



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: August 19, 2020

Subject: Fossil Fuel Zoning Petition (Amendments to Article 22.000 of the Zoning Ordinance)

Recommendation: The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION, following further study and refinement.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

On August 18, 2020, the Planning Board (the “Board”) held a public hearing on a City Council zoning petition (the “Petition”) to amend Article 22.000 of the Zoning Ordinance by creating a new Paragraph 22.25.2(d) within the Green Building Requirements. The Petition would amend the administrative review procedure at the building permit phase to require the submission of a plan that uses alternative and renewable energy sources as well as an analysis of the feasibility and cost of installing such a system compared with a fossil fueled energy system. The Petition does not mandate that a non-fossil fuel system be installed; rather, its intent is to gather data about the options available to developers regarding clean energy systems.

Following discussion with City Councillor Dennis Carlone, who presented the Petition, the Board voted to submit a favorable recommendation to the City Council, acknowledging the need for further refinement. Board members agreed that it would be beneficial to collect data on the feasibility of using renewable energy sources. Board members suggested that some aspects of the petition could be rethought or clarified, including whether off-site or on-site renewable energy options should be studied, how the requested information would relate to analogous state energy codes, and when in the permitting process it would be most beneficial to receive the required information. Board members would encourage working with City staff to refine the language of the Petition and to address considerations raised in the Community Development Department memo to the Planning Board dated August 13, 2020. Overall, the Board supports the Petition as an incremental step towards advancing the City’s climate goals.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

Catherine Preston Connolly

Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair.