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THE BOSTON SUN

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COURTESY OF CBT ARCHITECTS

An artist's rendering of the proposed Motor Mart Garage redevelopment project from 2018.

Motor Mart Garage reportedly going back on the market

By Dan Murphy

The owner of Motor Mart Garage has apparently scrapped its ambitious redevelopment plans and is now reportedly poised to put the property on the market this winter.

The CIM Group, owner of the century-old garage since

2016, has apparently hired the global commercial real estate services and investment firm, CBRE, to potentially sell the 1.2 acre site, which spans a full city block where Bay Village meets Back Bay, according to the Jan. 7 edition of The Boston Globe. (Banker & Tradesman first reported the listing.)

Prior to the pandemic, an affiliate of the Los Angeles-based CIM Group and Boston Global Investors were poised to redevelop the existing eight-story, Art Deco garage at 201 Stuart St. into a mixed-use building with new condominium units

located within the western portion of the existing structure, as well as additional units within a new 20-story residential tower that would sit atop of the existing structure. In all, the project would have created 306 new residential units while retaining approximately 46,000 square feet of restaurant space and retail space, along with 672 of the 1,037 existing parking spaces. The project would also have included a new basement-level space at Columbus Avenue and Church Street designed to accommodate a supermarket.

City Council welcomes Councilor Miniard Culpepper

Special to the Sun

The Boston City Council welcomed Councilor Miniard Culpepper, who began his first term representing District 7 on January 5, following a recent inauguration ceremony.

Councilor Culpepper represents the neighborhood of Roxbury and sections of Dorchester, Fenway, and the South End. Born and raised on Seaver Street in Dorchester, he was shaped by a family legacy rooted in activism, faith, and community leadership. His grandparents were the first Black couple to live on Seaver Street, and his grandfather – a pastor and NAACP leader – marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and helped build one of Boston's first Black-owned nursery schools. That legacy instilled in him a lifelong commitment to justice and service.

A graduate of English High

School, Brandeis University, Howard Divinity School, and Suffolk University Law School, Councilor Culpepper's path to public service was deeply influenced by his early work as a lawyer, including a fight to help

(CULPEPPER, Pg. 3)



District 7 City Councilor Miniard Culpepper.

Time Out Market Boston to close in the Fenway

By Sun Staff

The culinary landscape of the Fenway neighborhood is bracing for a major shift following the recent announcement that Time Out Market Boston will permanently close its doors on January 23. Located in the historic 401 Park building—the former Sears, Roebuck & Co. warehouse—the 25,000-square-foot food hall has

served as a primary anchor for the district's revitalization since its debut in 2019. Reports from The Boston Globe and the Boston Business Journal indicate that individual vendors were notified of the impending shutdown earlier this month, citing a combination of declining revenue and the persistent challenges facing

(TIME OUT MARKET, Pg. 6)

Our Office will be closed on **MONDAY, JAN. 19** in observation of **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**. The office will reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. with events around Boston

Turn to Page 7

EDITORIAL

REMEMBERING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

For those of a certain age, it is hard to imagine that 2026 will mark 58 years since the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis while he was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. Recalling how we felt when we first heard the news of Dr. King's murder still brings chills and a deep sense of sadness that never has subsided.

For those who are too young to have been alive in that era of American history, there are a few things that everyone should know about Dr. King that should provide inspiration to all of us.

First, Dr. King was fearless. He knew from the inception of his rise to prominence of the Civil Rights movement that he would become a target for those who opposed change. Yet, even though he often told others that he believed his death would be imminent, he did not relent in his fight to continue his work in the civil rights movement.

Second, Dr. King stood for the rights of all Americans, not merely those of color. He was in Memphis because he was working with striking sanitation workers, whose pay and working conditions he was seeking to help improve. He also was an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War because he knew it to be an unjust war, not only for poor Americans who could not get a college deferment for the draft, but also for the people of Vietnam, whose homeland was being bombed into oblivion at great profit for the American military-industrial complex.

Third, Dr. King spoke forcefully about the economic inequality that existed in the 1960s -- and that has been exacerbated exponentially today -- making the attainment of the American Dream all but impossible except for a select few.

If Dr. King were alive today, there is no doubt that he would be in the forefront of the protests against the barbaric deportation program by the federal government.

Dr. King's words ring as true today as they did two generations ago. His "I Have A Dream" and "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speeches are among the most powerful orations not only in American history, but in all of Western civilization.

All of us should learn from the example set by Dr. King. His life was a testament to the idea that each of us has the power to change the world -- and that each of us has the capacity to inspire others, whether through our words or deeds, whether on a small or large scale, to make the world a better place. Many of our fellow citizens have followed the path set by Dr. King and many more will do so in the years ahead.

Dr. King often would say, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Admittedly, that "bend" often has taken a less-than-direct path in recent years.

But as we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day this Monday, let us recall not only his memory and the many things that he accomplished, but let us also resolve never to yield to the forces of intolerance, prejudice, and hate that continue to plague our country and the world today.

STILL TIME TO GET FLU SHOTS FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN

An estimated 7400 Americans already have died from the flu this season. Although most deaths occur among senior citizens, young children are the next most-vulnerable group.

The tragedy is that almost all of these deaths would have been preventable if those who died had received their flu shots.

It is not surprising that this flu season has seen more hospitalizations and deaths compared to last year. Fewer Americans have received a flu shot, even though a vaccination is the number one means by which Americans of all ages can receive protection from serious illness and death.

It is estimated that 90% of pediatric deaths -- four deaths have been reported in Mass. thus far this season -- occur in children who were unvaccinated.

This tragedy in our country is the inevitable result of the spread of misinformation about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Instead of following medical guidance, those who do not get vaccinated instead are relying on social media and other, uninformed sources to guide their medical decisions.

So our advice to everyone who is unvaccinated simply is this: Stop listening to know-nothing social media feeds and get a vaccination ASAP -- it just might save your life or that of a loved one.

SEND YOUR NEWS

The Boston Sun encourages readers and residents to submit their local news! Engagements, weddings and birth announcements, news releases, business and education briefs, sports stories and photos for publication.

Submitting does not guarantee publication that week.

Content will be printed on a space available basis. Items should be e-mailed to stephen.quigley@thebostonsun.com or deb@thebostonsun.com

The Independent Newspaper Group reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity. The Independent Newspaper Group publishes columns, viewpoints and letters to the editor as a forum for readers to express their opinions and to encourage debate. Please note that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Independent Newspaper Group.

Building Boston 250

Momentum grows for the city's semiquincentennial

Special to the Sun

Boston is preparing to mark the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution--honoring the people, ideas, and places that sparked independence. Led by the City's Commemoration Commission, planning for Boston 250 is building toward an inclusive, citywide celebration that highlights Boston's leadership in shaping a new nation.

On March 19, 2025, the Boston City Council voted to amend the ordinance establishing the Commemoration Commission as first discussed in July 2024 and as proposed by commissioner vote in October 2024. This revision reduced the number of voting members from 44 to 37, in an effort to alleviate how often the Commission ran into the inability to have a quorum. In addition, advisory committees /stakeholder groups replace the original subcommittee structure. These groups will take no official votes but may share ideas and recommendations in a non-binding fashion. In an effort to strengthen and support the amendments to the ordinance, Commemoration Commission staff is working on bylaws to develop frameworks for the Commission to be successful in the endeavors they have been tasked with. These bylaws will exist inside of a handbook that commissioners can reference routinely.

The Commission swore in one new member and will fill three additional seats.

The commissioners worked on an interim report that recommends commemorative activities that can be undertaken and explored for Boston 250 titled Interim Recommendations of the Boston Commemoration Commission: Commemorative Activities for Boston 250, which is now being edited based on feedback provided on the first draft.

In an effort to highlight Boston's diverse historical resources, the Boston Commemoration Commission has compiled a list of repositories, historical collections, projects, museums, and other places where people can learn about Boston's history. With support from the Boston Public Library, this list will be made publicly accessible as the Boston Historical Collections and Resources Database, a simple, searchable database on the Library's website. We envision this as a launching point for Boston residents and visitors alike who seek to deepen their understanding of our shared history. This is envisioned as a living resource, and once it is publicly accessible, users will be able to fill out a similar web form to help us fill in any gaps.

2026 is a big year for the City and for the Commemoration Commission as we mark the 250th anniversary of the Siege of Boston, the 250th Evacuation Day, Independence Day, and more. We are working hard to create unforgettable experiences, and we are looking forward to Boston 400 on the horizon!

THE BOSTON SUN

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City announces over \$300,000 in Swim Safe Grants to expand free swim lessons for youth

Special to the Sun

The City of Boston's Office of Human Services and Boston Centers for Youth & Families announced the award of Swim Safe grants totaling \$314,118 to 15 Boston-based nonprofit organizations to expand access to free beginner swim lessons for young people across the city. The grants bolster Boston's ongoing efforts to enhance water safety and equitable access to aquatics programming.

"This investment of City funds ensures that every young person has access to free swim lessons, building on our ongoing commitment to water safety," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm grateful to the Office of Human Services and BCYF for awarding these grants, which will allow us to expand access to aquatic programming for thousands of Boston youth. I encourage all Boston families to take advantage of this critical resource and enroll in programming."

Grant awards range from \$2,200 to \$100,000 and are drawn from the City of Boston FY26 Operating Budget. They will support a range of organizations to provide free swim lessons throughout the school year, including large aquatics providers as well as school-based programs serving Boston Public Schools students. Through this grant, Boston expects to see over 2,500 youth complete beginner swim lessons. These free lessons are offered in addition to the

thousands of free lessons provided by the staff at Boston Centers for Youth & Families aquatics sites.

Grantees include the following organizations:

- YMCA of Greater Boston (9 locations)
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (4 locations)
- Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester (Dorchester)
- Salvation Army Kroc Center (Dorchester)
- West End House (Allston-Brighton)
- Tierney Learning Center (South Boston)
- Friends of the Hernandez School (Roxbury)
- Bridge Boston Charter School (Roxbury)
- Modest Women Swim, Too! (Roxbury)
- Omega Men in Action (Roxbury)
- Ohrenberger School (West Roxbury)
- Blackstone Elementary School (South End)
- Hurley School (South End)
- Swim Freedom (Roxbury)
- Edusports (Mattapan)

"Our Swim Safe grants continue to strengthen Boston's commitment to ensuring every child has access to this essential life skill," said José F. Massó, Chief of Human Services. "Thanks to this year's grantees, we're not only reaching thousands of young people but also expanding the network of providers who can help keep our young people safe around the water."

"This year's grant awards represent a major investment in water safety and equitable access," said Marta E. Rivera, Commissioner of Boston Centers for Youth & Families. "In collaboration with our aquatics partners, BCYF is ensuring that every Boston family has free and inclusive access to swimming and helping to break down barriers and provide high-quality programming that serves the incredible diversity of our city."

In addition to long-standing Swim Safe partners that operate pools and provide youth swim lessons, including the YMCA of Greater Boston, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester, and the West End House, this year's cohort introduces several new grantees proposing to add swim lessons into existing school-based and after-school programs. These new providers will help deliver swim instruction to elementary-age students in Boston Public Schools, as well as youth enrolled in after-school enrichment programs, significantly broadening the reach of the Swim Safe initiative. New school partners include the Ohrenberger School in West Roxbury and the Blackstone Elementary School in the South End.

"We are thrilled to be able to offer swim lessons to our families that otherwise would not have the chance to take swim lessons without the Swim Safe grant," said Courtney Sheppeck, Principal of the Blackstone K-6

Elementary School. "We feel swimming should be taught to all students across the city. The Swim Safe grant will give more students the opportunity to learn this essential life skill."

New this year, budgeted costs have been capped at \$200 or less per child, ensuring that the maximum amount of funding goes directly to swim instruction rather than administrative costs. This grant cycle will also serve as a pilot period to assess this cost-efficiency strategy.

"The Salvation Army Boston Kroc Center is proud to provide safe, accessible swim opportunities that empower young people to build confidence, develop lifesaving skills, and enjoy the water responsibly. Through the Swim Safe initiative, we've been able to expand our reach and create a supportive environment where children and families feel welcomed, protected, and encouraged," said Stephanie Lorfils, Program Director of Salvation Army Boston Kroc Center. "This partnership allows us to strengthen our commitment to water safety and ensure that every child in our community has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in and around the pool."

By the conclusion of this grant cycle, the city expects more than 2,500 young people to have received free swim lessons during the school year. There will be an

expanded pool of swim providers participating in Swim Safe, increasing the number of accessible, community-based swim lessons available to Boston residents.

The Human Services cabinet oversees six departments that provide direct services to Boston residents: Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Boston Public Library, Age Strong Commission, Office of Youth Engagement & Advancement, Office of Returning Citizens and the Office of Veterans' Services. The mission of the Human Services cabinet is to provide equitable access to high quality services, resources, and opportunities so that every Boston resident - especially those with the greatest needs - has what they need to thrive. In pursuit of this mission, the departments in the Human Services Cabinet meet residents where they are - in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities - to break down barriers to critical resources.

Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) is the City of Boston's largest youth and human service agency. BCYF operates 35 community centers in Boston that offer a variety of engaging and enriching programs for people of all ages created through community input and need. BCYF also oversees many citywide programs.

CULPEPPER (from Page 1)

a friend purchase a boarded-up home in Grove Hall – an experience that shaped his understanding of housing as a cornerstone of dignity and opportunity.

His career in public service spans decades. As New England Regional Counsel for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Councilor Culpepper fought for tenants' rights, fair housing, and reinvestment in underserved neighborhoods. His work included implementing Boston's first Civil Rights Protection Plan in public housing, exposing racial discrimination at the Boston Housing Authority, and helping secure

\$25 million in federal funding to rebuild public housing developments across the city. He also advocated for affordable housing communities such as Academy Homes, A Field Estates, and the Franklin Park Apartments.

In addition to his federal service, Councilor Culpepper has remained deeply engaged at the community level. As Senior Pastor of Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church, he founded the Trotter Peace Program to support mentorship and employment opportunities for young people of color and led the Six Point Peace Plan to reduce community violence. During the pandemic,

he organized grassroots vaccination and food distribution efforts to support his neighbors.

As a member of the Boston City Council, Councilor Culpepper is committed to advancing housing stability, economic opportunity, strong schools, safe and healthy communities, and a city government that is transparent, accountable, and rooted in community voice.

Guided by faith, shaped by lived experience, and grounded in decades of public service, he begins his term ready to partner with residents to deliver results for District 7 and help shape a more just and inclusive Boston.

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2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP



Stuart Chandler sets up a shot.

Derek Kouyoumjian Photos

Top men and women squash players from all over the world came to the University Club in Back Bay to compete in the 34th annual MFS Pro-Am Squash Doubles Championship January 7-11. Spectators who attended the five-day event were witnesses to some of the best squash playing. A special feature of the tournament, is that many local amateur squash players were privileged to play with the pros.

See Pages 5, 8 and 9 for more photos.



Stuart Chandler, Maria Elena Ubina, Fernanda Rocha Maturi, and Tony Simboli.



Fernanda Rocha Maturi.



Tony Simboli.



Maria Elena Ubina.

Fenway Forward release schedule and construction management plan for Hill project

By Dan Murphy

Representatives for the newly rebranded Fenway Forward (formerly Fenway CDC) were on hand for a virtual meeting on

Tuesday, Jan. 6, to outline their schedule and construction management plan for a home-ownership project planned for Beacon Hill.

Per its agreement with developer JDMD, Fenway Forward - a nonprofit developer of affordable housing - is redeveloping two adjacent buildings located at 27/29 Hancock St., which are both currently zoned as lodging houses, into a total of 15 units at 80-100 percent AMI (Area Median Income) for new homeowners.

Construction is expected to take around approximately 12 months to complete, and to kick off this spring, pending finalization of the last piece of funding for the project, said Tim White of the Boston construction firm, J.L. Dunn & Company.

The traffic plan, developed by J.L. Dunn & Company, together with the Boston traffic engineering firm, Howard Stein Hudson, has been submitted to the Boston Transportation Department for approval, said

White, and proposes the temporary removal of five parking spaces on the left-hand side of Hancock Street, directly across from the project site, for the duration of construction. Sidewalks in the immediate area of the impacted parking spaces are also expected to be closed at this time. (Hanock Street is a one-way street, with parking only on the left-hand side ascending from Cambridge Street, White noted.)

"There should be no shutting down of Hanock Street during construction," said White, although one brief project phase will shut down the street for a few hours over the course of three days to allow for the installation of a new water main.

Work vehicles accessing the staging area created via the five repurposed parking spaces will go up Hanock Street, pass the site, and then back into the enclosure per the proposed traffic plan.

"We hope by establishing this [route], there will be no blocking of Hanock Street at any time,"



D. MURPHY PHOTO

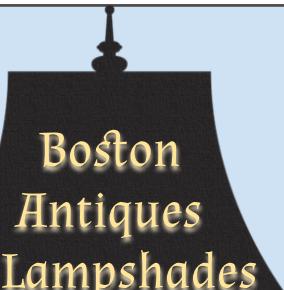
Two adjacent properties at 27/29 Hancock St., which are poised to be redeveloped by the nonprofit, Fenway Forward, into a total of 15 affordable homeownership units.

said White.

Barriers, comprising water-filled, semi-permanent jersey barriers and removable fencing,

will be erected around the staging area to allow for unloading, as well as to accommodate a

(FENWAY FORWARD., Pg. 5)



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2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP



Gina Stoker.



Nikki Todd strikes the ball as Gina Stoker and Kayley Leonard look on.



Gina Stoker, Kayley Leonard, Nikki Todd, and Maria Elena Ubina.



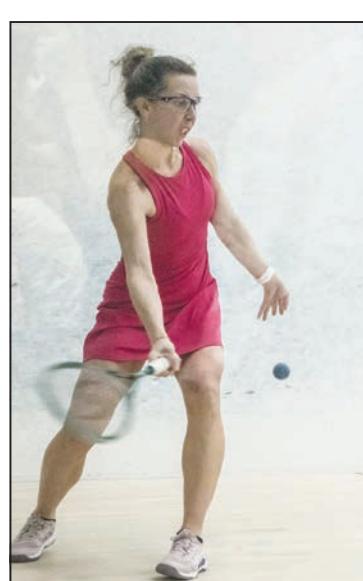
Kayley Leonard and Gina Stoker watch as Maria Elena Ubina locks in on the ball.



Maria Elena Ubina lines up a shot as Nikki Todd looks on.



Gina Stoker (center) strikes as Kayley Leonard and Nikki Todd look on.



Gina Stoker.

HOIL KIM PHOTOS
Shown (above and below) are players and members of the local squash community at the annual dinner.

FENWAY FORWARD (from Page 4)

dumpster, which can then directly collect debris without disrupting traffic on the left-hand side of Hanock Street. This will also allow the project to proceed without 'live loads' (i.e. variable, transient, non-permanent parts of a structure, such as movable parts or contents), said White.

Scaffolding will be in place to allow pedestrians to cross Han-

ck Street safely, added White, while netting will also cover the sidewalk staging during the spring, summer, and fall, with a white tarp over it during the winter months.

"People will be on site regularly to clean and maintain the sidewalk," said White.

JDMD, which developed The Archer Residences – a luxury

condo building on Temple Street – purchased 27-29 Hancock St. in 2018, with plans to gift the buildings to another developer for the creation of off-site affordable housing units to satisfy its IDP (Inclusionary Development Policy) with the city for the Archer project.

TIME OUT MARKET (from Page 1)

large-scale dining concepts in a post-pandemic economy.

The departure of Time Out Market is not an isolated incident but rather part of a broader transition for the 401 Park complex. The closure coincides with the upcoming exit of REI, another high-profile retail tenant that has anchored the building for years. These simultaneous departures highlight a pivot in the building's identity under the ownership of Alexandria Real Estate Equities, which purchased the site in 2020. As the Fenway increasingly transforms into a global hub for life sciences and lab research, the ground-floor retail model that once thrived on heavy office foot traffic is being fundamentally reevaluated.

As the final day of service

on January 23 approaches, the future of the massive space remains an open question. Local favorites such as Cusser's Roast Beef & Seafood, Ms. Cluck's Deluxe, and Union Square Donuts must now decide whether to relocate their operations or shutter their Fenway outposts entirely. While property management has not yet announced a successor for the space, the vacancy represents a critical moment for the neighborhood. The Fenway now faces a choice between maintaining its status as a public-facing dining destination or further specializing as a restricted-access life science campus, a move that could permanently alter the social fabric of the district.

Sen. Collins' tax relief legislation wins Ways & Means approval

Special to the Sun

The Massachusetts Senate's Committee on Ways and Means voted last week to advance bipartisan property tax relief measures, including An Act Relative Municipal Property Tax Relief, authored by Senator Nick

Collins. This legislation would provide cities and towns the authority to issue direct rebates to homeowners by tapping the surplus fund.

Currently, the City of Boston has more than \$552 million in available surplus funds. Senator Collins believes a portion of that

excess should be returned to taxpayers.

A similar approach was taken at the state level in 2022, when the Governor and Legislature issued rebates after tax revenues exceeded the cap established under voter-approved law MGL Chapter 62F, which limits the growth of state tax collections.

"With so much in the City of Boston's surplus fund, increasing residential property taxes was unnecessary, unfair and clearly inequitable," said Senator Collins. "To cancel out that tax increase, my legislation would authorize the City to issue direct rebates to homeowners."

The tax relief bills would provide additional and enhanced options for cities and towns to ease the property tax burdens on homeowners.

"This is an issue that directly impacts seniors, families and homeowners across Boston and the Commonwealth," Collins said. "These tax relief proposals would bring immediate relief to those feeling the brunt of municipal property tax increases."

the burden on individuals and small business owners.

To expand relief for older residents, Senator Collins is updating the 41C Senior Property Tax Exemption by increasing the maximum exemption from \$500 to \$1,500, tying income eligibility to 50 percent of Area Median Income, and raising asset limits to \$80,000 for single seniors and \$110,000 for married couples.

A reasonable abatement process amendment would allow property owners appealing their assessments to pay taxes based on the prior year's valuation while their appeal is pending, and clarifies filing deadlines to ensure consistent and fair procedures.

To prevent unfair overvaluation, a separate measure prohibits residential assessment increases of five percent or more in a single year unless new construction or significant rehabilitation has occurred.

Senator Collins is also advancing a Property Tax Relief for Veterans amendment that eliminates income limits for veterans seeking property tax exemptions, ensuring those who served are not denied access to relief as he works to move these proposals forward with urgency.

"We are hitting the ground running in the new year to make property tax relief a reality as these bills move to the Senate floor with urgency," said Senator Collins.

WATER-MAIN ERUPTS IN THE BACK BAY



D. MURPHY PHOTO

Workers are seen responding to a repair a broken water-main on the area of Newbury streets and Arlington streets at around 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 7. The break happened in that area at about 1:30 a.m., leaving the area covered in mud ahead of the morning commute.

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day events around The Boston area

Boston Children's Chorus: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert

Boston Symphony Hall

On January 19, at 4 p.m. ET, BCC takes the stage at Boston's iconic Symphony Hall as we explore the legacy of Good Troublemaker, Congressman John Lewis, and his journey from the Edmund Pettus Bridge to becoming the "Conscience of Congress."

BYSO: Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Faneuil Hall Marketplace

Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (BYSO) and The Museum of African American History come together to celebrate and honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 19, at 1 p.m. in Faneuil Hall. The tribute to Dr. King will feature classical music, spirituals and freedom songs.

Cambridge MLK Day of Service and Learning

Central Square Church

The 16th annual Cambridge MLK Day of Service and Learning will be held on Monday, Jan-

uary 19 (2-5 p.m.). Many Helping Hands and partners organize one of the largest single-day service events in New England and we are proud that the event has become a Cambridge...

City Year Greater Boston's MLK Day of Service

Condon K-8 School

Join us at the Condon K-8 School in South Boston for an impactful day of service on Monday, January 19, to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and support our work in school with students. Projects will include packing resource kits for schools and community.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration

Peabody Essex Museum

Join us as we celebrate the legacy and leadership of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Come explore America, A Hymnal, David Boxer's The Black Books, Alison Saar's Weight and other works that examine social justice, identity and freedom across the generations.

Mass. Convention Center Authority Board appoints John Barros Interim Executive Director

Special to the Sun

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) Board of Directors today voted unanimously to appoint John Barros as Interim Executive Director of the Authority, with a start date of January 14, 2026.

Barros brings more than 25 years of leadership experience across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, with a dedicated career focused on economic development, equitable growth, and community impact. From 2014 to 2021, he served as Chief of Economic Development for the City of Boston, where he led the creation of a newly consolidated Economic Development Cabinet focused on equity and inclusion, and advanced initiatives to create jobs, strengthen tourism, train the workforce, and revitalize neighborhoods.

Most recently, Barros served as Managing Principal at Civitas Builders, a Boston-based firm focused on improving communities through responsive real estate development and strategic project execution.

"As Massachusetts prepares for an extraordinary,

nation-leading year ahead for events, tourism and economic development, the MCCA is going to play a pivotal role," said Governor Maura Healey. "I'm confident that under John's experienced and strategic leadership, the Authority will continue fulfilling its mission to boost our economy and competitiveness, and I thank the MCCA Board for its work to ensure stability at this vital organization."

"John's proven track record in driving economic development for the region combined with his ability to build consensus and collaborate effectively, makes him the ideal leader to guide the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority into its next chapter," said MCCA Board Chair Emme Handy. "On behalf of the Board, we look forward to working with John and have the utmost confidence in his ability to provide strong, effective leadership for the Authority."

Earlier in his career, Barros spent 14 years as Executive Director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), leading the nation's largest urban community land trust and

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration 2026

George Sherman Union

An annual tradition by The Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground and its partners. *This event is not at the Howard Thurman Center. It will be held at the George Sherman Union. The Howard Thurman Center, the City of Boston, BU African American & Black Diaspora Studies.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Franklin Park Zoo

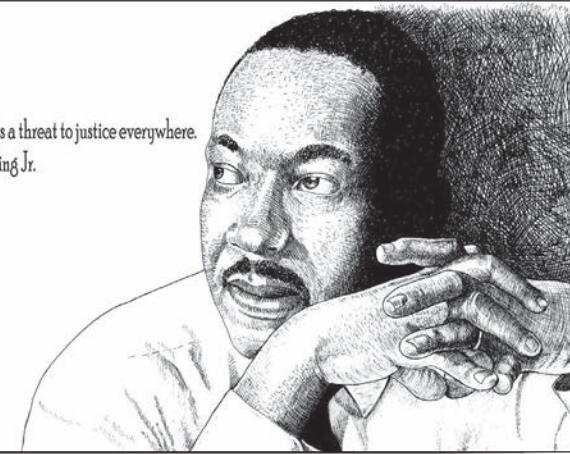
Franklin Park Zoo

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Franklin Park Zoo and Stone Zoo will offer free admission on Monday, January 19. Advance tickets are not required. Join us for keeper and educator chats—your chance to dive into the world of our amazing animals.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Stone Zoo

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Franklin Park Zoo and Stone Zoo will offer free admission on Monday, January 19. Advance tickets are not

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



required. Join us for keeper and educator chats—your chance to dive into the world of our amazing animals.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Free Admission

Institute of Contemporary Art

The ICA is offering FREE admission for all on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 19. Free advanced tickets are required and will be available to reserve beginning on Sunday, January 18 at 10 a.m. Celebrate the legacy of MLK with art-making and three acclaimed exhibitions

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast

The Westin Copley Place, Bos-

ton

On Monday, January 19, we will gather as the Beloved Community for the 56th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast. This year of commemoration, celebration, and activation carries additional historical resonance.

MLK Day

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Join us for our annual MLK Day Open House. This year, the MFA offers free admission for Massachusetts residents. Celebrate the legacy of Dr. King by surrounding yourself with art making, performances, and talks with members of our community!



Headshot-John Barros.

helping establish it as a national model for community-driven development and equitable neighborhood revitalization.

"John will bring dynamic leadership to this important role at a consequential moment for Boston and the Commonwealth," said Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. "His economic development experience, knowledge of the city, and dedication to community will steer the MCCA to greater collaboration and success. I look forward to working with him on making Boston the leading destination

and hub—starting with preparing for a big summer as we host the 250th commemorations, Tall Ships, and the World Cup."

As chief of Economic Development for the City of Boston under Mayor Martin J. Walsh, Barros co-chaired the development of Imagine Boston, the city's first citywide comprehensive plan, and oversaw initiatives focused on access to capital, local wealth creation, job connections, and neighborhood-centered growth. Under his leadership, Boston added 140,000 new jobs and significantly expanded public investment in workforce development and community-centered economic strategies.

"I am honored to step into this role at such a critical moment for the MCCA and grateful to the Board for their support and confidence," said John Barros. "As a world-class cultural and economic engine, what happens here impacts not just Boston, but the entire Commonwealth. I am looking forward to working with the team and ensuring we continue to deliver on our mission of driving economic impact, fostering a fair and equitable work-

place, and event excellence."

As Interim Executive Director, Barros will oversee the MCCA's venue portfolio and operations, including the Thomas M. Menino Convention & Exhibition Center, the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center, and the Lawn on D, while advancing the Authority's mission to drive economic impact through events and tourism.

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority owns and oversees the operations of the Thomas M. Menino Convention & Exhibition Center (MCEC), the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center, Convention Center Carpark & The Landing in Springfield, MA, the Boston Common Parking Garage, The Lawn On D and The Lot On D. The MCCA's mission is to deliver world-class event experiences that drive statewide economic growth, foster innovation, and exceed customer expectations all while cultivating a workplace culture that values excellence, inclusivity, and employee well-being.

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

DEREK KOYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Charlie Humber, Chris Callis, and Ryan Mullaney look on as Mark Froot strikes the ball.



Charlie Humber strikes the ball.



Charlie Humber strikes the ball.



Chris Callis, Charlie Humber, Ryan Mullaney, and Mark Froot.



Ryan Mullaney locks in on the ball before striking.



Sam Khalifa takes a shot while James Stout watches.

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP



Scott Arnold, Sam Khalifa, James Stout, and Chris Callis.



James Stout watches as Sam Khalifa takes a shot.



James Stout races into a shot.



Scott Arnold shoots while Chris Callis prepares to counter.



James Stout, Sam Khalifa, Chris Callis, and Scott Arnold.



Scott Arnold watched as Chris Callis takes a shot.



Chris Callis takes a shot.



Chris Callis his the wall following the ball as Scott Arnold prepares his shot.



James Stout takes a shot.



After winning the Men's Finals, Chris Callis and Sam Khalifa pose with Charlie Humber and Chris Spahr.



HOIL KIM PHOTO

Tom Poor, (second from right) a local squash legend is shown holding his plaque for the US Squash President's Cup. This award was presented to Poor at the Pro-Am Doubles Championships that was held at the University Club over the last weekend. This award is the US Squash's highest annual service award and is regarded as its most prestigious honor. Shown with Poor from left are Tournament Committee members Charles Humber, Chris Spahr, Poor and James Zug, US Squash Senior Correspondent.

OBITUARIES

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FRESH AND LOCAL

Savory Pancakes

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

When you think of pancakes, do you picture a stack of golden discs with a big pat of melting butter and a cascade of maple syrup? That is one side of the pancake story. The other side is all the savory pancakes that people enjoy around the world. Today, we'll give you some ideas for pancakes that are perfect for a hearty breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

World Tour

You may have already enjoyed savory pancakes in international versions at home or abroad. Perhaps you've tasted French crêpes or buckwheat gallettes, Indian roti, Japanese okonomiyaki, Vietnamese banh xeo, Ethiopian injera, Latin American tortillas, or Eastern European Blini, but didn't consider these pancakes.

Wikipedia defines this food as "... a flat type of batter bread like cake, often thin and

round, prepared from a starch-based batter that may contain eggs, milk, and butter, and then cooked on a hot surface such as a griddle or frying pan."

Pick Your Starch

Many pancakes begin with all-purpose flour. But that is not the only option you can use to explore the world of savory pancakes. Injera is made with teff flour, and the batter is fermented to create the lovely texture that soaks up and holds the food you pick up with it.

Buckwheat gallets may be made with 100% gluten-free buckwheat flour. However, many cooks add some wheat flour because it makes the batter easier to work with. If you're gluten intolerant, ask before you order this pancake. The same is true of buckwheat blini.

Cornmeal pancakes are among our favorites. Johnny cakes, or journey cakes, are tra-

ditional New England cuisine said to have originated in Rhode Island. Think of the mix-ins you can add to a cornmeal pancake to create a savory meal. Beyond tacos or arepas, we recommend making a simple cornmeal pancake recipe with less sugar, adding corn kernels, jalapeño, and chili powder, and topping it with leftover meat and cheese.

Chickpea flour is used to make pancakes in both Asia and Italy.

The website Serious Eats has a great article on Italian farinata, with tips to make it without ending up with a dry, uninteresting result. Like many serious eaters, Daniel Gritzer uses ratios. "The key to custardy farinata is to use the right ratio of water to chickpea flour: three to one by weight, respectively. You'll end up with a batter that looks very thin and watery: That's okay, it's what you want."

Mix, Top, Fill, or Roll

How you turn a pancake



A Dutch Baby is another pancake variation you can fill with savory ingredients.

savory is up to you. You can add mix-ins from a favorite flavor profile. You can use it as a base and top it with the ingredients from an Irish breakfast. You can fill it and roll it like a crêpe or roti. As is often the case with classic foods, you can create a great meal with leftovers and reduce food waste.

One final note that may account for many pancake failures is that many recipes call for resting the batter for a recommended period. Resting allows

the flour to hydrate fully and, in some cases, ferment.

When you see a form of pancake on an ethnic food menu, give it a try. If you love it, you can check out the recipe. You might find it is relatively simple to make, and could add some variety to your menu rotation.

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

The Museum of African American History marks a century of Black history commemorations throughout February

Special to the Sun

In 2026, Black History Week will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The observance was expanded into a monthlong celebration in 1970, reflecting the growing recognition of the importance of Black history and culture. To honor this historic milestone, the Museum of African American History | Boston & Nantucket (MAAH) invites the public to take part in a vibrant series of programs, many offered at no cost, at its 46 Joy Street location on Boston's Beacon Hill. From wellness and music to poetry and thought-provoking discussions, these events honor Black history, creativity, and community across generations. All programs are open to the public. To RSVP and for additional information please visit maah.org/events.

Threads of Legacy: Pop Up Shop

Throughout the month of February, a pop-up shop inside MAAH will feature a limited-edition collection of silk scarves honoring the resil-

ience, and lasting impact of the Black women leaders who lived on Beacon Hill's North Slope during the 19th century. Developed through a collaboration between MAAH and the Bee Blunt fashion brand, the designs incorporate historic maps, architectural details, and symbolic references to activism. The 25" x 25" scarves are available for \$55 each or \$160 for all three while supplies last.

Jump Into the Past:

Teen Takeover

Sunday, Feb. 1, 1-3 p.m.

FREE

MAAH and the Mayor's Office for Youth and Engagement welcome teens to an afternoon of food, fun and entertainment. Young people aged 11 to 18 will take part in a scavenger hunt, connect with friends, explore exhibits a, tour the African Meeting House, and meet Boston's Youth Poet Laureate, and enjoy a performance.

Saturdays with Sheila:

Yoga at MAAH

Saturday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m.-12

FREE

p.m.
FREE

Join yogi Sheila Thorne of Bous Yoga for an all-levels yoga class which is held on the first Saturday of each month. Arrive early to secure a mat or bring one from home.

Children's Storytime:

We Go Slow

Saturday, Feb. 7, 1-2 p.m.

FREE

Artist, poet, and author Mariadessa Ekere Tallie will read from her award-winning picture book *We Go Slow*, which follows a young girl and her grandfather as they take a walk through their neighborhood. Ideal for children ages 4-8, this gentle and contemplative story celebrates the quiet joy of slowing down and noticing the world around us. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

A Little History for Kids: An Interactive Workshop Celebrating Black Historical Figures

Sunday, Feb. 8, 1-2 p.m.

FREE

Violinist Caden Burston of

Castle of Our Skins, a non-profit celebrating Black artistry through music, introduces children to historical figures including author Phillis Wheatley, inventor Garrett Morgan, and President Barak Obama. Elementary school aged children are encouraged to sing, clap, move, and imagine as they explore the stories of trailblazing figures. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

New Guinea Joy Walking Tour: A Tour Through Boston's Black Heritage

Sunday, Feb. 8, 2-4 p.m.

\$30 for adults, \$15 for youth 18 and under.

Together, MAAH, the West End Museum and Afrimericana Academy trace Boston's earliest Black roots, from the North End's historic New Guinea Settlement to Joy Street on Beacon Hill which by the 1800s was the center of the city's burgeoning Black community. This tour looks at the lives of the free Black Bostonians who shaped history from the colonial era through abolition and beyond.

Flower Arranging With Pilon Fleur

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
FREE

Just in time for Valentine's Day, Wendy Alexis-Janvier, founder of Pilon Fleur, will guide participants as they create colorful bouquets with refreshments provided. The session will cover basic floral design techniques, including flower selection, color balance, and arrangement. Everyone will leave with a one-of-a-kind bouquet, and refreshments will be served. Donations are welcome and encouraged.

From Ideas to Institutions: The Process of Making Black History

Friday, Feb. 13, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

FREE

Discover how Black history is created, preserved, and celebrated. Angela Tate, Chief Curator and Director of Collections at MAAH; Kyera Singleton, public historian and Executive Director of the Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford; and edu-

Real Estate Transfers

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PRICE

BACK BAY

Bresler, Carol J	Rich Colorful Inv LLC	167 Commonwealth Ave #5	\$1,800,000
Jody M Kipnis Ft	Todd Ruderman 2002 RET	400 Stuart St #28D	\$583,419
Smith, Stephen	Bero 3rd, George L	53 Clarendon St #1	\$1,300,000
Rios, Barbara V	Tire Investments LLC	69 Church St #1	\$2,600,000

BEACON HILL

Post, Alexandra	The Doucette & Fisher Rt	70-72 Mount Vernon St #BA72	\$833,000
Harris, Dylan	21 Beacon Street 4s T	21 Beacon St #4S	\$540,000

BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE

Spacone, Aaron	Hagerty, Matthew C	27 Appleton St #1	\$2,925,000
McLP Asset Company Inc	Wang, Feng	40 Traveler St #507	\$1,043,142

DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT

Thomson, Melissa A	Byrne, Patrick J	110-112 Commercial St #5	\$830,000
Desravines, Rudie P	Downey, Richard	156 South St #1L	\$492,000
Rupley Ft	Abrano, Kim S	343 Commercial St #212	\$2,275,000
Sommer, Jonathan	MCAF Winthrop LLC	240 Devonshire St #3804	\$2,390,000

BLACK HISTORY (from Page 10)

tor Jennifer Turner, board director for Communitas, an organization fostering inclusive and engaged communities in Greater Boston, will share the stories, strategies, and visions behind the institutions that honor Black history.

The program will be followed by a celebration of Frederick Douglass' 208th birthday, featuring music and refreshments.

Digging Deeper into Black Voices of the Revolution
Tuesday, Feb. 17, 5-7 p.m.
FREE

Hear the stories that history often overlooks. UMass Boston Professor Dr. Nedra Lee and MAAH's Chief Curator and Director of Collections will discuss the creation of the Museum's newest exhibition, Black Voices of the Revolution. From rare artifacts to AI-driven displays, this exhibit invites visitors to engage with history in a new way.

Storytime at the Museum: Joy Takes Root
Thursday, Feb. 19, 10-11 a.m.
FREE

Author Gwendolyn Wallace will share her children's picture book, Joy Takes Root, which follows a young girl as she connects with the earth, learns to grow plants, and honors her family's

gardening traditions. Reviewers have called Joy Takes Root "a beautiful ode to both the natural world and intergenerational cultural wisdom..." Recommended for children ages 3-8. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

MAAH Lunch Club, A Taste of the Diaspora
Saturday, Feb. 21, 12-3 p.m.

\$50 per person.

Enjoy Southern hospitality at its best. Savor a flavorful meal created in collaboration with Heritage Market and award-winning chef Larry J of Larry J's BBQ Café followed by a performance and poetry workshop featuring Boston poet Amanda Shea.

Black Wellness Retreat
Sunday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
\$40 per person

This half-day retreat invites adults 18 and up to focus on rest, creativity, and connection. Through movement, storytelling, and shared meals, participants will explore ways to nurture themselves and build community. The Haus of Glitter, a dance company and performance lab, offers a space to refresh, recharge, and engage with others in meaningful ways.

US Premiere: In Search of Phillis

Wheatley Peters
Thursday, Feb. 26, 6-8 p.m.
FREE

Executive Producer and Director Leslie Askew, founder of Askew Films, and Executive Producer Turlough White, the company's head of production, will host the premiere of their new documentary *In Search of Phillis Wheatley Peters*. The filmmakers will examine the remarkable life of Wheatley Peters, the first African American woman—and only the third American woman—to publish a book of poetry. Enslaved in Boston and later emancipated, she mastered English, Greek, and Latin, composing elegant verse on religion, freedom, and historic figures.

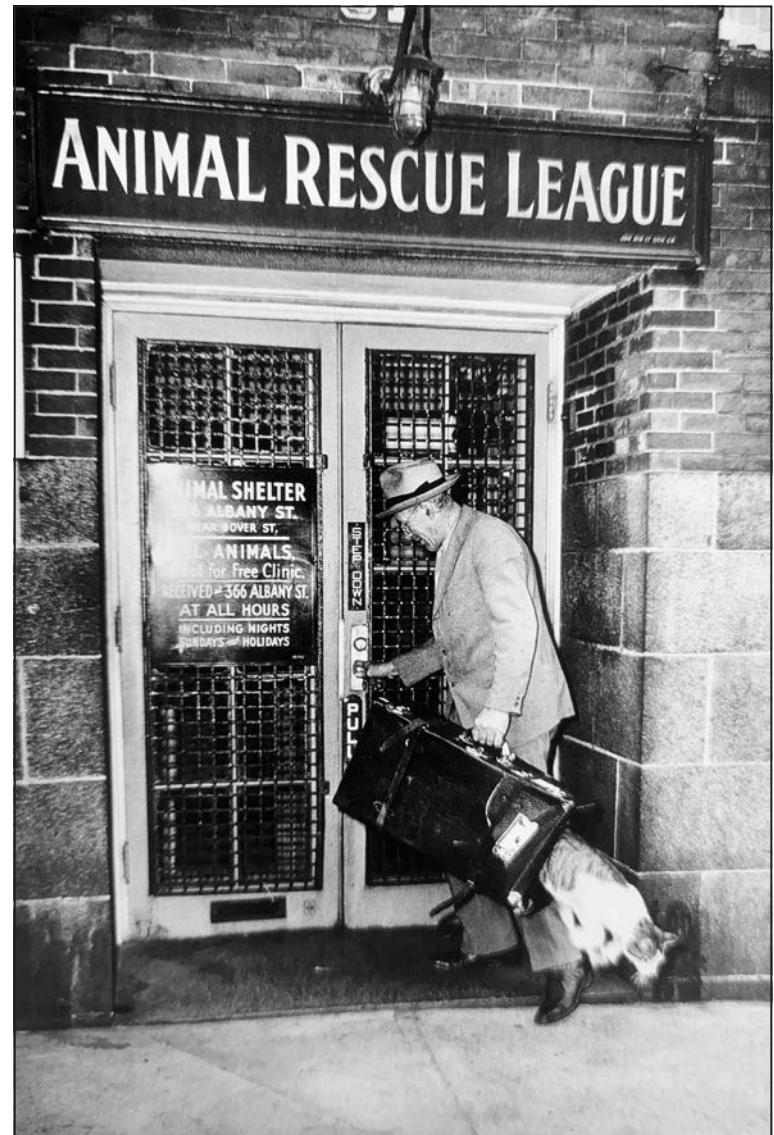
Suite for a Minor Meeting, Live Performance
Feb. 28, 5-7 p.m.
FREE

Join Tufts University Art Galleries and MAAH for *Suite for a Minor Meeting*, a new site-specific performance by Jonathan González, a Magical Thinking of Systems and Belief—commissioned artist who works at the intersections of choreography, sculpture, text, and media. This special presentation, featuring Ogechi Okoye and Valentine Umeh, takes place at the African Meeting House on the MAAH campus.

Attention to Detail

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The squirrel sculpture in the last clue is in front of the Animal Rescue League's current building at 10 Chandler Street. Today's answer is a humorous photo of the entry to their former home at 366 Albany Street. Today, this location is a highway on-ramp.

You'll find the next clue in the Back Bay.

Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



Significant drought conditions declared in central and northeast regions

Special to the Sun

Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper has declared the Central and Northeast Regions have worsened to a Level 2—Significant Drought. Conditions also declined in nearly all other regions, moving the Southeast Region to a Level-1 Mild Drought and the Millers River Basin to a Level 3-Critical Drought. In the Islands Region, Dukes County has returned to Normal Conditions, and Nantucket County has moved to a Level 3-Critical Drought. Conditions remain unchanged in the Western, Connecticut River Valley, and Cape Cod Regions.

Drought is a look back at conditions over a period of time. The Drought Management Task Force (DMTF) collected and analyzed data from August 2024 through December 2025. Despite minor improvements at a few locations, drought conditions have continued in most of Massachusetts.

“Continued snow and rainfall are needed to alleviate the drought that many regions in our state are experiencing this winter,” said EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper. “Groundwater levels still need to recover, so as we get closer to the growing season, we encourage everyone to continue to follow state guidance and local water restrictions. This will help ensure we have enough water available for our essential needs.”

During December, Massachusetts received rainfall ranging from 3 to 4 inches, but the month ended with totals at 1-2 inches below normal. However, when looking back over the past 3 to 6 months, precipitation deficits persist.

The current drought, which began in 2024, has had significant impacts on the natural environment, including the drying of streams in nearly all regions, lower water levels in lakes and ponds, resulting in exposed banks, and impeding fish passage out to the ocean. Although local water supplies are currently stable, as the drought persists and winter recharge is reduced, it is prudent for all to be very conservative and save water whenever possible.

As outlined in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, continued monitoring of drought conditions must continue. The drought levels also require ongoing coordination among state and federal agencies to implement drought response actions such as water use restrictions. Additionally, engagement with municipalities, including local Boards of Health (BOH), is essential. This includes providing technical outreach and assistance to water suppliers and affected municipalities. Residents are asked to report to their local BOH in case of wells drying up; BOHs are asked to report on the condition of local private wells.

Residents can report dry environmental conditions and sub-

mit photos to help monitor the situation on the Massachusetts Water Impact Reporter. Additionally, a FAQ is now available for questions regarding the current drought status and water conservation; and private well owners can go here for information on how the drought may impact them.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will continue to assist communities in managing their water systems. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water supply system is not experiencing drought conditions.

Below are recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within a Level 1-Mild Drought, Level 2-Significant Drought, Level 3-Critical Drought including those utilizing a private well. Residents and businesses are strongly urged to check with their local water system in case more stringent watering restrictions are in place. Many systems may have other more severe local conditions and constraints on water supply.

For Regions in Level 3 – Critical Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use
- Follow state water conservation actions and any local water use restrictions
- Monitor total household water use shown on your water bill for sudden increases, which often indicate leaks. Use the

MA Home Water Use Calculator tool to evaluate household water use.

- Fix any toilet or faucet leaks immediately. Check for leaks in homes and businesses regularly by:

- Checking water meters for constant dial movement
- Using dye tabs to check for toilet leaks
- Conducting regular inspections of all pipes and fixtures, including those located in utility rooms, crawlspaces, and other hidden areas
- Use dishwashers rather than handwashing dishes. Run the dishwasher only on a full load
- Aggressively reduce indoor water use by:

- Reducing shower length and consider using a shower timer
- Running washing machines only on a full load
- Not letting water run while brushing and shaving
- Replacing old fixtures and appliances with water-efficient ones. Make sure toilets, faucets, and showerheads are WaterSense labeled
- Stop all non-essential water use

Immediate Steps for Communities/Municipalities:

- Limit or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; and,
- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use
- Provide timely information on the drought and on water conservation tips to local residents and businesses taking advantage of the state’s library of outreach materials
- Enforce water use restrictions with increasingly stringent penalties
- Strongly discourage or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing
- Establish or enhance water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities/Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state’s library of outreach materials

- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates
- Prepare to activate emergency inter-connections for water supply

- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan

For Regions in Level 2 – Significant Drought Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- Follow local water use restrictions;
- Fix indoor leaks, such as from toilets, faucets, and showers, which result in more than 60 percent of indoor use; and,
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities.

Immediate Steps for Communities/Municipalities:

- Limit or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; and,
- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use.

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities/Municipalities:

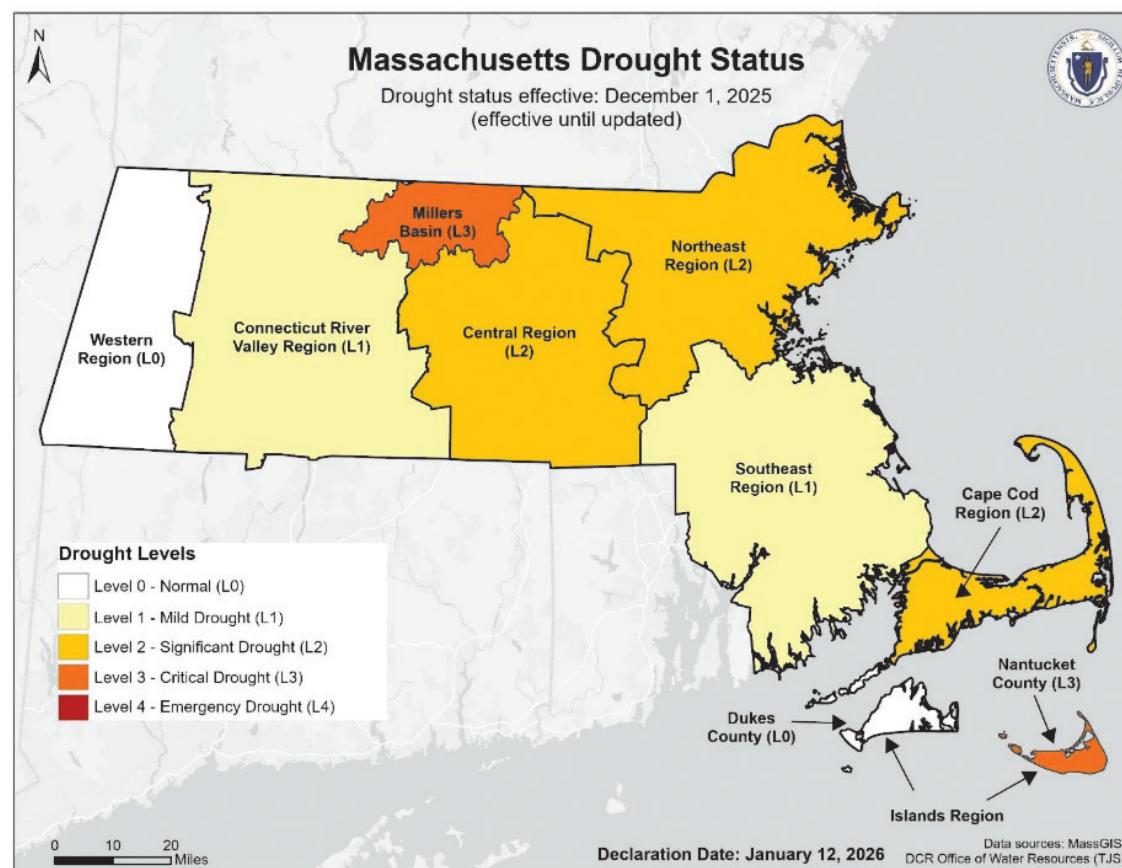
- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state’s library of outreach materials;
- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;
- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates;
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan.

For Regions in Level 1 – Mild Drought Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities;

Communities/Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state’s library of outreach materials



Wine enthusiast Magnus Cleveland natural on the job at DeLuca's on Newbury

By Dan Murphy

While he might have come to his current role as wine cellar manager for the Newbury Street location of DeLuca's Market in a somewhat roundabout manner, Magnus Cleveland was an immediate natural on the job.

Raised outside Buffalo in Lockport, N.Y., Cleveland began stocking shelves at a nearby 'big-box' liquor store, Premium Wine and Spirits, as soon as he met the age requirement of 18. (His father worked for many years as the store's general manager and just retired this past Dec. 31.)

Cleveland continued to work at Premium during the summers while attending Middlebury College in Vermont. He would graduate in 2020, earning a bachelor's degree in Classics and Classic Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics.

After college, Cleveland worked as a historic preservation intern at Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky, before he returned again to Pre-

mium in early '22, this time to assume the role of full-time wine associate.

Cleveland attributes much his love of wine to what he learned in this role, but the seeds were first planted for him a few years earlier when he visited Italy and learned first-hand how integral wine is that country and its culture.

In August of 2023, Cleveland relocated to the Boston area to work on the preservation staff for Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. He also soon applied for a position at DeLuca's, which he learned was co-owned by another Middlebury alum, Victoria Aiello.

Cleveland came on board at DeLuca's on Newbury Street in a part-time capacity in March of 2024, and as more of his ideas were implanted and his responsibilities there grew, so did his role within the business.

Today, Cleveland serves not only as the wine cellar manager for the Newbury Street store, but

he also now runs the beer program at both that location and at DeLuca's other store on Charles Street.

As he seeks out new wine and craft beer to stock the shelves, Cleveland said he looks for products that best align with DeLuca's values, not only as a small, family business but also a business owned by women.

Furthermore, Cleveland said he hopes DeLuca's will become more of a destination for wine lovers, as well as a "neighborhood resource," where patrons can request a special product be put on order, or just ask a general question regarding wine.

"The world of wine can be a little difficult to navigate, and we want to be here to make that journey a little easier for them," said Cleveland.

DeLuca's Market is located at 239 Newbury St. in the Back Bay, as well as at 11 Charles St. on Beacon Hill. Visit delucas-market.com for more information.



D. MURPHY PHOTO

Magnus Cleveland, wine cellar manager for DeLuca's Market on Newbury Street.

BPLF hosts free estate planning webinar for same-sex couples and non-traditional families

Special to the Sun

The Boston Public Library Fund (BPLF) is proud to announce that it will host an online Zoom free webinar on Wednesday, February 4, 12:30-1:30 p.m., featuring Scott E. Squillace, Esq., for an in-depth program exploring the unique estate planning considerations affecting same-sex couples and non-traditional families.

In the wake of shifting federal administrations, LGBTQ+ individuals have faced evolving questions about marriage rights, legal protections, and long-term

planning. This program will trace the history of LGBTQ+ rights and the development of key case law, examining how these legal changes impact estate planning today. Attendees will gain insight into the advantages and disadvantages of marriage from tax and estate perspectives, as well as the specialized planning strategies available to same-sex couples. Mr. Squillace will also discuss emerging risks in the current political climate and outline proactive steps attorneys and clients can take to safeguard their interests.

This free webinar is essential

for same-sex couples considering marriage and for professionals advising them on estate planning strategies. Following the presentation, Mr. Squillace will answer questions from the audience. Register here: www.bplfund.org/ events.

The mission of the BPLF is to provide financial support to the Boston Public Library, ensuring that it remains viable, engaging, accessible, and free to all. The fund fulfills this mission by working in partnership with the library, donors, and other funders in supporting BPL programs and special initiatives.

Support from the Fund supplements, but does not supplant, other BPL resources, including City of Boston funding.

With over 38 years of legal experience and a career dedicated to serving the LGBTQ+ community, Scott E. Squillace, Esq. brings extensive knowledge and practical guidance to this important topic. He is the author of *Whether-to-Wed: A Legal and Tax Guide for Gay and Lesbian Couples* and has spoken nationally on LGBTQ+ estate planning. He is the founder of Squillace & Associates, P.C., a boutique law firm located in

Boston's historic Back Bay. His practice focuses on estate and business planning, with a special emphasis on tax and philanthropic planning for high-net-worth individuals and families.

Scott holds a bachelor's degree from Fordham University, studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris, and earned his J.D. from the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He resides in Boston, MA and Palm Springs, CA, with his husband and their two silver labs.

DROUGHT (from Page 12)

reach materials;

- Provide timely drought and water conservation information to residents and businesses;
- Check emergency inter-con-

nections for water supply; and,

- Develop a local drought management plan (learn more here).

State agencies will continue

to closely monitor and assess conditions across the state, coordinate any needed dissemination of information to the public, and help federal, state, and

local agencies prepare additional responses that may be needed in the future. The DMTF will meet again on February 10 at 9:30 AM. For further information

on water conservation and what residents can do, visit the EEA's drought and water conservation pages.

DO YOU NEED TO PLACE A LEGAL NOTICE?
Don't Forget to check with the Courts to see if you qualify for a FEE WAIVER

Healey announces safety reforms following release of the ALR Commission's final report

Special to the Sun

Governor Maura Healey announced a comprehensive set of reforms to strengthen safety, transparency and consumer protections in assisted living residences (ALRs) across Massachusetts. This action follows the submission of the ALR Commission's final report to the Legislature, which outlines both regulatory and legislative solutions to improve the safety and well-being of residents.

The ALR Commission was established through the 2024 Act to Improve Quality and Oversight of Long-Term Care and undertook an extensive review of the ALR sector to ensure it continues to meet the needs of an aging population while prior-

itizing resident health and safety. The Commission was expected to file its final report on August 1, 2025. Following the tragic fire at Gabriel House in Fall River, Governor Healey signed into law an extension passed by the Legislature so that the Commission had additional time to incorporate lessons learned from the fire. The Commission voted unanimously by those in attendance to approve its final report on January 12, 2026.

The Commission's recommendations aim to ensure ALRs continue to meet the evolving needs of older adults while significantly strengthening transparency and oversight, emergency preparedness, staffing, and consumer protections. The Commission met 16 times, held two pub-

lic hearings, and incorporated direct feedback from residents, families, industry experts, and first responders. Key recommendations include:

Stronger Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness Standards – enhance inspections and coordination with local fire departments to prevent future tragedies.

Transparent Public Data – create a new statewide online database to provide families with clear access to compliance records, ownership information, and corrective action plans.

Standardize Disclosures – standardize information on services, costs, staffing, and resident rights for easier comparison across ALRs.

Staffing & Nursing Leadership Requirements – ensure every ALR has access to licensed nursing support and leadership training that matches resident needs.

Clear Assessment Practices – ensure consistent evaluations of resident needs with clear notice of any cost or care changes.

Affordability Task Force – create a task force to evaluate new models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is taking immediate action to begin the implementation of a majority of the regulatory and administrative recommendations in this report.

"Every older adult deserves a safe home and peace of mind, and every family deserves transparency and accountability," said Governor Maura Healey. "The heartbreaking tragedy at Gabriel House showed us that we cannot wait to strengthen protections for assisted living residents. We are taking immediate action on these recommendations so we can better protect residents, support families and ensure our assisted living system continues to serve people well into the future."

"Massachusetts has a responsibility to protect residents in every single assisted living community, and families are counting on us to get this right," said Aging & Independence Secretary and ALR Commission Chair Robin Lipson. "These changes will strengthen fire safety, clarify standards and practices that impact resident well-being, and

make critical information more accessible so families can make informed decisions. We have already begun putting stronger protections in place and will work to ensure that residents across the Commonwealth are safer, better supported, and treated with the dignity they deserve."

The Commission recommends legislative action to further strengthen resident safety and consumer protections, including establishing a dedicated funding mechanism to expand state oversight and public reporting, amending state law to authorize certified medication aides in assisted living settings, and creating a statewide registry for ALR executive directors. The report also urges the review of ALR building classifications and the modernization of building code requirements. Finally, the Commission recommends forming an ALR Affordability Task Force to look into sustainable models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

"These recommendations are very important. The Gabriel House fire in Fall River increased the urgency of action," said Senator Patricia Jehlen, member of the ALR Commission. "AGE can implement most of the recommendations about transparency and emergency preparedness without legislation. But it's important to give them the budgetary resources to enforce the rules. The legislature needs to act on the recommended statutory changes, including establishing a dedicated and sustainable funding mechanism, supported by certification and recertification fees and fines."

"ALRs are an important pillar of the Commonwealth's continuum of care for our aging population, helping older adults age in place and maintain their independence. The health, safety and well-being of these residents is paramount. This principle guided the Commission's deliberations over the past year, especially following the devastating fire at Gabriel House in Fall River," said Representative Thomas Stanley, member of the ALR Commission. "I am proud of the comprehensive recommendations the Commission produced in this final report and look forward to the work ahead, including establishing the proposed

ALR Affordability Task Force. I'd like to thank my fellow commission members for their service on behalf of our older adults in ALRs and their caregivers, and salute Secretary Lipson and her team at AGE for their incredible leadership and engagement throughout this process."

"While there are quality residences across Massachusetts, inadequate regulations have allowed bad actors to persist for far too long," said Senator Mark Montigny, lead legislative sponsor of the ALR Commission. "As the devastating Gabriel House fire showed, vulnerable lives are at stake and we need to continue to demand more action from legislators, regulators, and residence owners. I appreciate the hard work of this commission over the past year to come to a set of actionable recommendations that can be implemented immediately and in the near future to help protect residents and improve the overall assisted living model in the Commonwealth."

"I would like to thank the commission for their thoughtful review of existing policies and procedures and for the recommendations outlined in this report that will provide for important enhanced safety measures for all residents of assisted living centers throughout the state in the aftermath of the tragic Gabriel House fire," said Fall River Mayor Paul Coogan.

"I am gratified to see the ALR Commission release its report detailing a number of comprehensive reforms that will strengthen safety and increase transparency for ALRs all across the Commonwealth. The extensive reviews following the tragic fire at the Gabriel House will ensure that our seniors will not only have the latest in health and safety protocols in place, but that ALR staff will be equipped with the highest training and certifications standards in the industry. The new statewide online database will also provide families with clear access to important compliance records, ownership information, and mandate that their facility has a proven corrective action plan in place," said Senator Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. "All older

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Following ICE murder of Renee Good, Pressley and Markey expand push to end qualified immunity for ICE agents, federal officers

Special to the Sun

Following the horrific ICE murder of Renee Good, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) and Senator Edward J. Markey (D-MA) announced the introduction of the Qualified Immunity Abolition Act of 2026. The Qualified Immunity Abolition Act builds on the lawmakers' prior work by granting victims the right to sue federal law enforcement officers—not just state and local—for civil rights violations and abolishing the defense of qualified immunity in these suits. The expanded legislation would help deliver accountability for families abused by law enforcement, including ICE agents.

Congresswoman Pressley delivered a floor speech on the need to end qualified immunity for federal law enforcement,

including immigration officers. Watch the floor speech here.

In June 2020, following the murder of George Floyd, the lawmakers introduced the Ending Qualified Immunity Act to eliminate the court-invented doctrine of qualified immunity that shields government officials from civil liability for misconduct. On Wednesday, a masked Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer shot and killed Renee Good, a 37-year-old mother of three, in Minneapolis, Minnesota—just blocks away from the site of Floyd's murder in 2020.

"We cannot stand idly by while rogue federal agents—emboldened by the Trump White House—ravage our communities, brutalize families, and kill our neighbors on the street in cold blood," said Congress-

woman Pressley. "Our bill sends a powerful message to everyone in America—citizen or not—that when ICE agents break the law, they should and will be held accountable. For Renee Good, Keith Porter, Nenko Gantchev, and every death at the hands of federal law enforcement, Congress must end qualified immunity."

"When masked ICE agents are allowed to kill and harm people with impunity, we have crossed a dangerous threshold in our nation," said Senator Markey. "All too often, the flawed and judge-made doctrine of qualified immunity shields law enforcement officers from liability, even when they commit egregious misconduct or use excessive force. The Qualified Immunity Abolition Act abolishes this unjust defense in cases against

federal law enforcement officers, allowing victims to vindicate their rights in court. With ICE agents trampling over our laws, our rights, and our communities, we must demand justice and hold wrongdoers accountable."

The Supreme Court invented the judicial doctrine of qualified immunity to prevent government officials from being held personally liable in court for misconduct, including for violations of constitutional rights. Congress never intended to shield public officials from this type of liability. In its passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1871, also known as the Ku Klux Klan Act, Congress expressly allowed individuals to sue government officials, including law enforcement officers, who violate their civil rights. In the past few decades, federal courts have gutted this landmark civil rights law by cre-

ating and then expanding the defense of qualified immunity.

Congresswoman Pressley and Senator Markey have been leading the charge to abolish qualified immunity for law enforcement. Last May, ahead of the five-year anniversary of George Floyd's murder, Senator Markey and Representative Pressley introduced the Ending Qualified Immunity Act. Representative Pressley and Senator Markey originally introduced the bill in June 2020 along with then-Congressman Justin Amash (I-MI) following the murder of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement.

Rep. Pressley is also the author of the People's Justice Guarantee, a comprehensive, decarceration-focused resolution that outlines a framework for a fair, equitable and just legal system.

Massachusetts wins \$10 million federal grant for early literacy tutoring

Special to the Sun

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is celebrating that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has been awarded \$10 million from the U.S. Education Department in a new Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant. The state plans to use this funding for early literacy tutoring as part of the administration's comprehensive strategy to improve literacy for all Massachusetts students.

The funding for the 2026-27 school year will support Massachusetts' no-cost, high-dosage early literacy tutoring that the state is funding with \$25 million

in Fair Share dollars at 272 elementary schools. High-dosage tutoring is an evidence-based model shown to deliver significant gains in literacy achievement, particularly for students who are behind grade level, and provides one-on-one or small-group tutoring sessions multiple times a week for at least 10 weeks.

"We know that improving early literacy is vitally important to improving our students' futures, and high dosage tutoring has been proven to be highly effective," said Governor Maura Healey. "This \$10 million grant will help accelerate students' progress in literacy, building a

stronger foundation for success in school."

"When adults work together for students' benefit, great things can happen," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "This \$10 million is a welcome investment in a priority area for our state."

This is the second federal grant the Healey-Driscoll Administration has won to support early literacy, bringing millions of federal dollars into the state to help students learn to read and read well. The state also received a \$38.4 million, over five years, federal literacy grant in September 2024.

These grants align with

the administration's Literacy Launch: Reading Success from Age 3 through Grade 3 initiative. Literacy Launch is focused on transforming early literacy systems in public schools and community-based preschool

programs through grants for high-quality reading materials, technical support, literacy screeners, and coaching, free professional development, and speeding up the review of teacher education programs, which are now required to provide evidence-based literacy training. The administration has secured \$35 million in state funding for the first two years of Literacy Launch through the Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026 budgets.

"This federal grant, paired with other state and federal investments, is a reflection of how important early literacy

is," said Education Secretary Dr. Patrick Tutwiler. "I'm glad to see our tutoring efforts receive this additional support, because we know it's critical for students to be successful readers by third grade."

"Early literacy is an essential investment in improving student outcomes," said Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Pedro Martinez. "We want students to find joy in reading and be ready to use their literacy skills in other subjects. This tutoring will help students make that progress."

Literacy Launch efforts have included Partnership for Reading Success – Massachusetts (PRISM) grants and Literacy Launch Institutes, which trained 500 educators in summer 2025. Another 1,300 educators are expected at institutes this winter and next summer.

ALRs (from Page 14)

adults deserve a safe dwelling and their families the utmost in transparency and accountability for the aging parents."

"The ALR Commission Report and recommendations delivers achievable goals. Legislative action is needed to ensure uniformity and compliance," said Representative Alan Silvia (D-Fall River).

"After our community experienced the tragic and deadly fire at Gabriel House last year, we have been evaluating necessary remedies and changes to prevent

catastrophes like this," said Representative Carole Fiola (D-Fall River). "Thanks to the work of this Commission, we are seeing important changes to help improve safety, affordability, and care. Thank you to Secretary Lipson and my colleague Chair Stanley for their tireless dedication to this issue."

"I thank the ALR Commission for the work and report, it brings attention to needed improvements. I applaud the state's commitment to promptly addressing the issues and lis-

tening to concerns brought forward," said Representative Steven J. Ouellette (D-Westport). "I strongly support efforts to avoid serious incidents, particularly those that help our seniors and those ability hindered."

The Commission's report contains a comprehensive set of reforms that will significantly improve resident safety and ensure families have the information they need to make informed decisions.

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