

Offered by City Councilors Julia Mejia and Ricardo Arroyo, Coletta, Fernandes Anderson, Breadon, Flaherty, Lara, Louijeune, Murphy and Flynn



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING ON EXPANDING ACCESS FOR MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES INTO HIGH-VOLUME COMMERCIAL CENTERS

- WHEREAS,** While the bulk of Black and brown businesses have traditionally been centered in neighborhoods like Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and East Boston, every neighborhood benefits from a diverse pool of diverse business enterprises; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The history of residential segregation in Boston has played a major role in the location and success of many Black and brown-owned businesses in the city today; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In some of Boston's most famous and storied commercial centers, like the Seaport, Newbury Street, and Faneuil Hall Marketplace, there is an opportunity to look into ways to make those high-volume commercial centers more accessible to entrepreneurs of color; *and*
- WHEREAS,** By means of example, Faneuil Hall has suffered as a result of the pandemic, and the much-appreciated businesses need support through this time. There is an opportunity to revive that business community through investing in Black and brown businesses; however, in order to do so, historic emotional barriers such as the idea of setting up shop in an area named after a slave-holder need to be addressed; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Creating environments that are supportive to minority business enterprises involves not just changes in policy in the city, but also changes in culture amongst Boston's small businesses; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Venues in Boston, such as Society on High in the Financial District, were recently issued a cease and desist letter, on the grounds of "optics," negatively impacting clientele of color, service providers of color, and its employees drastically; *and*

WHEREAS, Reckoning with Boston’s economic barriers for entrepreneurs of color means reckoning with the symbolism of the institutions they are trying to emerge into;
and

WHEREAS, We have a responsibility as a city to end the us vs. them mentality and build relationships and communities that value and validate the experiences of entrepreneurs of color; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss expanding access for Minority Business Enterprises in high-volume commercial centers. Representatives from the administration, including the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, as well as advocates from BECMA, and others are invited to take part. Community activists and members of the public are also encouraged to attend virtually.

Filed in Council: January 25, 2023