

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ERIN J. MURPHY, ARROYO, BAKER, BREADON, DURKAN, COLETTA, FLAHERTY, LARA, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, WORRELL AND FLYNN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

**HEARING ORDER TO DISCUSS THE HUMANITARIAN
CRISIS AT THE INTERSECTION OF MASSACHUSETTS
AVENUE AND MELNEA CASS BOULEVARD**

WHEREAS, As the Chair of Public Health, Mental Health and Recovery I asked the Boston Public Health Commission to vote at its meeting this Wednesday on a State of Emergency in the area of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard. The request was in hopes of addressing a dire public health situation with a sense of urgency – one this body, in light of the fact that we have received no response, evidently does not share ; **and**

WHEREAS, We need to respond to the ongoing tragedy of substance use disorder, mental illness, open use of illegal drugs, violence, criminality, and disturbance of urban life that has gone on for far too long. We have reached a stage where dramatic intervention is vital in the area and we need real solutions that address underlying problems and causes; **and**

WHEREAS, The Boston Police Department has arrested, and Suffolk County prosecutors have pressed charges of armed assault with intent to murder against a man who allegedly stabbed a woman to death last week. In the early morning of September 8, Boston Police responded to a call about a woman naked and unconscious on the sidewalk while possibly being sexually attacked near the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pompeii Street. On the afternoon of September 8, Melnea Cass Boulevard was closed to traffic in both directions between Massachusetts Avenue and Hampden Street due to police activity; **and**

WHEREAS, The “Mass and Cass” situation is worsening, not improving. Data maintained by the City of Boston reflects a 57 percent increase from June 2023 to July 2023 in the number of people who received substance use treatment. In January of 2022, there were 76 BPD incident reports; for the week of August 13, 2023, there were 170 such reports. Outside health care providers have pulled out of the area over safety concerns to their employees. Businesses are suffering, youth activity programs have been jeopardized, and our first responders are subject to dangerous conditions that exceed what should reasonably be expected of people already performing difficult jobs. Long ago, this exceeded the quality of life threshold and has become an outright Public Health Emergency; **and**

WHEREAS, In truth, the root causes of what has become the central problem of a concentrated handful of neighborhoods lie far outside Boston, but the intersection of Mass and Cass has borne the toll. We ask for swift and comprehensive action to begin the process of bringing relief to this area and the people suffering there. This is an urgent situation with a humanitarian toll; *Therefore be it* children in BHA housing are officially and accounted for and safe. **AND NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED, That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss the Public Health Emergency, and Humanitarian Crisis, in this area. The Boston Public Health Commission Board, Office of Recovery Services, Street Team, Boston Public Works and other interested parties shall be invited to attend. In addition, members of the public are encouraged to attend.

Filed on: September 13, 2023