



MALDEN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Malden City Hall, 215 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148

June 1, 2026

Alex Pratt, Director
Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
215 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Subject: Request for Information regarding Proposed Amendments to Demolition & Alteration Delay Ordinance

Dear Mr. Pratt,

As Chair of the Malden Historical Commission, I respectfully request that the Commission be promptly provided with information and documentation concerning any proposed amendments, revisions, policy changes, administrative interpretations, or other modifications under consideration regarding the City's Demolition and Alteration Delay Ordinance, Title 4.24, Code of the City of Malden (the Ordinance).

The Historical Commission was invited to the meeting of the City Council's Economic Development Committee on May 18, 2026, where discussed were potential revisions to the Ordinance prepared by the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), as referenced in CCP 256/2026. To date, the Historical Commission has neither received a formal presentation of the proposed changes nor been provided with supporting documentation explaining the purpose, necessity, or legal basis for such changes.

As the municipal body established pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 8D, and as the body responsible for the administration and implementation of this Ordinance, it is essential that the Commission be fully informed regarding any proposed modifications affecting its authority, responsibilities, procedures, or operations.

The original Ordinance was developed through the efforts of the Historical Commission in cooperation with the Mayor and City Council and was adopted in 2018 after substantial research, public discussion, and legislative review. Subsequent amendments adopted by the City Council in 2022 were likewise developed with significant participation by the Commission. Given this history, it is concerning that currently proposed changes have been prepared without consultation with the Commission despite its statutory role, institutional knowledge, and direct responsibility for administering the Ordinance. Accordingly, the following are requested:

1. Proposed Ordinance Language. A complete copy of all proposed amendments, revisions, redlined drafts, substitute language, memoranda, reports, presentations, summaries, or other documents that describe or contain proposed changes to the Demolition and Alteration Delay Ordinance.
2. Statement of Purpose and Rationale. A written explanation of:
 - the purpose of each proposed amendment;
 - the specific issues the proposed amendments are intended to address;
 - the legal, administrative, or policy basis supporting each proposed amendment;
 - any data, studies, reports, or analyses relied upon in developing the proposed amendments; and
 - the anticipated effects of the proposed amendments upon the administration and effectiveness of the Ordinance.
3. Preparation of the Proposed Amendments. Identification of:
 - the individual or individuals who drafted or prepared the proposed amendments;
 - all OSPCD personnel involved in developing the proposed amendments;
 - any outside consultants, attorneys, organizations, developers, or other parties who participated in preparing or reviewing the proposed amendments; and
 - any municipal departments or boards that were consulted during the drafting process.

4. Consultation with the Historical Commission. A written explanation as to:
 - why the Historical Commission was not notified during the development of the proposed amendments;
 - why the Historical Commission was not invited to participate in discussions concerning amendments to an ordinance that it helped create and administer;
 - whether OSPCD considered obtaining input from the Historical Commission before developing the proposed amendments; and
 - whether OSPCD intends to consult with the Historical Commission before any amendments are presented for legislative consideration.
5. Legal Authority. Identification of any legal opinions, memoranda, statutes, ordinances, charter provisions, or administrative directives relied upon by OSPCD in developing amendments affecting the authority, procedures, or responsibilities of the Historical Commission.
6. Timeline and Public Process. A written description of:
 - the timeline for development of the proposed amendments;
 - meetings at which the amendments were discussed;
 - anticipated future meetings concerning the amendments;
 - the intended public review process; and
 - the anticipated schedule for City Council consideration.

The importance of the Historical Commission's participation in any process concerning amendment of this Ordinance cannot be overstated. Any review of the Ordinance must include meaningful participation by the Commission. As the body charged with implementing the Ordinance and as the entity that played a central role in its original development and subsequent amendments, the Commission possesses substantial institutional knowledge regarding the Ordinance's purpose, operation, effectiveness, and preservation objectives.

Transparency, interdepartmental cooperation, and public participation are essential to maintaining public confidence in municipal decision-making, particularly when considering amendments that may affect the preservation of historically significant resources within the City. I therefore respectfully request that no further action be taken regarding proposed amendments to the Demolition and Alteration Delay Ordinance until the Commission has had an opportunity to review the proposed changes, receive supporting documentation, and provide formal comments and recommendations.

Your response to this request will be discussed at the Commission's next meeting on June 18, 2026. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

The Historical Commission looks forward to a constructive and collaborative discussion regarding any proposed amendments affecting the City's historic preservation program.

Respectfully submitted,

Inna Babitskaya
Chair, Malden Historical Commission

Cc: Mayor Gary Christenon
City Council President Amanda Linehan
City Council Rules & Ordinance Committee Chair Stephen Winslow
Malden City Council
City Solicitor Alicia McNeil