



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Government Operations

Lydia Edwards, *Chair*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

September 10, 2021

Dear Councilors:

The Committee on Government Operations was referred the following docket for consideration:

Docket #0773, An Ordinance Creating a Commission on Black Men and Boys.

This matter was sponsored by Councilor Julia Mejia, and was referred to the Committee on Government Operations on June 16, 2021.

Summary

Docket #0773 requests that the City of Boston Code, Chapter XV shall be amended by adding a new section to establish within the Mayor's Office a division to be known as the Commission on Black Men and Boys. The membership of this Commission shall consist of twenty-one members, all of whom shall be appointed by the Mayor. The members of this Commission will include seven members that shall serve two-year terms, seven members that shall serve for three-year terms, and another seven members that shall serve for four-year terms. One two-year term member and one three-year member shall be youth members. Once the term of a member expires, the member's successor shall be appointed by the Mayor for a term of three years from such expiration. Any members absent for more than one-third of the Commission meetings within a twelve-month period may be removed from the Commission by the Mayor at their discretion by notice to the City Council, provided, however that there were at least three meetings of the Commission during the twelve-month period. Vacancies, other than by reason of expiration of terms, shall be filled for the balance of unexpired terms, appointed and confirmed in the same manner and by the same body.

The Mayor shall appoint a member as the Chairperson of the Commission who may be their Advisor and shall have the powers of a department head with respect to the execution of the contracts and matters of personnel management within said office. The members of this Commission shall serve without compensation.

The Duties of the Commission shall include but not be limited to advising the Mayor on issues pertaining to Black men and boys; assisting the Office of the Mayor in determining budget and policy priorities; monitoring and advising city agencies and departments on issues pertaining to Black men and boys; designing projects and programs that promote equity for Black men and boys which are not currently being implemented by existing city agencies; performing outreach, communication, and liaison to Black men and boys related to community groups and organizations; working with the Department of Intergovernmental Relations concerning state and federal legislation and programs that are of concern to Black men and boys; working with the Office of Civil Rights to assure that Black

men and boys are represented at all levels of city government; coordinating dialogues and action on behalf of city government to issues of concern to Black men and boys and related organizations, including but not limited to: concerns related to national origin, sexual orientation and gender identity, mental, physical, and sexual health, violence prevention, employment, and more; during the first year of its existence, the Commission shall hold monthly meetings, give updates to the City Council on a quarterly basis, and produce an annual report; after the first year of its existence, the Commission shall produce an annual report.

Information Received at Working Session

The Committee held a hearing on Dockets #0773-0774 on Friday, August 20, 2021. Celina Barrios-Millner, Chief of Equity and Inclusion, Susan Helmy, Program Manager for the Human Rights Commission; Gregory Blaize, Executive Director of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance; Dr. Rufus J Faulk, Director of the Mayor's Office of Public Safety testified on behalf of the Administration. The Committee was also joined by former Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson, Thaddeus Miles, Director of Community Services at MassHousing; and Corey Thompson and Ron Bell both of whom are local community activists.

Former Councilor Jackson discussed his work in passing the Ordinance through the Council which would have created a Commission on Black Men and Boys but was vetoed by the previous Administration.

The Committee discussed the importance of keeping the Commission on Latino Men and Boys with the Commission on Black Men and Boys as two separate commissions, the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community and gender identity in the ordinance, the components and parameters of what will be included in the report that will be released by the Commission, the need to allow freedom of the Commission to identifying their own clear goals and objectives, implementing a codified relationship between the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet and the Commission included in the Ordinance, the possibility of adding funding to provide staff for the Commission to assist with their work, and amending the legislation to clarify that the Commission shall release an annual report and not just in the first year of Commission's existence

Summary of Amendments to Docket as Originally Filed:

Section 15-11.2, *Organization*, is amended in Section B. so that when a member of the Commission is removed by the Mayor, the Mayor must file a written statement of reasons for removal with the City Clerk. This section was also amended to remove "and confirmed" once a new member is appointed to the Commission in case of a vacancy.

Section 15-11.3 *Duties*, Section G. was amended by replacing "the Office of Civil Rights" with "city departments including but not limited to: the Human Rights Commission, the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet, and Boston Public Schools".

Section 15-11.3 *Duties*, Section I. was amended by removing "and produce an annual report" and adding that the Commission shall hold monthly meetings "and" give updates to the City Council on a quarterly basis.

Section 15-11.3 *Duties*, Section J. was amended by removing "After the first year of its existence, the Commission shall produce an annual report", and replacing it Producing a yearly report pertaining to the work of the Commission and the progress of the City and the community to advance the status of

Black men and boys. The Commission shall submit the report to the City Clerk of the City of Boston who shall forward the report to the Mayor of the City of Boston and shall file the report and include the docket on the agenda of the next-occurring meeting of the Boston City Council.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

Docket #0773 will establish a Commission on Black Men and Boys with the Mayor's Office for the purpose of advising the Mayor on issues pertaining to Black men and boys, designing projects and programs that promote equity for Black men and boys; and to perform outreach, communication, and liaison to Black men and boys related to community groups and organizations. By the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, to which the following was referred:

Docket #0773, An Ordinance Creating a Commission on Black Men and Boys.

submits a report recommending that this docket **ought to pass in a new draft.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lydia Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lydia Edwards, Chair
Committee on Government Operations