

**OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BRIAN WORRELL, LIZ BREADON, COLETTA, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, MEJIA, WEBER, AND LOUIJEUNE**



## **CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL**

### **ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE HOMEOWNERSHIP VOUCHER PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS:** The escalating housing costs in Boston disproportionately affect long-term residents and middle-class families, and deepen the substantial minority of homeownership gap; and

**WHEREAS:** Boston's homeownership rates reveal a persistent racial gap, with a 44% rate for white residents, 30% for Black residents, and 17% for Latino residents, exacerbating the broader racial wealth gap, as indicated by city-data after the 1968 outlawing of redlining, according to a WBUR analysis; and

**WHEREAS:** A considerable disparity in mortgage approval rates exists, with Black residents experiencing a threefold higher denial rate compared to white residents in Boston from 2015-20, coupled with imbalances in mortgage distribution across neighborhoods, further limiting opportunities for minority homebuyers, as highlighted in the same report; and

**WHEREAS:** The City of Boston has dedicated funds and resources to assist these residents; the resources provide an additional layer of support in conjunction with successful existing partnerships that help increase the buying power for income-eligible, first-time homebuyers within the City, such as the ONE+ Boston Mortgage Program; and

**WHEREAS:** The City continues to work to identify financial institutions with whom to partner to provide service to our first-time homebuyers through our mortgage programs; and

**WHEREAS:** The Boston Housing Authority has expanded its Section 8 Homeownership Program that allows voucher holders to subsidize a mortgage payment; and

**WHEREAS:** The Citywide Voucher program has attracted a total of 91 applications; out of the 91 applicants, 67 met the home-buying readiness and program requirements; and

**WHEREAS:** Considering limited funding that could only serve approximately 10 households, a lottery drawing was conducted, selecting 15 of the 67 qualified applicants to move forward; and

**WHEREAS:** Homeownership vouchers were successfully issued to 10 of the 15 selected applicants upon completion of BHA's admissions screening process; the remaining 5 applicants either independently purchased homes or were deemed income-ineligible by BHA admissions; and

**WHEREAS:** There is a pressing need for additional funding to provide homeownership opportunities to the remaining 52 home-buying-ready applicants from the initial 67; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing conducted to explore avenues for securing additional funding and expanding the Citywide Voucher Program to accommodate the homeownership aspirations of the remaining applicants. Representatives from the Administration, the Mayor's Office of Housing, and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: January 24, 2024