



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO REVIEW AFFIRMATIVE MARKETING PRACTICES FOR RE-LEASING EXISTING AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS GENERATED BY THE INCLUSIONARY DEVELOPMENT POLICY

- WHEREAS,** The City of Boston Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) was first established by mayoral executive order in February 2000 and subsequently updated in various forms (IDP Orders) in February 2005, May 2006, September 2007; *and,*
- WHEREAS,** Various policies (IDP Policies) have been adopted internally by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, now the Boston Planning and Development Agency, to interpret or clarify IDP Orders in October 2003, December 2004, July 2009, June 2010, and January 2015; *and,*
- WHEREAS,** The IDP Policies were effected by a Memorandum of Agreement enacted between the City's then-Department of Neighborhood Development and the then-BRA in July 2014, transferring all funds generated by the BRA through the IDP program into a special revenue account; *and,*
- WHEREAS,** Upon completed construction of a development participating in the IDP program, new rental units are advertised according to an approved marketing plan, typically including a lottery overseen by the City of Boston's Office of Fair Housing and Equity, with results sorted according to applicable preferences; *and,*
- WHEREAS,** The 2020 IDP Annual Report, "Bridging the Gap," indicates at the time of publication that the IDP program has created 5,464 income-restricted units since 2000, of which developers created 3,238 on-site and off-site units, and 78 percent (2,525) of on-site and off-site units created by developers are rental units; *and,*
- WHEREAS,** The BPDA maintains a spreadsheet posted on its website listing over 135 existing developments with income-restricted affordable rental units created through the IDP program, with lotteries previously conducted for initial tenants; *and,*
- WHEREAS,** Income-restricted rental units generated by the IDP program contribute toward addressing the needs of moderate- and middle-income households being priced out of the Boston real estate market; *and,*
- WHEREAS,** Some constituents living in IDP units who have started at very low incomes have found themselves facing cliff effects as their incomes have grown, with loss of IDP eligibility, meaning that their rents could suddenly increase to extremely high levels in certain market-rate buildings, raising the question of how program guidelines might be adjusted to better smooth such effects; *and,*

WHEREAS, At present, residents seeking existing income-restricted IDP rental units must contact each individual residential development owner or their designated leasing agent to inquire about current vacancies, upcoming availability, or waitlist procedures, prior to initiating the income certification process; *and,*

WHEREAS, Current practices for re-leasing existing income-restricted rental units place burdens on prospective tenants to contact each development owner or leasing agent, many of whom may have differing practices for maintaining waitlists; *and,*

WHEREAS, In some cases, applicants on waitlists for income-restricted rental units have been given 24 hours from notification of an available unit to submit a rental application before losing their place on the waitlist; *and,*

WHEREAS, Additional data than those generally included in IDP Annual Reports would be beneficial toward assessing the suitability of Affirmative Marketing practices for re-leasing existing income-restricted IDP rental units; *and,*

WHEREAS, Disaggregated data on citywide income-restricted units created by the IDP program would be greatly beneficial, including a schedule of units by AMI affordability level, as well as turnover and vacancy rates since the initial lottery and leasing process per AMI level; *and,*

WHEREAS, There is no centralized mechanism to assess how many prospective tenants are currently on waitlists for individual affordable rental developments generated by the IDP program across the City, or how long the average wait is by each Area Median Income (AMI) affordability level or unit size; *and,*

WHEREAS, The Office of Housing's Neighborhood Homes Initiative creates affordable homeownership opportunities on City-owned land, and allows prospective first-time homebuyers to submit a single application, automatically entering applicants into every lottery for which they qualify and meet income limits; *and,*

WHEREAS, While income-restricted affordable rental developments resulting from the IDP Orders are subject to the City's Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Program, it would be beneficial to review current practices and the need for standardization regarding re-leasing and marketing of existing rental units toward increased accessibility and awareness for prospective tenants; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss Affirmative Marketing practices for re-leasing existing affordable rental units generated by the Inclusionary Development Policy, and that housing compliance and policy representatives of the Mayor's Office of Housing and the Boston Planning and Development Agency, owners and leasing agents of developments participating in the BPDA Affordable Housing Program, neighborhood organizations, residents, and members of the public be invited to attend.