

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS LIZ BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MURPHY, SANTANA, WORRELL, WEBER AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS B.C.Y.F. SERVICES IN THE ALLSTON-BRIGHTON NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

- WHEREAS*, The Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) is the City’s largest human service agency, enriching residents’ lives through partnerships offering a range of programs responsive to neighborhood needs, including afterschool activities, childcare, summer camps, youth employment, adult education, and senior services; *and*
- WHEREAS*, In the early 1970s, new school constructions led to the vision of these buildings as neighborhood hubs for civic engagement and community resources, which resulted in the establishment of a network of school-based and standalone centers; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Chapter 18 of the Ordinances of 1972 established the Community School Program under the jurisdiction of the Public Facilities Commission, and in 2001, BCYF was formed by consolidating the services once provided by Boston Community Centers, the Office of Community Partnerships, the Boston 2:00–6:00 After-School Initiative, and the Recreation Division of the Parks and Recreation Department; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The Foundation for Boston Centers for Youth & Families is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on securing funding to support BCYF programs; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The Jackson Mann facility opened in Allston’s Union Square in 1976 to house the Jackson Mann K–8 School, the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Jackson Mann Community Center, operated in partnership with the Jackson Mann Community School Council, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated to provide educational, cultural, social, recreational, and community services to the diverse residents of the Allston-Brighton neighborhood of Boston; *and*
- WHEREAS*, A Capital Improvement Project Request was initiated in 2019 to address long-standing deferred maintenance at the Jackson Mann facility, leading the Public Facilities Department to commission a full-scale external engineering review, which resulted in findings that a majority of the mechanical systems exceeded their useful life and suggested that keeping the site open long-term was not a viable solution; *and*
- WHEREAS*, In March 2020, the Boston Public Schools communicated that the Jackson Mann facility’s condition constituted a building emergency and that it must be vacated by the end of the 2020–2021 school year, a one-year delay was announced in November 2020, and the closure of the Jackson Mann K–8 School was announced in May 2021 and approved by the School Committee in December 2021, effective June 2022; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The Horace Mann School vacated the Jackson Mann site and relocated to Charlestown after the 2023–2024 school year until a permanent facility is identified; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The services of the BCYF Jackson Mann were to be temporarily relocated but now remain on the site until a permanent facility is identified; *and*

- WHEREAS*, While there are over 30 BCYF facilities in the City of Boston, the Jackson Mann is the only BCYF site in Allston-Brighton, a growing and resilient neighborhood of nearly 80,000 residents, many of whom depend on its programming; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The BCYF Jackson Mann hosts a teen program and adult education programs including English as a Second Language, while its preschool and school-age programs were discontinued amid the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The BCYF Jackson Mann Community Center facility has served as a neighborhood emergency shelter, cooling center during extreme heat, warming center during winter emergencies, and polling location for five precincts during elections; *and*
- WHEREAS*, In fiscal year 2021 (FY21), \$500,000.00 in capital funds were authorized to study facility needs for the Jackson Mann School and the BCYF community center; *and*
- WHEREAS*, In FY22–FY23, \$125,000.00 in capital funds were authorized for a programming and siting study for a new BCYF community center in Allston-Brighton, and in FY24 an additional \$4 million was authorized following an October 2023 final report; *and*
- WHEREAS*, In FY23, \$150,000.00 in capital funds were authorized to develop a building program for the design and construction of a new preK–6 school located on the Jackson Mann site, and an additional \$10 million was authorized in FY24; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Since 2022, \$1 million in federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) have been budgeted, within an eligible expenditure category for neighborhood features that promote strong and healthy communities, to ensure the continuity of BCYF services in Allston-Brighton by supporting the transition of the BCYF Jackson Mann Community Center to a short-term swing space facility and, as of the January 2024, April 2024, and July 2024 quarterly reports, a total of \$46,310.00 have been obligated to be expended; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The Boston Public Schools Long-Term Facilities Plan, released in December 2023, identified plans for a preK–6 school in Allston-Brighton on the site of the former Jackson Mann campus alongside the BCYF Jackson Mann Community Center; *and*
- WHEREAS*, As the Allston-Brighton community’s sole BCYF community center operates out of a facility long deemed inadequate, and while other Boston neighborhoods have multiple BCYF centers or processes underway for additional sites, it remains crucial for there to be concrete plans and urgent coordination for current and future BCYF services in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood; *NOW, THEREFORE BE IT*
- ORDERED:* That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) services in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood of the City of Boston, and that representatives of BCYF, the Office of Human Services, Boston Public Schools, the Public Facilities Commission, the Foundation for Boston Centers for Youth & Families, the Jackson Mann Community School Council, human and social service providers, BCYF members, Allston-Brighton residents, and interested members of the public be invited to attend.

Filed on: August 26, 2024