



## OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN & JOHN FITZGERALD

### CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

#### ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS PUBLIC SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE CONCERNS AT MASS & CASS AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

**WHEREAS:** Since the closure of the city's Long Island recovery campus in the fall of 2014, the opioid crisis has driven people to the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard and surrounding areas, where those battling addiction can seek methadone treatment or a bed at city-run shelters; *and*

**WHEREAS:** On a given day, neighbors can regularly find hundreds of people sprawled throughout the area while engaging in open-air drug dealing, drug use, human trafficking, shoplifting and violent crimes throughout the neighborhoods of South End, Nubian Square, Roxbury, Dorchester, South Boston, Downtown Boston and the Back Bay; *and*

**WHEREAS:** As well-intentioned as some of the City's efforts have been, it is wholly appropriate to finally acknowledge that the City of Boston's current plan at Mass & Cass has been an abject failure by any standard. Any reasonable person who visits the area will say unequivocally that what has taken place there on a daily basis for over a decade now - an open air drug market and dealing, public drug use, the trafficking of women, acts of serious violence, public defecation and urination, among others - is completely unacceptable; *and*

**WHEREAS:** The neighborhoods around Mass & Cass continue to bear the brunt of a humanitarian crisis, and it is impacting the public safety and quality of life for residents and businesses, with piles of trash, including discarded needles and human feces scattering neighborhoods. Neighbors from Nubian Square, Worcester Square, Andrew Square, Blackstone and Franklin Squares all the way to Downtown Boston and the Boston Common continue to share their frustration and fear for their personal and families' public safety; *and*

**WHEREAS:** More recently in the South End, neighbors have experienced residential and business break-ins, assaults on residents, and drug dealing on residents' stoops. The situation continues to harm our small businesses, nonprofit partners, and the local economy; *and*

**WHEREAS:** While it is important to remain compassionate to those struggling with drug addiction, the status quo of escalating crime and violence spreading from Mass & Cass cannot continue and requires difficult decisions. We need a zero tolerance when it comes to making arrests for public drug dealing and public drug use, human trafficking, crime and assaults. On public health, it is appropriate to shift to a treatment-first approach. It is long past time to put wish lists aside and make a recovery campus a top priority for the City of Boston. It is also critical that these services be decentralized and spread out to other

locations across the Commonwealth; *and*

**WHEREAS:** While we are seeing an improvement, thanks to the partnership of the Community Response Team and the Neighborhood Engagement Safety Team, there is an urgent need to discuss the current and future strategies in addressing the public safety, quality of life, neighborhood services, and public health issues related to the situation in Mass & Cass and in the impacted neighborhoods. We need to discuss ways to improve the City's response to the opioid crisis, drug dealing activities, and homelessness; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss public safety and quality of life concerns at Mass & Cass and surrounding neighborhoods.

**Filed in Council: January 28, 2026**