



**Medford City Council
Medford, Massachusetts**

**Special Joint Session of the Medford City Council and Community Development
Board, March 3, 2026**

City Council Attendees

Isaac B. "Zac" Bears Council President; Emily Lazzaro Council Vice President; Matt Leming Councilor; George A. Scarpelli Councilor; Justin Tseng Councilor; Anna Callahan Councilor; Liz Mullane Councilor.

Community Development Board Attendees

Doug Carr, Chair; John Anderson CDB Member; Sean Beagan CDB Member; Dina Caloggero CDB Member; Ari Gofman Fishman CDB Member. (Page Buldini absent)

This meeting took place via Zoom due to technical issues experienced during the originally scheduled meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

President Isaac "Zac" Bears called the meeting to order on March 3, 2026 @ 6:10pm.

President Bears explained that the meeting had been rescheduled due to technical difficulties from the prior week and that the meeting would be conducted via Zoom to ensure accessibility and continuity of the zoning discussion process.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Councilor Callahan; Councilor Leming; Councilor Mullane; Councilor Scarpelli; Councilor Tseng; Vice President Lazzaro; President Bears

MOTIONS, ORDERS, AND RESOLUTIONS

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Councilor Leming motioned to approve the records of the Special Joint Session held January 21, 2026 (seconded by Councilor Callahan) - Approved on a Roll Call vote of Seven in favor, Zero opposed.

26-052 – Offered by Matt Leming, City Councilor

Proposed Zoning Meeting Schedule through May 2026

Councilor Leming presented a proposed timeline and meeting schedule outlining upcoming public hearings, committee meetings, and community engagement opportunities related to the Medford Square Zoning Update project.

Councilor Leming explained that the schedule was developed to provide greater clarity and transparency for residents and stakeholders regarding the zoning amendment process. The schedule included:

- A joint public hearing on Medford Square zoning amendments
- A public information session at the McGlynn School on March 11
- Ongoing bi-weekly working group meetings between city staff and consultants
- Planning and Permitting Committee meetings
- Future joint meetings of the City Council and Community Development Board
- A target timeline to bring a revised zoning proposal forward by March 25, 2026

Councilor Leming noted that the consulting firm Innes Land Strategies, which is assisting the City with zoning revisions, is contracted for a limited number of meetings, making it important to establish a structured meeting schedule in advance.

The schedule was presented as a working outline, acknowledging that additional deliberation may occur depending on public feedback and board discussion.

Councilor Leming motioned to approve the proposed meeting schedule (seconded by Councilor Callahan) - Approved on a Roll Call vote of Seven in favor, Zero opposed.

CDB Chair Carr then called the roll for the Community Development Board.

On the motion by Member Beagan (seconded by Member Anderson) to endorse the proposed schedule – Approved on a Roll Call vote of Five in favor, Zero opposed.

HEARINGS

26-023 – Offered by Matt Leming, City Councilor

Public Hearing – Proposed Amendments to the Medford Zoning Ordinance Chapter 94 (Medford Square)

President Bears opened discussion on the continued public hearing regarding proposed amendments to the Medford Zoning Ordinance affecting Medford Square.

President Bears noted that the meeting would include several presentations before opening the floor to public comment, including:

1. A recap of the zoning proposal and updates by Planning Director Alicia Hunt
2. Additional discussion and context from CDB Chair Doug Carr
3. An overview of potential historic preservation approaches from Historic Preservation Planner Theresa Dupont

Presentation – Planning, Development and Sustainability Department

Planning Director Alicia Hunt provided a presentation summarizing the current zoning proposal and the updates that had emerged through previous discussions and meetings.

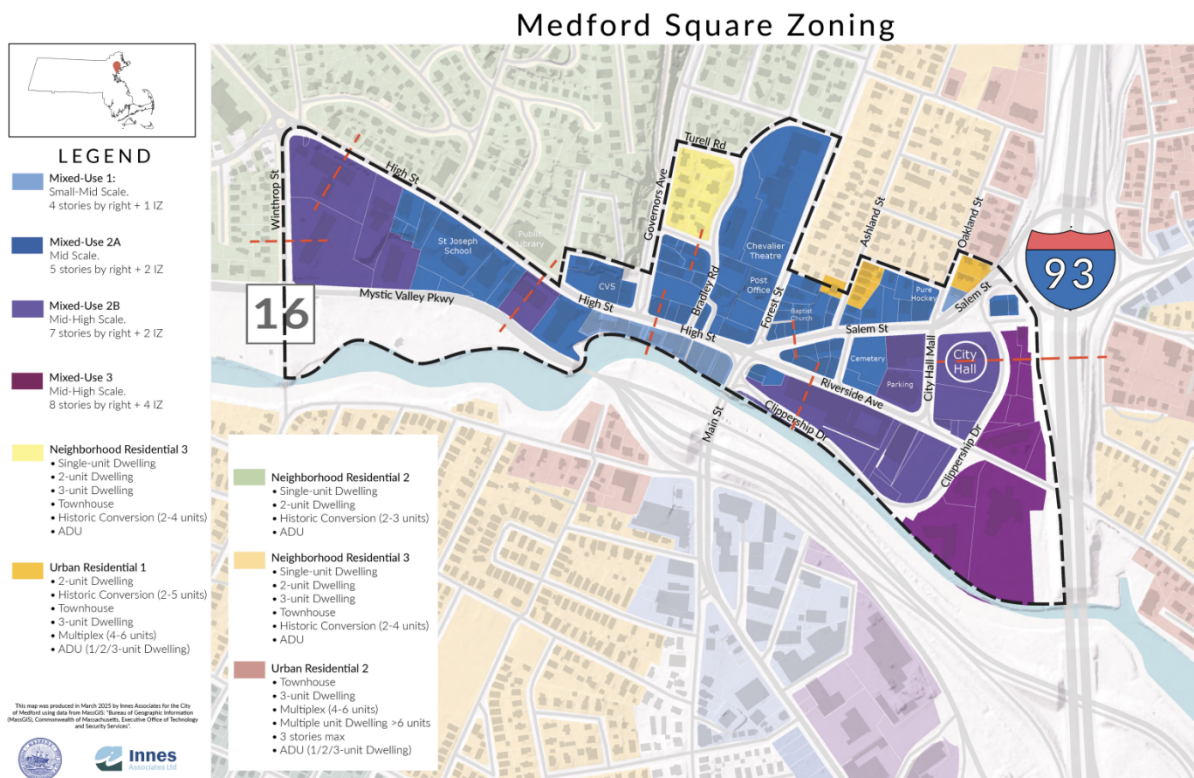
Director Hunt explained that the presentation was intended as a brief recap of the proposal and the changes that have been discussed since last summer.

Topics discussed included:

Zoning Map Updates

Director Hunt reviewed the existing zoning in Medford Square and the proposed mixed-use zoning districts. She explained that the proposal aims to create zoning that better reflects the current uses and development patterns in the square while supporting future redevelopment.

She noted that certain parcels previously included within the zoning proposal may require adjustment if they currently contain house-scale residential structures, and invited the boards to identify parcels that may need further review.



Building Height and Shadow Studies

Director Hunt presented shadow study models demonstrating the potential impact of proposed building heights on surrounding streets and public spaces.

These studies were intended to help the boards and the public better understand how potential redevelopment could affect sunlight, especially along High Street and near the Mystic River corridor.

She also noted that a potential daylight minimum standard could be developed to address concerns about building massing and shading.

Proposed Zoning Use Table Changes

Director Hunt outlined several proposed changes to the zoning use table, including:

- Potential allowance of three-unit detached dwellings by right in certain mixed-use districts
- Adding four-to-six unit residential buildings by right in specific zones
- Allowing townhouses by right in certain areas
- Considering whether municipal parking garages should be permitted uses within specific zoning districts

Director Hunt noted that some of these proposed changes had generated different opinions among board members, and further discussion would be needed to determine which uses should ultimately be allowed.

Parking and Municipal Parking Facilities

Director Hunt discussed whether municipal parking garages or parking areas should be allowed as principal uses within certain zoning districts. She noted that the current proposal does not permit standalone municipal parking garages in the proposed districts, but that board members had indicated interest in potentially allowing them as part of broader strategies to address parking challenges in Medford Square.

Dimensional Requirements and Lot Sizes

Director Hunt reviewed the dimensional standards included in the proposal, including:

- Minimum lot sizes
- Setback requirements
- Building coverage limits
- Open space requirements
- Landscape minimums

She explained that the existing proposal required 10,000 square foot lot sizes, which could render many parcels in Medford Square unbuildable by right.

Staff recommended potentially reducing minimum lot sizes to 3,000–4,000 square feet to better reflect the historic parcel structure of the square and enable redevelopment.

Ground Floor Active Use

Director Hunt also discussed proposed requirements for active ground floor uses, which are intended to encourage retail, restaurant, and pedestrian-oriented commercial uses along key streets in Medford Square.

Zoning Code Clarifications

Director Hunt noted that staff had identified several areas of the zoning code where language or organization could be improved, including:

- Separating dimensional requirements and waivers into distinct sections
- Clarifying definitions within the zoning code
- Renaming certain zoning districts to avoid confusion with other areas of the city

Community Development Board Presentation

CDB Chair Doug Carr then summarized discussions held by the Community Development Board regarding the Medford Square zoning proposal.

Chair Carr highlighted several key areas where the board had expressed interest in further revisions:

Parking Considerations

The board emphasized the importance of ensuring that zoning does not inadvertently prevent future parking solutions, including potential municipal parking garages or shared parking arrangements.

Chair Carr referenced a 2011 Medford Square parking study, which had included conceptual plans for a parking garage near Governor's Avenue, and suggested that revisiting such concepts could be valuable in future planning efforts.

Zoning Boundary Adjustments

Chair Carr noted that several parcels within the current zoning map may need adjustment to better reflect existing land uses.

Examples discussed included

- The Medford Public Library
- The Unitarian Universalist Church and related buildings
- Certain residential structures located near commercial properties

The board expressed interest in refining the zoning boundaries to ensure that properties are placed within districts that best reflect their character and potential future use.

Historic Preservation

Chair Carr emphasized the importance of protecting Medford Square's historic structures while still allowing redevelopment.

The board discussed the possibility of:

- Creating a Medford Square Historic District
- Establishing a historic overlay district
- Developing incentives that encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings

Chair Carr presented examples of historic buildings within the square that have been successfully expanded or renovated while preserving their architectural character.

Historic Preservation Discussion

Historic Preservation Planner Theresa Dupont provided an overview of how a historic district or overlay district could potentially be implemented within Medford Square.

She explained the general process for establishing such a district and noted that the concept was in the early stages of discussion.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

President Bears then moved to open the Public Hearing portion of the meeting at 7:01 pm and invited members of the public to raise their hands via Zoom if they wished to speak.

Before opening public comment, President Bears read a letter submitted by the Medford Chamber of Commerce dated February 25, 2026.

The Chamber expressed encouragement regarding the City's efforts to promote economic growth and offered several recommendations, including:

- Allowing commercial parking garages as a permitted use
- Creating zoning incentives to support existing businesses
- Maintaining continued engagement with the local business community during the zoning process

Members of the public were then invited to address the Council and Community Development Board.

Addressing the Council:

Roberta Cameron 12 North St
Kaitlin Robinson 31 Everett St
Seth Hurwitz 48 Albion St
Ken Gareau 52 Lambert St
Jeremy Martin 65 Burgett Av
Stephen Pompeo 18 Newton Rd
Laura Jasinski 65 Burgett Av
Tom Lincoln Gleason St

President Bears closed Public Participation at 7:21pm

DISCUSSION

Following public comments, members of the City Council and Community Development Board discussed potential guidance to the zoning consultant Innes Land Strategies regarding revisions to the proposed Medford Square zoning ordinance.

President Bears introduced a draft motion requesting that the consultant prepare revised language addressing several key issues, including:

1. Dimensional requirements that would make new construction or renovations more feasible by right
2. Parking provisions that could help address parking supply and demand
3. Historic preservation strategies, including potential overlay districts
4. Additional technical revisions identified during previous meetings

The boards discussed these topics and the timeline for receiving revised language before the next joint meeting.

Motion

Motion to request that Innes Land Group provide information and proposed language on the following issues and present a revised version of the Proposed Medford Square Zoning Ordinance in advance of our March 25th joint meeting:

1. Dimensional requirements - proposals that will make it more likely for new construction or renovations/additions/expansions to be possible by-right
2. Parking - proposals that will provide options for parking for new construction or renovations/additions/expansions by-right and could help to address parking supply and demand, including consideration of required parking mandates
3. Historic preservation - proposals to help protect historic structures and encourage creative and historically appropriate re-use and renovation of historic structures as part of new development and through incentive zoning bonuses, including how a potential overlay district would interact with a Local Historic District process and provide two options/approaches using these tools
4. Boundaries - proposals to adjust the boundaries of the proposed districts and subdistricts based on comments of City Councilors and Community Development Board members, explore shifting MX-1B to MX-2A
5. Arts - Look at incentive zoning for arts and culture, change use table for public entertainment/recreation from no to yes
6. Overlay districts - discuss overlays as a zoning tool, including potential regarding historic preservation, arts and culture, affordable housing, small businesses, and planned development district
7. Definitions - create daylight minimum, update high-frequency transit, check that all uses have definitions (if extensive, can be part of the Building/PDS cleanup proposal), fire exits on public ways, and parking structure/garage definition (how it relates to active ground floor and facade)
8. Incentive zoning - confirm any proposed/TBD incentives in table, explore removing fountains from incentive zoning, can incentives assist with historic preservation (waiving parking) or retaining existing businesses during construction?

Further we request the mayor send a written confirmation that it is acceptable for the Council and CDB to consider changes to parking requirements as part of the Medford Square zoning amendment since that is a departure from the December 2025 agreement between the Mayor and the Council.

Further, we request that we use version control for the next draft with a numbering system for the proposed map and zoning amendment text.

Councilor Leming motioned to approve and submit as amended to Innes LG and Mayor (seconded by Councilor Mullane) – Approved on a Roll call vote of Six in favor, Zero opposed (Vice President Lazzaro absent)

President Bears announced that the public hearing would be continued to the Joint Meeting scheduled for March 25, 2026 to allow time for the consultant to incorporate feedback and present updated zoning language.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Callahan motioned to continue the Public Hearing to March 25th and Adjourn
(seconded by Councilor Leming) – Approved on a Roll Call vote of Six in favor, Zero opposed
(Vice president Lazzaro Absent)

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted

Richard Eliseo Jr

Acting City Clerk