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

CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT AND ENSURE THE NUBIAN SQUARE TASK FORCE, ITS GOALS, VISION, PLAN, AND COMPOSITION IS IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY AND RECOVERY

WHEREAS, Substance use disorder is on the rise in Massachusetts leading to an increase in opioid-related overdoses, as the Boston Public Health Commission found that the opioid-related overdose death rate was 33.5 per 100,000 people in 2022 and that there were 2,357 confirmed and estimated deaths, representing a 9.1% increase from the pre-pandemic peak in 2016, with neighborhoods like Roxbury, the South End and Dorchester experiencing disproportionately higher rates than other neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS, At the same time, Boston also saw an increase in the number of unhoused people sleeping out on the streets, with a roughly 25% increase from January 2020 to January 2021, and while no one night paints the full scope of the problem, The City's Engagement Center, which focuses on serving individuals experiencing homelessness and people who use drugs, served 14,368 unique individuals from May 2021 through March 2022; *and*

WHEREAS, While substance use disorder and homelessness exist in all corners of the City of Boston, neighborhoods like Nubian Square experience disproportionate rates of both, a problem which not only demands urgency in the provision of services for unhoused individuals experiencing substance use disorder, but also demands the creation of a holistic plan for the community which takes into consideration the needs of both long-term residents and those living without shelter experiencing substance use disorder; *and*

WHEREAS, In order to mitigate the harmful impacts to both unsheltered individuals and long-term residents, and to address the root causes of substance use disorder and homelessness, holistic plans for Nubian Square must be made in collaboration with community stakeholders, the District 7 office, and public health and safety officials in order to ensure that people have access to the services they need; *and*

WHEREAS, Any future plans for recovery services in Nubian Square must involve the full continuum of care, including implementing harm reduction models, holistic

wraparound referrals, follow up services, and intensive care coordination, which itself can include case management, peer advocacy, and access to therapeutic practitioners, street workers, life coaches, and more; *and*

WHEREAS, Plans should also keep in mind both operational and capital-based collaterals such as safe consumption sites, needle-exchange programs, health vans, work programs, and deeper, more meaningful public safety collaboration; *and*

WHEREAS, Furthermore, it is imperative that plans are properly administered and managed, establishing metrics and guidelines through which we can measure the mitigation of both homelessness and substance use disorder, in addition to guaranteeing adequate facilities, administrative support, and management; *and*

WHEREAS, Plans for Nubian Square should take lessons from other neighborhoods and cities, including the Newmarket Business Improvement District's plan titled "Recover Boston," which would build a temporary recovery campus with a pathway towards permanent housing and long-term sobriety for participants; *and*

WHEREAS, Similarly, the City of Boston can look abroad to find successful models of substance abuse and homelessness recovery services, including in Lisbon, Portugal where lawmakers successfully addressed the opioid crisis by decriminalizing drugs, increasing access to harm reduction services, and provides legal, psychiatric, and medical services to those who need it; *and*

WHEREAS, To help address the concurring issues of substance use disorder and homelessness in neighborhoods like Nubian Square, the City of Boston assembled the Nubian Square Task Force, described as a coalition of community, public health organizations, and businesses that share and coordinate resources in the Nubian Square area, supporting people who use drugs and experience homelessness; *and*

WHEREAS, The District 7 office has partnered with residents, community advocates, the Nubian Square Task Force members, academic partners, and nonprofits to advocate for increased services and accountability in Nubian Square, including advocating for the establishment of a health clinic in Nubian Square offering holistic and culturally competent care, in addition to partnering with the Nubian Square Task Force to structure metrics, organize collateral, restructure check-ins, recruit interns, and create a dashboard for new hires; *and*

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the Boston City Council, the administration, representatives of the Boston Public Health Commission, representatives for the B2 Police district, representatives for the Streets cabinet responsible for the cleaning of said areas, members of the Nubian Square Task Force, community public health officials, members of the wraparound collateral services, and community

stakeholders collaborate on developing recovery plans for Nubian Square rooted in equity, science, compassion, and accountability; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

RESOLVED*:* That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the Nubian Square Task Force, its goals, plan, and composition. Representatives from the City of Boston, including but not limited to the Boston Public Health Commission, the Office of Recovery Services, and representatives from the Nubian Square Task Force, in addition to community advocates and members of the public are encouraged to testify.

Filed: January 29, 2025