



**DRAFT**

December XX, 2019

Kathleen R. Pedersen, Executive Secretary  
City of Boston Zoning Commission  
Boston City Hall, Room 900  
1 City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201

Subject: Proposed Text Amendment Regarding Executive Suites

Dear Ms. Pedersen:

NEWRA is writing to express its support of the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development's petition to amend the text of the Boston Zoning Code to change the regulation of "Executive Suites" in certain neighborhoods, including the North End. This City-sponsored text amendment would change the Use Regulations in Article 8 and in various Neighborhood District articles to "Conditional" use where "Executive Suites" is currently an "Allowed" use.

This change has become necessary due to the growing conversion of housing units to "Executive Suites" by short-term rental operators as a means of circumventing Boston's new Short-Term Rental ordinance. The North End is a residential neighborhood of nearly 11,000 residents living in an area of only one-third square mile. As in so many other neighborhoods of Boston, housing in the North End is at a premium and becoming more and more out-of-reach for many. The North End lost hundreds of housing units to short-term rental conversions over the past several years. While our community is hopeful that the Short-Term Rental ordinance will cause a return of many of these units to the long-term housing supply, we recognize that unconditional "Executive Suite" conversions could severely limit such a return.

Many of our residents live in buildings within the Hanover Community Commercial sub-district, which encompasses much of Hanover Street, as well as parts of Prince Street, Richmond Street, and North Street. Currently, the Zoning code allows the hundreds of housing units in this sub-district to be converted to "Executive Suites" without any community notification, review or input.

Article 54 of the Zoning Code states that among the goals and objectives of the North End Neighborhood District zoning are: "to manage the future development of the North End for the benefit of the inhabitants of the North End and Boston"; "to preserve and enhance the North End neighborhood"; "to promote residential development that is affordable to all

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segments of the community, particularly low and moderate income residents"; and "to discourage displacement of residents." These residential protections in the Zoning Code should be preserved and supported even as – and especially as – the city's economy grows and evolves, sometimes placing new risks on the quality of residential life.

We believe that the proposed amendment is critical to the support of the Article 54 goals and objectives. Importantly, the amendment would not preclude "Executive Suites" as a use within the Hanover Community Commercial sub-district, but it simply would subject this use to community review and input. For these reasons, we urge the Commission to incorporate the amendment and its residential protections into the Zoning Code.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Delgreco  
President, NEWRA

cc: Mayor Martin J. Walsh  
Senator Joseph Boncore  
Representative Aaron Michlewitz  
City Councilor Lydia Edwards  
Sheila Dillon, Director, Housing and Neighborhood Development  
Maria Lanza, Neighborhood Services