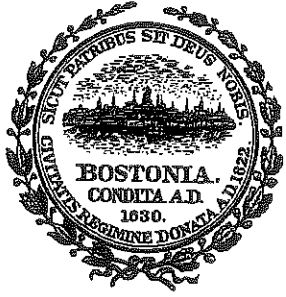


Offered by City Councilor Lydia Edwards



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE CITY OF BOSTON PURCHASING LIQUOR LICENSES

WHEREAS: Governor Baker ordered restaurants and bars in the Commonwealth to cease on-site consumption as of March 17, 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak; and

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Restaurant Association estimates that up to 40% of restaurants may not reopen once the current State of Emergency ends; and

WHEREAS: Up to 90% of restaurant workers in the Commonwealth have been furloughed or laid off as a result of the closures; and

WHEREAS: Bars and restaurants are integral to the fabric of our City's neighborhoods and economy and will be a key component of the economic recovery after Covid-19; and

WHEREAS: Many restaurants are in need of immediate funds that would allow them to reopen when they are able to do so; and

WHEREAS: Some restaurant and bar operators have an asset in the form of a transferable liquor license; and

WHEREAS: The current system of transferring liquor licenses requires a needs-based assessment of a license in a particular location even if an establishment is already operating at that address; and

WHEREAS: The City's current distribution of liquor licenses is inequitable, with neighborhoods in the City that are underserved by bars and restaurants and a geographic concentration of liquor licenses; and

WHEREAS: The existing liquor license distribution exacerbates wealth inequality in the City of Boston, allowing license holders to better overcome financial hardships due to the Covid-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS: The Covid-19 pandemic provides a unique opportunity for the City of Boston to invest in our local economy by owning newly available licenses and redistributing them in a more equitable manner; THEREFORE

BE IT ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss a City buyback of certain liquor licenses, the leasing of these licenses back to the operators, the conversion of these licenses from transferable to non-transferable, the attachment of these non-transferable licenses to the address in which the establishment is currently located, and that members of the City of Boston Licensing Board and other interested parties be invited to testify.

Filed in City Council: Wednesday, April 29, 2020