

Offered by City Councilor Lydia Edwards



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING AN EAST BOSTON ZONING INITIATIVE AND MASTER PLAN

- WHEREAS:* The neighborhood of East Boston has long served as a beacon for immigrants, a cornerstone of the marine economy and a portal to the world; and
- WHEREAS:* East Boston is currently experiencing rapid growth, intense development pressures, traffic congestion, and sea-level rise and flooding; and
- WHEREAS:* The City of Boston has set a goal of 53,000 new units of housing by 2030; and
- WHEREAS:* Rents are rising to a degree that threatens the permanent displacement of neighborhood residents while homeownership opportunities are decreasing; and
- WHEREAS:* Traffic congestion, exacerbated further by new development and an underfunded public transportation system, is negatively impacting neighborhood quality of life; and
- WHEREAS:* East Boston is lacking a comprehensive transportation, traffic and parking plan, accommodating the need to reduce congestion and vehicle emissions; promote sustainable transportation such as walking, biking, MBTA bus and subway services and an East Boston ferry; and provide adequate parking for residents, teachers, health care workers and other essential purposes; and
- WHEREAS:* The Climate Ready Boston initiative has identified East Boston as a neighborhood extraordinarily vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; and
- WHEREAS:* Resilience may require changes to zoning, new investment, cooperation across private property lines and publicly-owned land; and
- WHEREAS:* Preserving Boston's history and promoting stable, affordable and resilient housing for Boston's residents requires purposive and coordinated action by city government that is led by the residents of the impacted neighborhood; and
- WHEREAS:* East Boston's last master plan was completed eighteen years ago and since that time, East Boston has changed immensely and for too many without a common clear goal or vision;
- WHEREAS:* The master plan is eighteen years old and for many does not reflect the actual modern

needs of the community and many “Eastie” residents feel that development is happening *to* them, not *for* them or their children; and

WHEREAS: The Zoning Board of Appeals and developers are essentially engaging in spot zoning and planning that is variance driven and utterly ignores East Boston’s zoning, character of the neighborhood and master plan;

WHEREAS: The master planning process could be a way to build community, build buildings and build trust between city residents, city departments, and developers if the community is at the table to help shape a realistic vibrant growing community; and

WHEREAS: Other neighborhoods, such as South Boston, have implemented zoning reform initiatives to guide the development and vision in their neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS: East Boston, with opportunities from Suffolk Downs to its waterfront, can be a model for community-led master planning and visioning;

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing in East Boston to discuss the creation of a Master Plan and that city departments such as the Department of Neighborhood Development, Boston Transportation Department, Parks and Recreation, Boston Housing Authority, neighborhood and civic groups, the area Community Development Corporations, the Boston Planning and Development Agency, and any other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

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