

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON, JULIA MEJIA, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, FLYNN, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, WORRELL, AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO AUDIT ALL CITY OF BOSTON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS TO EVALUATE THEIR COMPOSITION, SELECTION PROCESSES, CRITERIA FOR SELECTION, APPOINTMENT TIMELINE, AND ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

WHEREAS, The City of Boston and the Boston City Council possess the ability to establish Commissions, Boards, Oversight Committees, Task Forces, and other bodies in order to provide oversight over administrative work, make policy and programmatic recommendations, and create dedicated community spaces addressing unique and substantive issues; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston currently lists 70 active Boards and Commissions addressing a variety of issues from arts and culture to public safety to disability rights and more, with over half of them (37) currently having open seats which need to be filled; *and*

WHEREAS, While some boards and commissions possess enabling legislation which allows input from the City Council and other community organizations to recommend Commissioners and board members, the vast majority of the City's Boards and Commissions with enabling legislation state that members must be appointed by the Mayor while others have no enabling legislation whatsoever; *and*

WHEREAS, The composition and function of Boards and Commissions within the City of Boston plays a crucial role in shaping policies, programs, and initiatives that impact the lives of residents; *and*

WHEREAS, Transparency and accountability in the selection process for Commissioners also plays a pivotal role in fostering public trust and confidence, ensuring not only that diverse voices and perspectives are heard and actively represented in decision-making processes, but also to ensure that the City adheres to relevant laws such as M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 11A, which outlines requirements for public access to governmental decision-making processes, ensures transparency and accountability in the City's governance structures, and promotes greater inclusivity and equity in governance; *and*

WHEREAS, There is a need to conduct a comprehensive audit of all Boards and Commissions within the city to evaluate their composition, selection processes, criteria for

appointment, selection timeline, and adherence to principles of equity and inclusion; *and*

WHEREAS, Residents across Boston who represent a wide spectrum of backgrounds and cultures deserve unequivocal assurance that Board and Commission appointments reflect the rich diversity inherent within our communities, and that appointees possess not only relevant expertise but also a profound understanding of the nuanced challenges and aspirations of our diverse populace; *and*

WHEREAS, Providing residents, through a public hearing, information relative to the demographic and biographic information of all existing Board and Commission members, the timeline for appointments, and the criteria for appointments will be necessary to identify any gaps or disparities in the composition of Boards and Commissions, with the opportunity to recommend strategies to promote greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in future appointments; *and*

WHEREAS, Auditing the selection and composition of Boards and Commissions serves as a crucial step towards fostering a more accountable and representative municipal government, ensuring that all residents have equitable access to opportunities and resources, and reaffirming our commitment to building a more just and inclusive community for all; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to conduct a full audit of all Boards and Commissions within the City to evaluate their composition, criteria for appointment, selection processes, selection timeline, and adherence to principles of equity and inclusion, in accordance with the mandates outlined in relevant municipal and Massachusetts General Laws and regulations. Representatives from the Administration, including representatives from the City's various Boards and Commissions, in addition to advocates and members of the public are encouraged to testify.

Filed on: August 7, 2024