

**Nathan Giacalone**

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**From:** Pamela Wright  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 11:29 AM  
**To:** Nathan Giacalone  
**Subject:** Re: Demo Delay Comments

Is this what you want?

**Reasons not to change the date for demolition review from 50 year rule to 1945**

1. The “50-year rule,” a criterion established initially by the Historic Sites Survey and then used by the National Park Service for 86 years. The use of the 50-year guideline is intended to provide “the time needed to develop historical perspective when evaluating significance,”
2. Newton Historic Commission did not ask for this – replacing the 50 year rule with 1945. NHC has said they can handle the work load for a 50 year rule. Why are we changing this? As Newton resident and history professor Ellen Fitzpatrick stated, “History does not stop at 1945.” **This seems like a bad solution looking for a nonexistent problem.**
3. In the Newton Historic commission’s discussion, it was pointed out that should the proposed 1945 date for demolition review be approved, there would be 3200 Newton houses built between 1946 and 1971 that are currently in the 50 year period but would be excluded from future review because they are not in the MACRIS database. (The Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) which allows you to search the Massachusetts Historical Commission database for information on historic properties.) Ms. Holmes stated that we may receive state funding to inventory 110-120 homes a year. At that rate it would take ALMOST 30 years to inventory the undocumented homes from 1946 to 1971. Historic homes could be lost.
4. Personally, I would like to have no age limit. 50 year rule is a compromise for me. Much larger communities with no age limit include Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Fairfax County, and Boulder. Also, Boston, Brookline, Lexington, and Nantucket. New York City has a 30-year limit and Seattle has a 25-year limit.
5. The 50 year rule helps keep diverse housing options in Newton and reduces our carbon footprint. A renovation is more climate friendly than a teardown. According to Laura Foote, there are significant construction and demolition debris generated in Newton and no one counts this currently. It's a big part of our climate impact, The volumes are comparable to municipal solid waste, which we monitor carefully.
6. To me the only reason for the change is that this helps developers tear down homes. When a home is preferably preserved, the owner can come back with a

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design sensitive to the house and neighborhood. A home owner can still wait it out 12 or 18 months and tear down the house. Developers don't want to wait it out, because of the carrying cost and usually will come back with a much better design. A win for the neighborhood.

Please keep the 50 year rule and do not vote to change demo review to 1945.

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**From:** Nathan Giacalone <[ngiacalone@newtonma.gov](mailto:ngiacalone@newtonma.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 9:38 AM

**To:** Pamela Wright <[pwright@newtonma.gov](mailto:pwright@newtonma.gov)>

**Subject:** Demo Delay Comments

Good morning Pam,

I hope you had a good Fourth of July weekend! When you have a chance, would you be able to send me those comments you shared on screen during the demo delay discussion at last week's ZAP meeting so I can add them to the report? Thanks!

Best,  
Nathan

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