



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	October 11, 2016
Subject:	Urban Agriculture Zoning Petition
Recommendation:	The Planning Board does NOT RECOMMEND adoption in order to allow for the completion of the work of the Urban Agriculture Task Force.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

On August 23, 2016, the Board held a hearing on this City Council zoning petition, which would create a new Section 22.80 in the Zoning Ordinance to establish zoning regulations for the operation and establishment of urban agriculture activities with necessary public safety measures to reduce the impacts of such activities on city residents.

There was no presentation from the petitioner at the hearing and no other members of the public appeared to testify. The Board did hear a presentation from the city's Community Development Department (CDD) regarding the ongoing efforts by the Urban Agriculture Task Force (which includes representatives from CDD, the Public Health Department, other City departments, and community members and neighborhood associations) to develop a comprehensive urban agriculture policy for the city.

At this time, the Board finds merit in the progress made by the Urban Agriculture Task Force. The Board supports the Task Force's plan to develop public regulations, a permitting process and best management practices prior to amendment of the Zoning Ordinance to allow specific urban agriculture activities such as the keeping of chickens, beekeeping, and growing produce for sale.

While the current petition has a similar intent to that of the Urban Agriculture Task Force, the Board believes there needs to be further review of how agriculture uses are classified and regulated from a public health standpoint before designating the districts in which they may be established through zoning.

In addition, Board members recommend creating more public awareness about the anticipated permitting process, operation and maintenance requirements and best management practices for urban agriculture. The Board understands the need to assign to the appropriate City agencies specific regulatory authority for agricultural uses with regard to permit review, inspection, and enforcement.

In conclusion, while the Board is generally supportive of allowing urban agriculture uses in the city, Board members believe that more consideration is needed to determine the specific regulatory framework for permitting, guidance on establishment and operation, and enforcement mechanisms. The Board strongly supports the continued development of the urban agriculture policy by the Urban Agriculture Task Force with guidance from the City Council.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Theodore Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.