

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

**ORDER OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT RUTHZEE
LOUIJEUNE**

WHEREAS, On Monday, November 10, 2025, the City Council received a complaint alleging a violation of the Open Meeting Law; *and*

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law and the Attorney General's regulations the City Council is required to review the Open Meeting Law complaint and respond to the complainant within 14 business days (see G.L. c. 30A, §23 (b) and 940 CMR 29.05 (5)); *and*

WHEREAS, To comply with the Open Meeting Law and the Attorney General's regulations, attached to this order is the complaint referenced herein; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the Law Department for the City of Boston address the Open Meeting Law complaint and respond accordingly on behalf of the Boston City Council.

Filed on: November 17, 2025



OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT FORM

Office of the Attorney General
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Please note that all fields are required unless otherwise noted.

Your Contact Information:

First Name: **Dawn** Last Name: **Oates**
Address: **1295 Beacon St. #89**
City: **Brookline** State: **MA** Zip Code: **02446**
Phone Number: **781-763-7529** Ext.
Email: **dawn@playbrigade.com**
Organization or Media Affiliation (if any): **The Play Brigade**

Are you filing the complaint in your capacity as an individual, representative of an organization, or media?

(For statistical purposes only)

☒ Individual ☐ Organization ☐ Media

Public Body that is the subject of this complaint:

☒ City/Town ☐ County ☐ Regional/District ☐ State

Name of Public Body (including city/town, county or region, if applicable): **Boston City Council, Boston, MA**

Specific person(s), if any, you allege committed the violation: **Councilor Liz Braedon**

Date of alleged violation: **10/16/25**

Description of alleged violation:

Describe the alleged violation that this complaint is about. If you believe the alleged violation was intentional, please say so and include the reasons supporting your belief.

Note: This text field has a maximum of 3000 characters.

The Chair's management of the hearing reflected unequal treatment and viewpoint discrimination, violating Boston City Council Rule 34, the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law (G.L. c.30A §20(e)-(f)), and Article 16 of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights as interpreted in *Barron v. Kolenda*, 491 Mass. 408 (2023). Oversight speakers were interrupted, limited, or cut off while the agency under scrutiny was granted extended, uninterrupted time. The Chair altered the announced order of testimony, effectively demoting me from co-panelist to general speaker, and exercised selective control over recognition and questioning that amplified one viewpoint and suppressed others, including councilors charged with oversight. Similarly situated participants, Councilors Flynn and Murphy, myself, and residents, were treated unequally compared with Administrator Bok, chilling speech and distorting the public record. Councilor Flynn, the lead sponsor, was cut to two minutes ("two minutes, sorry, yeah," 10:19:54 to 10:20:01) while Administrator Bok spoke from 10:22:26 to 10:50:45, over twenty-eight minutes, without interruption. Chair Breadon interjected six times with affirming prompts ("That's great to hear," "Can you elaborate?"), expanding Bok's remarks to roughly thirty minutes. When Flynn later questioned me, only one two-minute exchange was permitted before discussion was ended. Although Flynn announced on record that Bok would present first and I would follow as the second panel, the Chair then called residents instead, despite having stated that residents would speak at the end. The failure to transition to a second panel caused visible confusion among attendees and councilors and reclassified me from co-panelist to public commenter. When I finally spoke at 11:34:36, I requested equal time ("I'd just like to ask for equal time as Administrator Bok") but was confined to five minutes, then "another five," with interruptions at 11:41:38 to 11:42:17 and 11:48:12 to 11:49:08 consuming more than ninety seconds. I was cut off at 12:04:54 while defending my right to continue. These shifting limits, combined with repeated interruptions, undermined clarity, forced procedural self-advocacy, and constrained the substance of my remarks. Residents were inconsistently recognized, some called before my testimony, others nearly skipped, all limited to two minutes, in contrast with Bok's half hour of uninterrupted time. The Chair's questions to Bok were supportive ("That's great to hear"), designed to highlight progress rather than probe deficiencies, while oversight questions from councilors were curtailed or diverted "off record." When Councilor Murphy asked why BHA's Architectural Access Board filings remained unmade, the Chair responded, "We'll ask that question in writing." When Murphy referred to "bad actors," the Chair interjected, "I don't think we should insinuate that there are bad actors." Murphy replied, "I've asked you not to give me more time, just to give respect...I'm at a loss...I'm sorry to the residents...I'm just gonna let my colleague on." This exchange mirrored my own experience and demonstrates content-based restriction prohibited under *Barron*. The Chair's actions violated Rule 34's requirement of fair and nondiscriminatory hearings, G.L. c.30A §20(e)-(f)'s mandate for consistent adherence to agenda and evenhanded procedure, and Article 16's prohibition on favoritism toward particular viewpoints. The arbitrary interference further contravenes G.L. c.30A §14(7)'s due-process standards against capricious decision-making. The result is a hearing record showing approximately thirty minutes of uninterrupted agency defense contrasted with fragmented, time-limited, and interrupted oversight and resident testimony, depriving participants of equal opportunity to be heard, chilling future speech, and weakening public accountability on matters of urgent concern to Boston's housing residents.

What action do you want the public body to take in response to your complaint?

Note: This text field has a maximum of 500 characters.

A formal finding that the Chair violated Rule 34, the Open Meeting Law, and constitutional free-speech protections; correction of the official record and attachment of my full, uninterrupted written testimony and this complaint to the hearing file; adoption of a standard time and order policy; chair training on neutrality; a follow-up hearing chaired by a neutral presiding officer; and referral to the Council's Committee on Government Accountability or the State Ethics Commission for review.

Review, sign, and submit your complaint

I. Disclosure of Your Complaint.

Public Record. Under most circumstances, your complaint, and any documents submitted with your complaint, is considered a public record and will be available to any member of the public upon request.

Publication to Website. As part of the Open Data Initiative, the AGO will publish to its website certain information regarding your complaint, including your name and the name of the public body. The AGO will not publish your contact information.

II. Consulting With a Private Attorney.

The AGO cannot give you legal advice and is not able to be your private attorney, but represents the public interest. If you have any questions concerning your individual legal rights or responsibilities you should contact a private attorney.

III. Submit Your Complaint to the Public Body.

The complaint must be filed first with the public body. If you have any questions, please contact the Division of Open Government by calling (617) 963-2540 or by email to openmeeting@state.ma.us.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the provisions above and certify that the information I have provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: _____

Dawn A. Gato

Date: 11/10/25

For Use By Public Body

Date Received by Public Body:

For Use By AGO

Date Received by AGO: