



building a better neighborhood together in Fort Point & the South Boston Waterfront

US Congressman Stephen Lynch
Senator Nick Collins
Representative David Biele
City Councilor Ed Flynn
(submitted via email)

February 20, 2024

Re: 24 Farnsworth Street

Dear Congressman Lynch, Senator Collins, Representative Biele and Councilor Flynn,

We are writing to you regarding the proposed change of use of the privately owned office building at 24 Farnsworth Street to accommodate a State funded emergency overflow shelter. We are urgently seeking your help to get time with the appropriate State and City agencies and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay who are evaluating this location and proposal by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

By way of introduction, FPNA is the residential civic association representing Fort Point, including the immediate neighborhood surrounding Farnsworth Street. We are a mixed-use community with office buildings, life science labs, ground floor retail spaces, and multi-unit residential buildings, home to over 3,000 residents.

On February 7th, the City of Boston's Office of Neighborhood Services notified us of the possible change of use at 24 Farnsworth Street. They were then, and are currently, only able to provide very minimal details on the proposal. We have also met with you (Senator Nick Collins, Representative David Biele, and City Councilor Ed Flynn), again looking for details on the proposal, with little information provided to you.

The FPNA is dedicated to enhancing and preserving the quality of life in our community, to broadening citizen awareness and participation within our growing neighborhood, and to building a socially interactive civic life.

In the interim, FPNA hosted a Zoom meeting Friday the 16th with the four residential buildings closest to Farnsworth Street for neighbors to share questions and concerns. We appreciate Senator Collins and staff from Representative Biele's office and Councilor Flynn's office attending on short notice. As you would expect, the lack of detail over the last two weeks, combined with press coverage describing the challenges experienced with shelters in Cambridge and Roxbury, has significantly raised community concerns.

Attached is a list of community generated questions. We hope these questions will be helpful in guiding the upcoming community meeting you called for on our behalf.

We need to be heard. We need answers. We need your help.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Ready

cc.

Ed Augustus, Massachusetts Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities

Scott Rice, Massachusetts Emergency Assistance Director

Karissa Hand, Massachusetts Press Secretary

Bob Giannino, United Way of Massachusetts Bay Ansin President & CEO

Brianna Millor, City of Boston Chief of Community Engagement

Sheila Dillon, City of Boston Chief of Housing

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FortPointNeighborhoodAssociation.org P.O. Box 52122 Boston, MA 02205

General Questions

- When would the shelter open?
- How many families?
- Any single individuals?
- School aged children?
- How many people total?
- When would it close?
- Will the center house both migrants and other State homeless individuals?
- Are City first responder agencies made part of this vetting process in terms of their ability to support increased service demand and specific considerations of the locations involved?
- How are City costs being funded?
- Does the property owner make money off of providing the overflow center?
- Are there any city or state owned buildings being considered for this project?
- Why are publicly owned buildings not being used for this purpose?
- At the point where a draft contract or other written materials between the city/state/appropriate entities and the church are available, could they please be provided to us?

Location Specific - Farnsworth is a dead end street. The building has no loading facilities available.

- What is the plan is to accommodate necessary vehicles and deliveries for the shelter?
 - Will food be delivered and if so, on what schedule?
 - What will the trash schedule be?
- What is the amount of shelter space being made available?
- Is the shelter overnight only or 24/7?
 - Where do adults go during the day if overnight only?
- How will access to the building be managed?
- Is extra security necessary, is it MSP or BPD jurisdiction and what is the patrol capacity?
 - Who inspects the ongoing safety conditions of the site, the wellbeing of the sheltered people and the works with neighborhood concerns?
- Are porta-potties needed and where would they be placed?
- Are external showers are needed, where would they be placed?
- Is there a play area for the children, where would it be placed?
- Is there a work area for adults, including computer access?

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Family Support

- Are the appropriate voucher systems in place at local stores (i.e. Trader Joe's or CVS)?
- How will medical care be provided, are shuttles going to be needed to get people to care?
- Will adults have access to the T with free passes?
- If children are housed where will they go to school and where is the bus pickup location?
- Are translation services provided and available for the community to use?
- What neighborhood programs and activities will be provided for the children and for adults while the adults wait for work authorization and work opportunities?

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