

Offered by Councilor Kenzie Bok and Michelle Wu, O'Malley, Mejia, Campbell, Breadon, Flaherty, Arroyo, Flynn, Edwards, Essaibi-George and Janey



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING A CITY-LEVEL CONSERVATION CORPS FOR BOSTON

WHEREAS: The Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the most successful programs under President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, created 3 million jobs, planted over 2 billion trees, and completed many other conservation-focused projects; *and*

WHEREAS: In 2019, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey introduced the “Green New Deal” resolution in Congress, including a federal green jobs program, which the Boston City Council supported through a resolution introduced by Councilors Matt O’Malley and Michelle Wu, and which Councilor Wu built upon in her “Order for a Hearing Regarding Implementing a Boston Green New Deal and Just Recovery”; *and*

WHEREAS: The City of Boston has set a number of climate and sustainability goals, and while we have made progress in reducing emissions since 2005, we are not on track to be carbon neutral by 2050; *and*

WHEREAS: On March 22, climate and policy experts published “A Green Stimulus to Rebuild Our Economy” in response to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting a Clean Water Corps and a Civilian Conservation Corps, and while Congress did not act on this opportunity, we can lead at the city-level; *and*

WHEREAS: Other cities including Los Angeles, Seattle, Philadelphia, and Austin have or are implementing city-level Conservation Corps; *and*

WHEREAS: The COVID-19 pandemic has had great economic impacts on the City of Boston, with many residents still out of work or working reduced hours, yet despite this economic downturn the City still has a favorable bond rating, and investing in capital projects is one of the most substantial “countercyclical” things that we can do through the local budgeting process to help counter a recession; *and*

WHEREAS: A Conservation Corps workforce could partner with city workers and trade unions to accelerate progress on the goals set out in the “Climate Action Plan” including improved stormwater management through green infrastructure, retrofitting existing buildings to net zero building standards, increasing solar, maintaining and planting trees, preparing our waterfront communities for storms and sea-level rise, and expanding the curbside composting pilot to a city-wide program; *and*

WHEREAS: In the “2019 Boston Climate Action Plan Update”, the city set a goal to “develop a carbon emissions performance standard to decarbonize existing large buildings”, which would significantly reduce emissions through building retrofits; *and*

WHEREAS: It is estimated that 80% of buildings in Boston will need to undergo deep energy retrofits and be electrified by 2050, and this will require a workforce specialized in retrofits and green building, so a Conservation Corps program that recruits residents and trains them would help to ensure equity in this emerging industry, and could provide pathways to City of Boston and union jobs for a more diverse set of residents, consistent with the goals of the Boston Residents Job Policy and Council President Kim Janey’s “Black and Brown Agenda for Boston”; *and*

WHEREAS: The City of Boston should lead by example, by retrofitting existing municipal building and utilizing a Conservation Corps for these capital projects; *and*

WHEREAS: Other cities, including New York City and Philadelphia have robust plans to establish green stormwater infrastructure systems city-wide, which they expect to save billions of dollars as compared to grey infrastructure stormwater systems; *and*

WHEREAS: Installation of green stormwater infrastructure city-wide would require additional workforce capacity and would be a significant capital investment; *and*

WHEREAS: Boston has committed to creating an Urban Forest Plan to protect and expand Boston’s tree canopy, and a Conservation Corps could expand the city’s capacity to plant and care for our urban forest, rather than relying on contracts; *and*

WHEREAS: Several Boston nonprofits and community development corporations that have successful programs for training youth and adults in urban forestry, urban wilds maintenance, and green stormwater infrastructure presented at a December 2020 Environment Committee hearing focused on a city-level Conservation Corps, along with national organizations focused on career pipelines for green jobs; *and*

WHEREAS: A Conservation Corps could allow Boston to complete more capital projects that are environmentally focused, including retrofits of municipal buildings, expanding and caring for green space and our urban forest, and installation of green stormwater infrastructure, as well as employ and train Boston residents, and allow Boston to meet its sustainability goals; *NOW THEREFORE BE IT*

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss implementing a city-level Conservation Corps program in Boston, and that representatives from the Environment and Public Facilities Departments, the Office of Workforce Development, the Office of Economic Development, the Public Works Department, representatives from relevant unions, the Boston Clean Energy Coalition, and the public be invited to testify.

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