

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BENJAMIN J. WEBER, ENRIQUE PEPÉN, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, BREADON, COLETTA, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, SANTANA, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO REVIEW PROGRAMMING AVAILABLE FOR SENIORS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS, According to Census Data, persons 65 years and older make up approximately 12.3% of Boston's population; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston's Age Strong Commission, formerly known as the Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, works with Bostonians who are 55 and older to enhance their quality of life through planning, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of services to this population in an efficient and effective manner; *and*

WHEREAS, The Age Strong Commission operates two senior centers for the entire City, one in Brighton and the other in East Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2023, the Committee on Strong Women, Families, and Communities held a hearing at the Elks Lodge in West Roxbury to assess the need for a senior center in the neighborhood. Approximately 400 people attended the hearing which lasted for about 2.5 hours to express their desire for a facility for senior programming in the neighborhood of West Roxbury; *and*

WHEREAS, Southwest Boston neighborhoods have some of the City's highest populations of seniors. West Roxbury is home to over 8,500 residents aged 60 or older, having the highest percentage of people 60 or older when compared to other Boston neighborhoods at 26.5%; *and*

WHEREAS, A pop-up senior center in West Roxbury operated by Ethos, which serves 75 residents from all across Boston every Tuesday and Thursday, is facing potential cuts to their available days due to a decrease in state funding; *and*

WHEREAS, Senior centers and day programming promotes the physical and mental health of seniors and helps seniors to stay in Boston and stay connected to their families and the community they helped build; *and*

WHEREAS, A 2019 study published in the *The Journals of Gerontology* found that older adults who interacted with people beyond their usual social circle of family and close friends were more likely to have higher levels of physical activity, greater positive moods, and fewer negative feelings; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston should be providing more day services to seniors to connect them with other seniors from around the city, not less; *and*

WHEREAS, The Expanding Engagement Grant Opportunity RFP was released by the City to provide up to \$500,000 in grants to expand senior programming citywide. The deadline for applications passed and closed on February 29th. The Council should work to ensure these funds are used equitably and to factor in recent state funding changes in its decisions around which communities are in need; *and*

WHEREAS, Seniors in West Roxbury, and elsewhere in the City would benefit greatly from more City-sponsored programming that is free, accessible, and in close proximity to their homes and their neighborhoods; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to review City programming available to residents 55 or older to ensure there is equitable distribution of City-sponsored activities for seniors in all neighborhoods across the City.

Filed on: March 13, 2024