

**OFFERED BY COUNCILORS MINIARD CULPEPPER, LIZ BREADON,
FITZGERALD, FLYNN, LOUIJEUNE, MURPHY, PEPÉN, WEBER, AND WORRELL**



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE CITY OF BOSTON'S RESPONSE TO NOISE COMPLAINTS AND ENFORCEMENT OF NOISE CONTROL LAWS

WHEREAS, Boston City Code Section 16-26 prohibits unreasonable or excessive noise throughout the City and establishes enforceable standards for excessive noise, including noise exceeding 50 dBA between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., noise exceeding 70 dBA during other hours, and, in certain circumstances, noise plainly audible from specified distances; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston City Code Section 16-26 establishes a clear role for law enforcement in responding to noise complaints, including provisions allowing residents to complain to the Boston Police Department, requiring police to verify certain alleged violations, authorizing enforcement actions and criminal complaints where appropriate, and permitting police and other designated officials to enforce restrictions on loud amplification devices in residential premises, public places, and motor vehicles; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston City Code Section 16-27 establishes additional nuisance-control protections for gatherings on private property that substantially disturb the quiet enjoyment of a neighborhood, including gatherings involving excessive noise, blocked streets or sidewalks, illegal parking, fights, disturbances of the peace, underage drinking, or other disruptive conduct; *and*

WHEREAS, Section 16-27 authorizes Boston Police officers to issue warnings and citations, imposes fines for first and subsequent responses to nuisance gatherings, establishes notice and follow-up requirements involving property owners and other responsible parties, and expressly provides that scientific noise measurements are not required before citations may be issued under the nuisance-control provisions; *and*

WHEREAS, The City provides residents with several resources for reporting excessive noise and loud parties, including 311 and 911, neighborhood police district stations, and the Boston Police Department Party Line at 617-343-5500, which is intended to

provide residents with a direct means of reporting loud after-parties and preventing late-night disorderly behavior and related criminal conduct; *and*

WHEREAS, Despite the clear enforcement responsibilities and remedies established under Sections 16-26 and 16-27, the Boston City Council has received numerous complaints, particularly from District 7 residents, reporting that calls to law enforcement and other available City resources frequently result in little or no apparent enforcement, resolution, communication, or follow-up; *and*

WHEREAS, The lack of a transparent and reliable response process can leave residents uncertain as to whether complaints have been documented, whether officers or other enforcement personnel responded, whether a violation was found, whether a warning or citation was issued, whether repeat complaints were connected to prior incidents, and whether responsible property owners or other parties were notified; *and*

WHEREAS, The City should examine whether the existing infrastructure for receiving, dispatching, documenting, enforcing, resolving, and following up on noise and nuisance complaints is functioning consistently and effectively across all neighborhoods and whether additional staffing, training, equipment, data systems, interdepartmental coordination, public information, or accountability measures are needed; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing regarding the City of Boston's response to noise complaints and enforcement of Boston City Code Sections 16-26 and 16-27, including the number, type, location, and source of noise and nuisance complaints received; the channels through which complaints are submitted; response and resolution rates; average response times; the number of warnings, citations, fines, arrests, criminal complaints, property-owner notices, and other enforcement actions issued; the handling of repeat complaints and repeat-offender locations; the availability and use of sound-level meters; coordination among City departments; communication and follow-up with complainants; geographic disparities in response and enforcement; and improvements necessary to create a more responsive, transparent, and effective noise-complaint system; and that representatives from the Boston Police Department and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: July 22, 2026