



OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN, Wu, Edwards, Janey
Essaibi-George, Flaherty, Campbell, Mejia, O'Malley, Bok, Edwards, Bredon
CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

**ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO
WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CITY OF BOSTON**

- WHEREAS:** Water and sewer pipes are critical infrastructure in maintaining the sanitation, public safety, and quality of life for our residents in Boston; *and,*
- WHEREAS:** Our city is one of the oldest cities in the country, and its water distribution system began construction in the mid-1800s. By the 1970s, the conditions of our water system began to deteriorate, and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission was created in 1977 to oversee Boston's water system; *and,*
- WHEREAS:** The recent building boom in Boston has seen many new developments added to the city's water and sewer system, and we need to think about how the added usage might impact the maintenance and integrity of our water and sewer system; *and,*
- WHEREAS:** Back Bay, South End, Bay Village, Fort Point Channel, Fenway, and other nearby neighborhoods were built on filled land that rely on wood pilings to support buildings, and these wood pilings need to be submerged in groundwater in order to prevent rotting. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established to monitor the groundwater level for these wood pilings; *and,*
- WHEREAS:** Maintenance of water and sewer infrastructure is important for groundwater level also, as any rupture or leakage not only cause flooding, but also decrease the groundwater level that submerge the wood pilings beneath foundation in many parts of the city, and cause these wood pilings to rot and impact the buildings on top; *and,*
- WHEREAS:** There was a water main break in April in the South End, which flooded many businesses and buildings, and caused additional hardship to residents and business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some residents are concerned that this may happen again; *and,*
- WHEREAS:** Moreover, some Boston neighborhoods have private alleys and private sewers that abut commercial and residential properties, where owners of these properties are responsible for the maintenance of these alleys and sewers. Many of the property owners abutting private alleys and sewer lines are often unaware of the ownership status of the alleys, as well as their responsibilities for upkeep; *and,*
- WHEREAS:** The conditions of many private alleys and sewers have deteriorated over the years, and the costs of maintenance and repair for private alleys and sewer lines

can be expensive and unaffordable for property owners, as well as a point of confusion and contention; *and*,

WHEREAS: Ensuring the integrity of water and sewer lines are critical for the wellbeing and safety of residents, and access to infrastructure for clean water and waste management is a fundamental quality of life and public health issue for residents across the city; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss the safety and maintenance of the water and sewer system in the City of Boston. Representatives from the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, Boston Groundwater Trust, as well as other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed in City Council: August 19th, 2020