

TOWN OF MEDFIELD

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town House, 459 Main Street, P.O.Box 315
Medfield, Massachusetts, 02052
(508) 359-8505

November 27, 2019

RE: Proposed Peak House Historic District

Dear property owner:

You are receiving this letter because the Medfield Historic District Commission is considering creating a new historic district, consisting of 38 properties, starting at the First Baptist Church (438 Main Street), where the current Town Center Historic District ends, to slightly past the intersection of Pound Street (ending at 339 Main Street). In addition to the Peak House (circa 1711), this new district would include the vulnerable Clark Tavern (circa 1743 – 1773), the nearby Eliakim Morse Homestead (circa 1750), the George Innes Studio (circa 1830), and the Joshua Fisher House (circa 1750). Your property would also be in this new district.

No decision has been made. An early step in the process is to hear from those residents who live in the proposed district. There are twenty-eight historic properties that would be included plus ten newer properties. If your property is historic, we have attached a copy of your inventory card from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (mhc-macris.net). A copy of all 28 inventory cards, along with our preliminary report, can be found at the Medfield Library. Also on the Town website under the Planning and Zoning web page are our Guidelines for Change and other documents you might find helpful in understanding historic districts in Medfield. Finally, we can send you an electronic version of the preliminary report and Guidelines if you give us your e-mail.

Currently there are four historic districts in Medfield:

1. John Metcalf Historic District, consisting of 28 properties along west Main Street starting from Noon Hill Grille to the Charles River;
2. Hospital Farm Historic District, consisting of 38 historic buildings at the former Medfield State Hospital;
3. Clark-Kingsbury Farm Historic District, consisting of one home and mill overlooking the Grist Mill Pond on Route 27; and
4. Town Center Historic District, consisting of 18 buildings in the center of town along North Street and Main Street.

The purposes of an historic district is to:

1. To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant to the Commonwealth and Medfield.
2. To maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places.

3. To assure that new construction is compatible with existing buildings in the district.
4. To maintain the integrity not only of individual structures but also of entire streetscapes.

Historic districts do not prevent changes from occurring, nor do they prevent new construction. The intent is to make changes and additions harmonious, and to prevent the intrusion of incongruous elements that might distract from the aesthetic and historic values of the district. The purpose of any local historic district is not to halt growth, but to allow for thoughtful consideration of change.

How is an historic district protected?


Since each home within a district contributes to the overall historic character, changes made to the exterior of any property, as well as demolition and new construction, are reviewed for the impact they may have on the district as a whole. Before a homeowner within a district is allowed to change an exterior architectural feature of the building it must receive approval from the Commission. Any change to the exterior of a building that is visible from a public way, park, or body of water is subject to review by the Commission. These changes include, but are not limited to, windows, doors, roof lines, building materials, new construction, additions and fences. They do not include paint color.

Examples of recent reviews include Starbuck's, Brother's Market, and Avenue, all which have enhanced our Town Center. Let's keep it, maintain it, and enjoy its history. To date we are protecting the historic character of West Main Street and the Town Center. What's missing is East Main Street, including the Clark Tavern and the Peak House.

Next steps:

We have scheduled a public hearing for Thursday, December 12, at the Public Works/Town Garage, starting at 7 pm. We hope you will attend. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me or any other member of the Medfield Historic District Commission.

Sincerely,



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