



March 13, 2025

Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning
City of Boston Planning Department (the “BPDA”)
1 City Hall Square
Ninth Floor
Boston, MA 02201

**Re: Homes on Hancock Strongly Supports Fenway CDC and JDMD’s Proposal for the
Redevelopment of 27-29 Hancock Street into 15 Affordable Condo Units**

Dear Mr. Shen,

On behalf of Homes on Hancock, we are writing to you with respect to Fenway CDC and JDMD’s proposal to redevelop 27 and 29 Hancock Street (the “Hancock Properties”) into 15 affordable housing units for first-time homeowners (the “Proposal”).

We understand that the Proposal is intended to fulfill JDMD’s commitments under the city’s Inclusionary Development Policy obligation to provide affordable housing to the Beacon Hill community with respect to the Archer Residences on Temple Street. We also understand that the Proposal would require revisions to the existing deed restrictions on the Hancock Properties, so that the new affordable housing deed restrictions for the Hancock Properties would be for 15 affordable condos for homeownership.

In short, the Proposal has **strong community support** and Homes on Hancock encourages the BPDA to vote in support of it.

In this letter, we will briefly provide background regarding the recent history of the Hancock Properties and the community-led process that led to Fenway CDC and JDMD’s proposal to bring new affordable housing to Beacon Hill as soon as 2027.

Background

The Hancock Properties have sat vacant for decades. Over the past year, Hancock Street residents and neighbors have organized and rallied support from the Beacon Hill community to help find an affordable housing solution for the properties that would enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our neighborhood.

Homes on Hancock was formed as a new 501(c)3 organization on June 3, 2024, and launched a website that describes our mission and Beacon Hill’s long and proud history of close community involvement in promoting affordable housing.¹ Homes on Hancock also organized a

¹ Homes on Hancock, *Concerned Residents Launch “Homes on Hancock” To Promote Safe, Dignified Affordable Housing On Beacon Hill*, PR NEWSWIRE, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/concerned-residents-launch->



petition with over 370 signers that supports the development of affordable apartments at the Hancock Properties.² On June 20th, the Beacon Hill Civic Association (the “BHCA”) reiterated its longstanding support for redeveloping the Hancock Properties into apartments that would provide affordable housing for families at the Hancock Properties.³

On June 27th, the city held a community meeting at the African Meeting House to discuss the future of the Hancock Properties. At that meeting, the community expressed uniform opposition to a proposal that would have involved the Women’s Lunch Place (“WLP”) housing thirty-six chronically homeless residents at the Hancock Properties in single room occupancy (“SRO”) units of 125 to 150 square feet that lacks private bathrooms, kitchens or adequate common space for supportive services. Homes on Hancock and the community oppose SRO housing at the Hancock Properties as SRO housing would introduce safety risks for residents and neighbors and lack necessary zoning approval. In response to strong opposition from the community, city officials made clear at the June meeting that community support is a necessary precondition to finding a solution for the future of the Hancock Properties.

On August 5th, Homes on Hancock released a proposal recommending the formation of a new advisory group with city, state and community representation to identify a solution for redeveloping the Hancock Properties into affordable apartments or condos and thereby receive community support.⁴

Advisory Group & Fenway CDC Proposal

In September, an advisory group was formed with representatives from JDMD, the BHCA, the Mayor’s Office of Housing, State Representative Jay Livingstone, City Councilor Sharon Durkan and Homes on Hancock. The advisory group solicited a request for proposals from affordable housing developers to redevelop the Hancock Properties into affordable apartments that comply with all modern code requirements.

The request for proposal process was a success. It clearly demonstrated that the available public and private funding sources were sufficient to redevelop the Hancock Properties into affordable apartments at 80% and 100% area-median-income. Indeed, the advisory group received multiple proposals that could have achieved community support.

Ultimately, the advisory group selected Fenway CDC’s proposal for 15 new condos for first-time homeowners. Fenway CDC was selected because of their history of successfully

[homes-on-hancock-to-promote-safe-dignified-affordable-housing-on-beacon-hill-302172343.html](https://www.homesonhancock.org/2729/f/L_2024-06-14-19-ET.html) (June 13, 2024, 14:19 ET). Also see www.homesonhancock.org.

² Hancock St. Affordable Housing, *Support Modern Affordable Housing on Hancock St.*, IPETITIONS, <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/support-modern-affordable-housing-on-hancock-st> (last visited March 13, 2025).

³ Letter from Joshua Leffler, Chair, & Colin Zick, President, Beacon Hill Civic Association, to Michelle Wu, Mayor, City of Bos. (June 20, 2024). Available at: https://homesonhancock.org/2729/f/L_2024-06-20_BHCA_Letter_to_Mayor_Wu.pdf

⁴ Available at: https://homesonhancock.org/2729/f/L_2024-08-05_Homes_on_Hancock_Letter.pdf



developing and managing affordable housing in Boston and dedication to working closely with neighbors and the surrounding community to ensure a smooth redevelopment process for the Hancock Properties. Beacon Hill needs new affordable homeownership units, as there is only one affordable homeownership unit in Beacon Hill.⁵

The selection of Fenway CDC's proposal was announced on December 24th by City Councilor Sharon Durkan⁶ and press coverage followed shortly thereafter in the Boston Guardian and Beacon Hill Times with supportive statements from State Representative Jay Livingstone, other advisory group members and the Fenway CDC.⁷ On December 25th, Homes on Hancock shared the news of the advisory group's selection of Fenway CDC's proposal with our mailing list of over 300 neighbors and received unanimous and emphatic support.

Recommendation

We recommend that the BPDA approve the Proposal, which requires: (1) the donation of the Hancock Properties from JDMD to Fenway CDC to satisfy JDMD's Inclusionary Development Policy obligation; and (2) revisions to the existing deed restrictions on the Hancock Properties, so the new deed restrictions on the Hancock Properties would be for 15 affordable condos for home ownership. Without the BPDA's approval of the Proposal, the Hancock Properties are likely to remain vacant and in a state of disrepair.

In conclusion, our view is that Fenway CDC and JDMD's proposal for the Hancock Properties demonstrates public policy at its best—community representatives, city and state government officials working together to provide Bostonians with new affordable housing that we can all be proud of.

(Signatures on next page)

⁵ Mayor's Office of Housing Income-Restricted Housing Inventory; 2010 Decennial Census; Permitting Data through 2022.

⁶ Available at: https://homesonhancock.org/2729/f/L_2024-12-24_Merry_Merry_Progress_on_27-29_Hancock_Street.pdf,

⁷ Available at: <https://beaconhilltimes.com/2025/01/02/fenway-cdc-named-developers-of-27-29-hancock-street-housing/>. Available at: <https://read.thebostonguardian.com/the-boston-guardian/2025/01/10/#?article=4282209>



Sincerely,

Harold Brink, President

John Gulliver, Secretary

Devin Kennedy, Treasurer

Victoria Kinnealey, Board Member

Wendy Oleksiak, Board Member

Nathalie Salomon, Board Member

Cc: (via email)

Massachusetts State Representative, Jay Livingstone (jay.livingstone@mahouse.gov)
Boston Chief of Housing, Sheila Dillon (Sheila.dillon@boston.gov)
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