



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager

From: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
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Date: March 21, 2024

Subject: Suggested zoning petition text to remove reference to “degrees of kinship” in the Zoning Ordinance (Response to Policy Order POR 2024 #9 dated January 29, 2024)

On March 6, 2024, Community Development Department (CDD) and Law Department staff met with the Housing Committee to discuss proposed amendments to residential use definitions in the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed amendments were requested by the City Council (POR 2024 #9) and were prompted by a request by members of the LGBTQ+ Commission to remove the exclusion of “groups of four or more persons who are not within the second degree of kinship” from the definition of “Family.”

CDD staff has previously met with members of the LGBTQ+ Commission to discuss their concerns about how “Family” is defined in the Zoning Ordinance. We support their effort and agree that the wording of the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to be inclusive of different family and household types.

At the end of the Housing Committee discussion on March 6, members voted to refer the matter back to the City Council with a positive recommendation. Staff requested time to review some outstanding questions and prepare a comprehensive zoning petition text that could be considered for adoption, after advertisement and public hearing in accordance with state law.

The attached zoning text is intended to have the following effects:

- Delete references to “degree of kinship” in favor of more inclusive standards to determine how a residential use is characterized.
- Update definitions to be more consistent with state sanitary code, building code, and other state law.
- Clarify distinctions between different types of “residences” and differentiate them from “transient accommodations” such as hotels.
- Update other sections of the Zoning Ordinance for consistency.

We recommend that the City Council refer the attached text as a zoning petition for hearing and report by the Planning Board and Ordinance Committee, after which it can be considered for adoption by the City Council.