

**OFFERED BY COUNCILORS TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON, BREADON, DURKAN, COLETTA ZAPATA, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE**



## **CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL**

### **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW MADINAH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

- WHEREAS,** Boston’s housing crisis demands immediate and urgent attention, with at least 200,000 homes needing to be built across Massachusetts by 2030 to “accommodate growth and achieve a healthy vacancy rate,” according to state housing officials, with the City of Boston establishing a 53,000-unit target itself; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In light of the City’s efforts to create more accessible, affordable, and climate-friendly housing, including the new Healthy and Green Retrofit Pilot Program, the City of Boston has an obligation to support projects which approach building emissions and climate with determination and precision; *and*
- WHEREAS,** At the same time, there is a substantial demand for new community spaces where residents of all backgrounds may gather, take part in community events, take advantage of mutual aid opportunities, and celebrate the rich cultural history of our community; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The Society for Islamic Brotherhood, which currently occupies an undersized facility at 726 Shawmut Avenue in Roxbury, submitted plans to the BPDA to redevelop their site through the Article 80 process; *and*
- WHEREAS,** This proposal creates 38 units of new affordable housing, a new worship space for the over-300 members who have expressed interest in worshipping at the Mosque for Praising Allah, a new food pantry to support the organization’s food assistance efforts, dedicated education spaces, and a “public bazaar”; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In addition, the project proposes adding a dozen new street trees, widening the sidewalk to make it more physically accessible, and implementing sustainability measures such as a heat-island reducing green roof, high-performance windows and doors, continuous thermal and air envelope, groundwater recharge, and efficient lighting and appliances; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Despite positive feedback from the community, the Planning Department elected to not allow the project application to proceed to a board vote, stating the the development’s need to remove two street trees in order to accommodate the massing prevents the project from moving forward, with the Department proposing changes to the massing to accommodate these existing trees; *and*

**WHEREAS,** At the request of the Planning Department, the project team hired an arborist with which the city had a working relationship to assess the tree's species, caliper, health, and impact, finding that required pruning and construction around the trees, even with the BPDA's proposed alternative, there would likely be severe health and longevity impacts to both trees, and it is recommended that the trees be removed prior to construction; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Furthermore, keeping the existing street trees would not ameliorate the existing sidewalk width condition, which is currently below the City of Boston's preferred 5 foot width; *and*

**WHEREAS,** As the City of Boston continues to advocate for more affordable housing, job creation, expanding mutual aid opportunities, and substantively addressing climate change, it is imperative that the city not miss the forest for the trees and move forward with the development process at 726 Shawmut Ave; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

**RESOLVED:** That the Boston City Council offers its support to The Society for Islamic Brotherhood and the Mosque for Praising Allah in their effort to redevelop 726 Shawmut Avenue.

Filed in Council: 8/26/24