



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: November 12, 2019

Subject: Exterior Building Insulation Zoning Petition

Recommendation: The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

On October 29, 2019, the Planning Board (the "Board") held a public hearing on a zoning petition (the "Petition"), developed by City staff and referred to the Board by the City Council, to amend provisions in Section 22.43.2, "Yard Exceptions for Added Exterior Insulation," and move such provisions to Section 5.24.2.1, pursuant to the "Yards" Section of Article 5.000. These provisions allow insulation to be added to the outside of an existing exterior wall of a building in a way that may encroach into a required yard setback, if the existing wall is not moved or demolished. The current zoning, adopted in 2010, allows such insulation to encroach into a required setback if the thickness of the wall is not increased by more than 4 inches and the resulting wall is no closer than 7'-2" from the nearest property line or conforms to the required district setback, if it is less restrictive. The Petition would increase the allowed increase in wall thickness to 8 inches and reduce the minimum distance from the property line to 3 feet, and would allow the Board of Zoning Appeal to approve less restrictive standards by special permit. At the public hearing, the Board received information and testimony from Community Development Department ("CDD") staff. There were no comments from the public.

Following discussion with CDD staff on the rationale behind the Petition and deliberation among Board members, the Board voted to enthusiastically recommend that the City Council adopt the Petition. The Board supports the City's efforts to encourage energy efficiency retrofits to existing buildings as a way of advancing the goals of the Net Zero Action Plan and recognizes that removing potential zoning barriers is a way to further those efforts. Overall, Board members expressed few concerns about the Petition.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair.