



Medford City Council Newsletter

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As the year comes to a close, we're hoping that everyone has a happy holiday season and stays warm! The City Council is putting a bow on a year packed with action. To highlight some of our work this year:

- The City Council voted to place Medford's first-ever overrides on the ballot, Questions 7 and 8, which the voters approved in November. These historic investments will enable Medford to stabilize the school budget, improve access to better public education and extracurriculars, and bring in a new in-house street and sidewalk repair team.
- The Council is in the middle of its comprehensive zoning reform process, working with Innes Associates, the Planning, Sustainability, and Development Department, and residents. The Council has referred to the Community Development Board a rezoning proposal for the Mystic Ave. Corridor and a "Green Score" proposal that aligns development to our Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. We are currently reviewing a rezoning proposal for the Salem St. Corridor. These proposals aim to increase our commercial tax base and promote housing production.
- For the first time, the City Council established general and capital stabilization funds, which allows the City to respond quicker to emergencies, gives Councilors and residents a greater say in how funds are spent, and funds more water, sewer, street safety, and infrastructure improvement projects.
- The City Council has started working on more housing affordability measures, considering policies to fund the Affordable Housing Trust and developing a rental assistance program for veterans. We also maximized tax deferrals for seniors and veterans.
- The City Council has worked on improving transparency and accessibility to residents, creating City Council Newsletters, community listening sessions, a Residents' Guide to City Council, and streaming our meetings on YouTube.
- The City Council passed a Wildlife Feeding Ordinance, an updated Solid Waste Ordinance, and a gas-powered Leafblower Ordinance. The Council also established a revolving fund to maintain electric vehicle charging stations. The Council is now working on Tree Ordinances to protect and expand Medford's tree canopy.
- The Governance Committee has started working on reforming the City Charter, setting out a timeline for reviewing recommendations from the Charter Study Committee and the Mayor's Office.

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Commemorations and Acknowledgements

- At our December 3rd meeting, the Council took up a resolution to congratulate the Medford High School Varsity Rowing Team on their recent achievement of being crowned State Champions at the Massachusetts Public School Rowing Association (MPSRA).
- At our December 3rd meeting, the Council also took up a resolution under suspension to congratulate the Medford High School Football Team on winning the annual Medford-Malden Thanksgiving Football Game and winning their first Greater Boston League championship since 1985.
- On December 3rd, the Council also passed a resolution under suspension to congratulate the Medford Mustang Marching Band on winning the New England Scholastic Band Association championship.

General Business

- At our November 26th special meeting, the Council voted to set our tax rate for the upcoming year and for a 175% shift of the tax levy from the Residential class to the Commercial/Industrial and Personal Property classes. This reduces the share of the levy paid by residential property owners and is the maximum allowed by the state.
- At this special meeting, the Council also voted against an open space tax exemption, a small commercial tax exemption, and a residential tax exemption on the recommendation of the Assessor's Office. Councilors discussed the resources the City may need to implement a residential tax exemption and how to plan for this.
- On December 3rd, the Council voted to approve licenses for Medford Donuts Cafe to continue operations at Demet's Donuts and for Buns House to take over Chilli Garden.
- At our December 3rd meeting, the Council voted to petition the State DCR and DOT to set a 25 MPH speed limit on state roads to protect the safety of all who use Medford's roads.

Governance Committee

- On December 10th, the Council met with representatives from the Collins Center to discuss the Charter review process, as explained in our October newsletter.

Planning & Permitting Committee

- On December 3rd, the Planning and Permitting Committee reviewed a draft rezoning proposal for the Salem Street Corridor. The draft proposal reflects Salem Street's status as a bustling commercial corridor, enhancing its existing residential character, and incentivizing more business development along key blocks and in Haines Square, including setting the stage for better community use of large commercial parcels in Haines Square. As with the rest of the City Council's zoning work this term, the Council's zoning consultant crafted this proposal in consultation with this Council and City staff and was guided by citywide goals and community feedback. After further review and feedback, the next steps for the proposed zoning would be reviewed by the Community Development Board, before going back to the City Council, procedural steps that apply to all zoning changes. The Committee resumed its review at the December 11th meeting and referred it favorably to the regular Council meeting.

Public Health & Community Safety Committee

- On December 11th, the Public Health & Community Safety Committee met to discuss proposed technical amendments to the city's Community Control over Public Surveillance Ordinance.

Resident Services & Public Engagement

- On December 10th, the Resident Services and Public Engagement Committee referred out of committee a Welcoming City Ordinance to codify our city's policy of non-cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on non-criminal matters.

Thank you very much,

Justin Tseng
Chair, Governance Committee