

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR MICHELLE WU



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING SMALL BUSINESS PERMITTING AND LICENSING REFORM

WHEREAS: the City of Boston has one of the strongest local economies of any urban area in the country and boasts access to leading universities, a highly educated workforce, a significant concentration of businesses in rapidly expanding industries, a thriving innovation sector, and an ongoing commitment to public infrastructure; and

WHEREAS: tens of thousands of Bostonians are employed by firms with 19 or fewer employees and Boston is one of only 11 metro areas in the United States with over 100,000 small businesses; and

WHEREAS: small businesses continue to be the leading job creators in the post-recession economy, both locally and nationally, and are often run by first- and second-generation Americans in neighborhoods throughout the City of Boston; and

WHEREAS: many view the licensing and permitting of a new business in Boston to be a confusing and time-consuming process that can weigh particularly heavily on small business owners who cannot afford lengthy delays from revenue-generating operations ; and

WHEREAS: City of Boston officials from a variety of departments have worked in recent years to cut down on the amount of time for new businesses to navigate the licensing and permitting process and have expressed a strong willingness to work with interested stakeholders to improve the process; and

WHEREAS: other cities – including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Sacramento – have taken steps to streamline their licensing and permitting process by reducing the regulatory burden on small businesses by consolidating permits and fees based on use, occupancy or the number of employees; *NOW,*

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to examine ways to streamline the licensing and permitting process for small businesses in the City of Boston through consolidation or elimination of certain permits, licenses, or fees; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED

That representatives from the following departments: Office of Business Development, Boston Main Streets Program, Inspectional Services Department (ISD) Building Division, ISD Division of Health Inspections, ISD Environmental Services Division, Boston Licensing Board, Consumer Affairs and Licensing, Boston Fire Department Fire Prevention Division, and the public be invited to testify.

Filed on: February 26, 2014