

CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL



**ORDER OF CITY COUNCILORS MATT O'MALLEY
AND ED FLYNN**

- WHEREAS:** The City of Boston offers its support and condolences to our neighbors in Lawrence, Andover, and North Andover for the natural gas incident that occurred on Thursday, September 13th, and will continue to support our fellow municipalities in their recovery; and
- WHEREAS:** The first responders, including firefighters, emergency personnel, police officers, gas crews and others from around the region, including first responders from Boston, deserve our heartfelt thanks for their rapid and tireless action; and
- WHEREAS:** The fires and explosions that took place during the natural gas incident prompt municipalities with a similar reliance on natural gas to examine their safety practices to prevent such an incident from occurring; and
- WHEREAS:** The Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, which has jurisdiction over natural gas infrastructure, has indicated that inspection and testing improve the chances of locating defects early and reduce the probability of catastrophic failure; and
- WHEREAS:** The Boston City Council passed “An Ordinance Regarding the Elimination of Gas Leaks in the City of Boston” in 2016, declaring at that time that “It is in the interest of public health, safety and welfare for the City of Boston to protect all residents, visitors, and businesses from the risk to safety and health of natural gas leaks;” and
- WHEREAS:** As federal and state investigation of the natural gas incident continues, the incident has already indicated the need for greater coordination and education on emergency response; and
- WHEREAS:** The City of Boston can explore the prevalence of natural gas safety features such as automatic shutoff valves, communications strategies to inform residents through multiple sources about disaster preparedness, and optimized coordination with utilities; and
- WHEREAS:** Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey have called for a congressional hearing on the federal regulatory role in preventing natural gas incidents, yet the important role played by municipalities in such situations shows that municipalities must make their own preparations for emergency response as well; and
- WHEREAS:** Boston can further its commitment to the safety of its residents by taking all necessary steps to prevent unlikely but devastating incidents like the one last week, while also preparing for any emergency that may arise; **THEREFORE BE IT**
- ORDERED:** That the Boston City Council, hereby assembled, orders a hearing to examine the safety of city natural gas infrastructure, the prevention of potentially dangerous gas leaks, and education and preparedness for emergency response. The appropriate city, state and federal officials and members of the public are invited to attend.

Filed in City Council: September 14, 2018