

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ERIN MURPHY



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXAMINE THE DENIAL OF A LONGSTANDING NONPROFIT EVENT PERMIT AND THE CITY'S POLICIES GOVERNING USE OF PUBLIC PARKLAND

WHEREAS, Franklin Park and the Emerald Necklace are critical public open spaces serving residents across Boston; and

WHEREAS, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy is a longstanding nonprofit partner that supports the maintenance, stewardship, and programming of these parks; and

WHEREAS, for more than 21 years, the Conservancy has held its annual "Party in the Park" fundraiser within the park system with permits issued by the City of Boston; and

WHEREAS, this annual event has raised over \$11 million since 2003 to support improvements and programming across the Emerald Necklace; and

WHEREAS, in 2026, the City of Boston denied the Conservancy's permit request, citing policy restrictions on private, ticketed events in public parks, representing a significant departure from past practice; and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy is currently engaged in litigation with the City of Boston regarding the redevelopment of White Stadium in Franklin Park, raising public concerns about whether the permit denial may reflect a broader breakdown in the City's relationship with nonprofit partners; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that permitting decisions for public spaces be transparent, consistent, and applied equitably to all organizations;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED, that the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a public hearing to examine the denial of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy's permit and the City's policies governing private and nonprofit events in public parks, and that representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department, the Mayor's Office, and any relevant permitting authorities appear to provide testimony.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the hearing shall include an examination of the history of permits issued for the Emerald Necklace Conservancy's "Party in the Park" and similar events; the specific rationale for denying the 2026 permit; any recent changes in policy or enforcement practices governing private or nonprofit use of public parks; the role of mayoral or central office review in permitting decisions; and the measures the City takes to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency across all applicants.

Filed on: March 26, 2026