



Cambridge  
Public Health  
Department

To: Louis DePasquale, City Manager  
From: Claude-Alix Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer  
Date: December 18, 2017  
Re: **Beekeeping Regulation**

The Cambridge Public Health Commission promulgated the “Cambridge Public Health Department Regulation for the Keeping of Honey Bees” on December 5, 2017 under its authority as a local health department (M.G.L. c.111 §31). This will allow the Public Health Department to regulate beekeeping in Cambridge in tandem with the proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that is currently before the Council. This is similar to how certain other activities are regulated both by zoning, which dictates where such activities are permitted to be conducted, and through health regulations, which regulate how such activities are to be conducted, such as tattoo and massage parlors, for example.

Through the Regulations, the Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD) will support local access to healthy food, including local honey production. The Regulations will strike a balance in protecting the public health of Cambridge residents while promoting healthy and safe food access. The Regulations set standards for safe and sanitary beekeeping operations to prevent nuisances and/or public health hazards. The Regulations establish the CPHD as the City agency responsible for reviewing permit applications and issuing permits, conducting routine and complaint-based inspections, evaluating variance requests, and resolving regulatory violations.

The Commissioner of Public Health will appoint a panel of three (3) CPHD staff to act as hearing officers. The panel will consider each proposed new application for beekeeping. A public hearing will be required for each initial permit application. The applicant, abutting neighbors and property owners will be notified of the date for a public hearing that will be held to discuss each new permit application.

The hearing panel will function similarly to other boards and commissions in the City that function in a quasi-judicial manner to evaluate applications that may be a matter of importance to the community, like the License Commission and the Historical Commission. This type of structure is also similar to how other communities with boards of public health review and determine these kinds of applications.

The Regulations are attached for the City Council’s information. I look forward to discussing the Regulations with the City Council and answering any questions they may have.

