

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS LIZ BREADON, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, JULIA MEJIA,
COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MURPHY,
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CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MARCH 16–22, 2025, AS “SUNSHINE WEEK” IN THE CITY OF BOSTON AND SUPPORTING HYBRID MEETING ACCESS UNDER THE OPEN MEETING LAW

- WHEREAS*, Sunshine Week is a nonpartisan collaboration among groups in the journalism, civic, education, government and private sectors that shines a light on the importance of accessible and open government; *and*
- WHEREAS*, This year marks the 20th anniversary of the first nationwide Sunshine Week, established in March 2005 to coincide with the birthdate of James Madison, a key architect of the Bill of Rights and a champion of government transparency; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Public access to meetings and records is essential for residents to stay informed of government actions and hold officials accountable; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Remote and hybrid meeting access has demonstrably increased public participation, ensuring that all residents—regardless of ability, location, work schedules, childcare responsibilities, transportation barriers, or health concerns—can engage in local government; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Under current temporary provisions set to expire on March 31, 2025, the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law permits remote and hybrid participation in meetings of public bodies, but no permanent requirement exists to ensure continued hybrid access for public participation, leaving future accessibility to the discretion of local government bodies; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The City Council recognizes that hybrid meeting options enhance accessibility, transparency, and community involvement in local governance; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Ensuring remote participation in government meetings fosters inclusivity and strengthens public trust in decision-making processes; *NOW, THEREFORE BE IT*
- RESOLVED*: That the Boston City Council designates March 16–22, 2025, as “Sunshine Week” in the City of Boston and affirms its support for requiring hybrid meeting access under the state Open Meeting Law to ensure transparency, participation, and accessibility in local government; *AND, BE IT FURTHER*
- RESOLVED*: That the Boston City Council urges the Legislature to amend the Open Meeting Law to require hybrid meeting access for all public bodies across the state, promoting greater inclusivity and civic engagement; *AND, BE IT FURTHER*
- RESOLVED*: That the Clerk of the City of Boston be, and hereby is, requested to transmit a suitably attested copy of this Resolution to the Legislature for consideration.

Filed on: March 19, 2025