

Offered by City Councilor Lydia Edwards



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE BPDA'S PLAN: EAST BOSTON INITIATIVE

WHEREAS: The neighborhood of East Boston has long served as a beacon for immigrants, a cornerstone of the marine economy and a portal to the world; and

WHEREAS: East Boston is currently experiencing rapid unplanned growth, intense development pressures, traffic congestion, and sea-level rise and flooding; and

WHEREAS: The City of Boston has set a goal of 69,000 new units of housing by 2030; and

WHEREAS: Rents are rising to a degree that threatens the permanent displacement of neighborhood residents while homeownership opportunities are decreasing; and

WHEREAS: Traffic congestion, exacerbated further by new development and an underfunded public transportation system, is negatively impacting neighborhood quality of life; and

WHEREAS: The Climate Ready Boston initiative has identified East Boston as a neighborhood extraordinarily vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS: Resilience may require changes to zoning, new investment, cooperation across private property lines and publicly-owned land; and

WHEREAS: Preserving Boston's history and promoting stable, affordable and resilient housing for Boston's residents requires purposive and coordinated action by city government that is led by the residents of the impacted neighborhood; and

WHEREAS: City Councilor Lydia Edwards called for the launch of a new planning process in 2018 and the Plan: East Boston process started shortly afterward; and

WHEREAS: The current master plan is eighteen years old and for many does not reflect the actual modern needs of the community and many "Eastie" residents feel that development is happening *to* them, not *for* them or their children; and

WHEREAS: The Zoning Board of Appeals and developers are essentially engaging in spot zoning and planning that is variance driven and utterly ignores East Boston's zoning, character of the neighborhood and master plan;

WHEREAS: The intent of Plan: East Boston and the interim planning overlay district (IPOD) was to slow the rate of development until a plan for the neighborhood was in place; and

WHEREAS: The planning process was slowed during the pandemic due to requests from East Boston residents; and

WHEREAS: There are several large development projects being proposed for the neighborhood with over 1,000 residential units proposed between three projects; and

WHEREAS: East Boston, with opportunities from Suffolk Downs to its waterfront, can be a model for community-led master planning and visioning; and

WHEREAS: East Boston residents are entitled to an update regarding the status of the Plan: East Boston initiative while unplanned development continues at a high rate

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the status of the Plan: East Boston planning initiative and that neighborhood and civic groups, the Boston Planning and Development Agency, and any other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed in City Council: September 15, 2021