



OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN

CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS PUBLIC SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES IN THE DOWNTOWN BOSTON AND THE BOSTON COMMON

WHEREAS: In recent years, residents have reported that public safety and quality of life issues in Downtown and the Boston Common have deteriorated. City officials have received a significant increase in outreach from concerned Downtown residents, families, schools and businesses regarding the issues of crime, violence, open air drug-dealing and use that has impacted their sense of safety and quality of life; *and*

WHEREAS: In August 2024, a Downtown Public Safety walkthrough was conducted with residents, the Downtown BID and businesses, Boston Police, and other stakeholders, many of whom expressed unease and concerns of personal and public safety due to instances of drug-dealing and consumption in public and the increase in violence in the area; *and*

WHEREAS: In September 2024, the Boston Police Department held a Compstat meeting with the Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association, and reported that crime statistics in the area increased. Residents who live and work in and around the vicinity of Downtown, such as those from the Leather District and Beacon Hill neighborhoods, and those who commute into South Station to work in Downtown, also highlighted a decreasing sense of personal and public safety when seeing the flagrant drug consumption, crime and other illicit activities in public view; *and*

WHEREAS: Subsequent meetings took place with nearby school administrators, parents, Boston Police, and city officials regarding serious concerns on the safety of children, caretakers, and staff as the population of those with substance use disorders started migrating from the Brewer Fountain closer to Park Street. Parents of young children, many of whom are Downtown residents and walk their kids to preschool every morning, expressed frustration for the safety of their children and the unhealthy environment that they walk by in the Common to pick up and drop off at the school every day; *and*

WHEREAS: In September 2024, NBC Boston reported recent incidents of violence at Boston Common led to specific tour operators having to either re-route or skip Boston Common altogether. Boston Historic Company reported that visitors got slapped, and an employee got punched in the face while on break in the area. Moreover, there was a stabbing at Downtown Crossing in August 2024, and another in October near the Brewer Fountain in the Boston Common, with many parents reportedly witnessing the aftermath while taking children to school; *and*

WHEREAS: As a result of the 2024 hearing and ongoing concerns from neighbors, the Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association hosted a meeting with Downtown elected officials, residents, business leaders, and non-profits to discuss the next steps in addressing public safety concerns in the Boston Common and Downtown Crossing area. Following the

meeting, in March 2025, the “One Downtown Task Force” was formed with Mayor Michelle Wu, Councilor Ed Flynn, Representative Aaron Michlewitz, District Attorney Kevin Hayden, and Rishi Shukla, Co-founder of the Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association, among others, to proactively ensure coordination among stakeholders and mobilize resources to address public safety and related quality of life issues; *and*

WHEREAS: Downtown and Boston Common remain both critical economic engines, as well as home to some of the most important historic sites in our country. There is an urgent need to continue to revisit and reevaluate current strategies in addressing the public safety and quality of life issues in the heart of our City. We need to identify ways to improve the City’s response to the opioid crisis, drug dealing activities, violence and homelessness; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss public safety and quality of life concerns in Downtown Boston and the Boston Common. Representatives from the Mayor’s Office, Police Department, the Coordinated Response Team, elected officials, community leaders, and any other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

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