



Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Aging

Community Listening Session
Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Minutes

Commissioners Present: Kathy Betts, Sean Cahill, Barry Callis, Paul Glass, Lisa Krinsky, Tanya Neslusan, Lynn Vidler, Gary Yuhas

Commissioners Absent: Senator Pat Jehlen, Representative Sam Montañó, Lenny Alberts, Bill Bogdanovich, Josie Dutil, Chris Erchull, Michelle LaPointe, Margaux LeClair, Jordina Shanks, Julie Watt Faqir

Guests: Senator Joan Lovely, Mayor Dominick Pangallo, Councilor Kyle Davis, Alex Bergson, Vicki Halal, community members

Welcome & Introductions

- Welcome to Salem Council on Aging
- Mayor Pangallo's welcome to Salem
- Senator Lovely's welcome
- Introduction of LGBTQ Aging Commission and Commissioners

Listening Session Discussion

- What is LGBTQ life like in Salem and on the North Shore?
 - Salem is a very LGBTQ welcoming community as are neighboring communities
 - People have specifically chosen to live and age in area
 - There have been instances of anti-LGBTQ prejudice
- What challenges are there for LGBTQ older adults?

- A number of incidents of hate crimes on North Shore, concern about safety
- Concerns about how welcoming/safe long term care is for LGBTQ older adults
- What is transportation like?
 - Good within Salem - some difficulty between towns
 - Many problems with reliability with The RIDE
- What is housing like? Are there concerns with availability, affordability, and/or safety?
 - Very high rental costs and property taxes
 - Limited ability to expand housing
 - Discussion of challenges of developing Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Potential value of added housing
 - Interest in developing LGBTQ friendly senior housing on the North Shore
- Is there access to elder services, such as Aging Service Access Points, Area Agencies on Aging, and Councils on Aging?
 - Council on Aging a valuable resource; no one has used ASAPs
- What are social programs like? Are there opportunities for community connection? Are there opportunities for multigenerational experiences?
 - Number of LGBTQ community programs - multigenerational
 - LGBTQ older adults group in Salem
 - Over the Rainbow Supper Club at House of Seven Gables
- What are your experiences with caregiving? Are there supports or challenges?
 - Very few participants have been caregivers
- What are your experiences with healthcare? Is healthcare accessible and safe?

- Overall health care providers in the area of LGBTQ welcoming; some front line staff need extra training to be LGBTQ welcoming
- One incident with dentist who told HIV + gay man that dental practice wasn't a good fit for "someone like you"
- Discussion of health care proxies - importance to complete them and share with providers. Challenges for those who don't have spouse/partner, family, friend to act in this capacity
- What are the experiences of transgender older adults in the community?
 - Salem is welcoming of transgender community
 - Some trans older adults participate in community events, attend Over the Rainbow supper
- Other topics:
 - Need for centralized listing of resources for LGBTQ older adults and LGBTQ community activities
 - Importance of SHINE volunteers, Long Term Care Ombudsmen program as resources and advocates
 - Importance of education about and preparing wills, health care proxies, durable power of attorney, designees for MassHealth communications

Wrap-up and Closing

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 10 - virtual quarterly meeting