

# Zoning Amendment Proposal: Beekeeping

Ordinance Committee Hearing – October 5, 2017



# Urban Agriculture

→ The practice of **cultivating food** in and around the city



# Benefits of Urban Agriculture

- Health
- Social
- Economic
- Ecological

# Benefits of Urban Agriculture

- **Health:**

- Access to healthy food
- Raise nutritional awareness
- Moderate physical activity
- Culturally important foods

# Benefits of Urban Agriculture

- **Social:**

- Education
- Youth development
- Community life

# Benefits of Urban Agriculture

- **Economic:**
  - Savings on food costs
  - Supplemental income

# Benefits of Urban Agriculture

- **Ecological:**
  - Pollination contributes to ecological health
  - Environmental awareness

# Urban Agriculture Task Force

- Composed of:
  - Cambridge Public Health Department staff
  - Community Development Department staff
  - Conservation Commission
  - CitySprouts
  - Community members
- Involved the cooperation of ISD, DPW, Animal Control



# Urban Agriculture Task Force

## Goals:

- Allow select agricultural activities in Cambridge within established guidelines
- Establish a clear permitting and enforcement process
- Support of best practices and safe operations
- Being good neighbors

# Outreach & Partners

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Focus Groups with local experts (beekeepers, chicken keepers, gardeners, farmers, entrepreneurs, academics, epidemiologists, veterinarians, clinicians)
- Nonprofits and Community Organizations, e.g. Cambridge Community Center, City Sprouts, Shady Hill School
- Residents
- Neighborhood organizations, Tenants Association
- State agencies (MDAR, MDPH)
- Local municipal experts (Boston, Somerville, Arlington)

# Focus Areas

- **Beekeeping**
- **Henkeeping**
- **Commercial farming**
- **Sales**

# Policy Approach

## Public Health Regulations

- Establish a permitting program and a set of standards to maintain safe and sanitary operations

## Zoning

- Establish allowed districts, criteria and/or review processes for principal agricultural uses

## Guidance Documents

- Best management practices
- Easy guide for community members to navigate permit process

# Zoning for Beekeeping



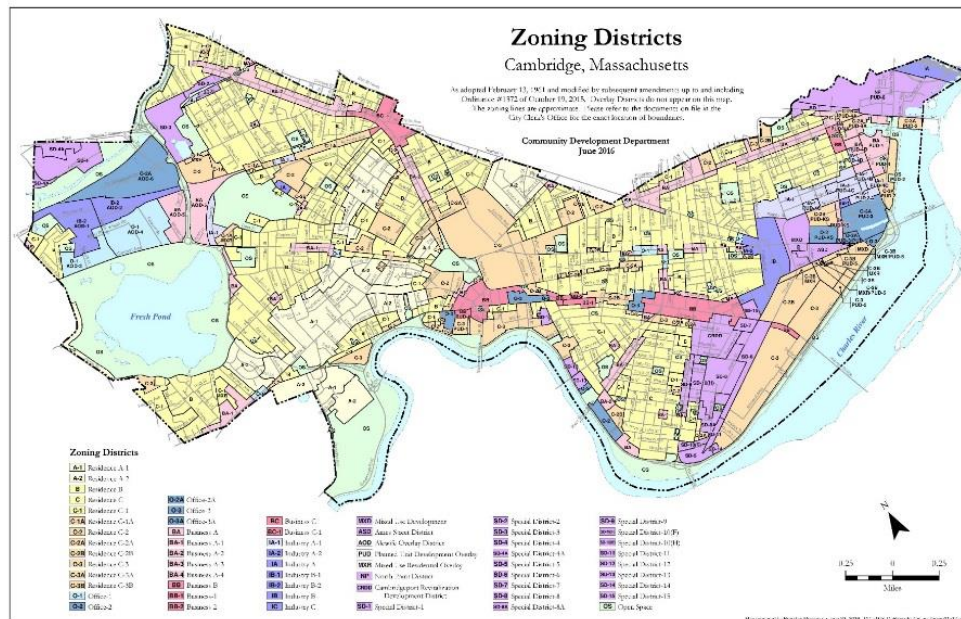
Placing beekeeping in our zoning framework:

- Land Use (Article 4)
- Application of development standards (Article 5)
- Standards for beekeeping (New Article 23)

# Zoning for Beekeeping

## Land Use (Article 4)

- Allowed citywide as an accessory use
- Accessory to residences, hotels, institutions (religious, educational), offices, stores, light industry



# Zoning for Beekeeping

## Development Standards (Article 5)

- If beehives are less than 6 feet tall and meet other standards, they don't count against height, setback, or open space requirements



# Zoning for Beekeeping

## Urban Agriculture Standards (New Article 23)

- Key definitions
- Requires compliance with Cambridge Public Health Regulations, other laws & codes
- Beekeeping requires a permit from Cambridge Public Health Department
- *Can include standards for other urban agriculture uses as they are developed*



# Zoning for Beekeeping

## Beekeeping Standards (23.40)

- No more than 2 beehives on a lot (may be increased temporarily)
- Beehives no more than 20 cubic feet in volume
- Beehives no more than 6 feet tall
- Apiaries at-grade or elevated (roof, deck)
- Apiaries set back 5 feet from property lines unless a solid fence is provided
- Apiaries set back 6 feet from roof parapet

# Zoning for Beekeeping

## Beekeeping Standards (23.40)

- Flyway Barriers – to control direction of bees exiting hive

*RECOMMEND MOVING TO PUBLIC HEALTH REGULATIONS*

- Warning signage – to notify sensitive abutters and passersby



# Other Regulations

## Local public health jurisdiction:

- Inspectional Services Department:
  - Enforces MA Food Code
- Cambridge Public Health Department
  - Local health department with statutory authority under M.G.L. c.111 §31 to promulgate health regulations
  - Statutory authority under M.G.L. c.111 §122 to regulate public health nuisances and prevent disease conditions



# Thank You!

