The building was a late nineteenth century residence which had been converted to a commercial office building and presently vacant. The Commission reviewed and determined the building was **not historically significant**. The building is still standing but is slated for demolition.
- 25 Franklin Street – The Commission received an inquiry from the building owner as to the applicability of the demolition delay to the property. Paperwork for review was filed and funding was appropriated to research the date of construction and history. Known as the Benjamin F. Parker House, the building was erected prior to 1855. Prior to the following meeting and without being notified by the applicant or Building Commissioner, the structure was knocked down for unknown reasons. The building was found **historically significant but not preferably preserved** by the Commission. A new house has replaced the building.
- 65 Summer Street – The Commission reviewed the history of the 1868 Webber House and determined it applicable for review following an inquiry by a developer bidding on the property. The applicant submitted paperwork and the property was found **historically significant but not preferably preserved**. The building has been demolished and a new house is under construction.
- 40-46 Linden Street – The Commission received an application for review for this circa 1875 Second Empire structure. The Commission found the building to be **historically significant but not preferably preserved**. Knowing the building to be important architecturally, the owners agreed to let the Commission document the structure prior to demolition. It is still standing and occupied.

- 37 West Street – The Commission received an inquiry from the building owner as to the applicability of the demolition delay to the property. Funding was appropriated to research the date of construction and history. Known as the Mary F. Cavanaugh House, the building was dated between 1880 and 1886 and applicable to review. Hearing nothing for some time, the Building Commissioner alerted the Commission that he was ordering the building demolished due to structural issues based on a report received by our board on 12/21/2016 and dated June 2, 2016. The structure was demolished without review shortly thereafter.

Goals for 2017

- Find a suitable candidate to fill the vacant Commission seat on the Medford Brooks Estate Land Trust Board of Directors.
- Educate owners, developers, real estate brokers and City departments about the Demolition Delay ordinance in preparation for the planned extension.
- Request that City Council move forward on our request to extend the demolition delay from six months to a full two years.
- Publish the results of the neighborhood surveys and the survey plans for the public to have access. This should also link to the MACRIS database at the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- Develop a full list of community preservation goals for use by the CPA Committee. This should include short and long term projects.
- Request additional funding for the following fiscal year from the Mayor's office beyond the additional grant funding.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan D. Hayward
Commission Chairman

April 10, 2017