

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON, KENDRA LARA, BAKER, BREADON, COLETTA, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, MURPHY, WORELL AND FLYNN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING CALLING FOR A MORATORIUM ON ALL DEVELOPMENT ON ALL CITY OWNED LAND IN DISTRICT SEVEN PRIOR TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS

WHEREAS, District Seven is home to densely populated, predominantly Black, brown and working class communities; *and*

WHEREAS, Years of unsatisfying development policies have essentially sidelined and marginalized the masses of people in the district in regards to development; *and*

WHEREAS, The current process functions in the manner of a *fait accompli*, where a development project is presented to community members after the initial decision has already been made as what the nature of said project will be; *and*

WHEREAS, This status quo is unacceptable, as it severely limits the ability of community members and concerned stakeholders to determine the nature of development and merely enables the BPDA and the ZBA to rubber stamp projects that are already in the works by developers; *and*

WHEREAS, For too long, the people of District Seven have had to accept such an arrangement with the economic and political power elites of our City, and we are calling for said arrangement to be terminated and replaced by one that integrally incorporates our perspective and involvement in every step of the development process; *and*

WHEREAS, District Seven is a particularly dense district with a high number of apartment buildings; *and*

WHEREAS, Around 75% of residents of Roxbury are already renters and 48% of all rental apartments in Roxbury are low income rentals, meaning that nearly 1 out of every 2 rentals in Roxbury are affordable rentals; *and*

WHEREAS, The average median household income for an individual in Roxbury is \$34,000 a year, which is 53% less than the average median income of a Boston resident, which is \$71,000; *and*

WHEREAS, Hence, the average person in Roxbury makes less than ½ the money of the average person in Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, Only 26% of Roxbury residents own their own homes, which is one of the lowest rates of homeownership in the City; *and*

WHEREAS, The real poverty rate in Roxbury is 33%, which is the second highest official poverty rate in the City; *and*

WHEREAS, Roxbury has the highest percentage of income restricted units in the City of Boston, with 54% of all of its housing stock being income restricted, which is twice the total of income restricted units in the City, which stands at 27%; *and*

WHEREAS, Of the 20,073 total housing units in Roxbury, 10,850 of said housing units are income restricted; *and*

WHEREAS, These high rental rates and poverty rates are consistent with the statistic that the average white family in Boston possesses \$247,000 while the average Black family has eight dollars of wealth; *and*

WHEREAS Various community leaders, civic associations, and concerned constituents do not wish to see the plethora of parcels in their community used primarily for the purpose of building housing, particularly low income rentals, which Roxbury, for example, already has in disproportion to most sections of the city; *and*

WHEREAS, Rather, vast sectors of the community speak to the need for the parcels to be activated in a variety of manners, including for arts & culture, purposes of beautification, urban gardens, places of recreation, playgrounds and more; *and*

WHEREAS, There are other communities in Boston, those that are wealthier and less dense, that can better accommodate and support the building of additional low income rental housing; *and*

WHEREAS, A great number of community leaders as well as civic and neighborhood

associations have held meetings with various developers and heads of departments and have expressed their views clearly; *and*

WHEREAS, While some minimal efforts in regards to inclusion have recently been engaged in within the existing development processes, none of that has fundamentally altered the status quo that continues to favor those already in positions of economic and political power; *and*

WHEREAS, Due to this, D7 leaders, activists, advocates and engaged community members are stating as a collective entity that they will no longer take part in any meetings, hearings, or conversations pertaining to development on city owned land with developers and the city departments collaborating with them until this moratorium is instituted; *and*

WHEREAS, Said D7 leaders, consisting of, but not limited to, civic and neighborhood associations, groups and other concerned parties, reserve the right to engage in meetings and conversations with developers and city department officials regarding work occurring and/or being proposed on private owned land; *and*

WHEREAS, Therefore, we reiterate our call and demand for a moratorium, which can and will allow time for the revision of the article 80 process and for a community lead master plan, on the development of all city owned land throughout District Seven until a truly equitable community planning process is instituted that centers the community's desires and wishes for how the land will be utilized and developed moving forward; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council record a hearing that will give voice to the residents of District Seven calling for a moratorium on all development on city owned land in the district, and that relevant entities, such as community leaders, presidents of civic and neighborhood organizations as well those in positions of leadership in Boston Redevelopment Authority or BPDA, the Boston Housing Agency, and the Mayor's Office of Housing and other interested and engaged parties be invited.

Filed: January 30th, 2023