

PROCLAMATION TO SUPPORT THE RECOGNITION OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ARLINGTON
(introduced on January 25, 2021)

VOTED: THAT THE TOWN ADOPT THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS the Indigenous Peoples of the lands that would later become known as the Americas and specifically the Massachusett tribe in the lands which would later become known as Menotomy (from an Algonquian word), have occupied these lands since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS the Town of Arlington, Massachusetts (the “Town”) wishes to honor our nation and town's Indigenous roots, history and contributions; and

WHEREAS the cultures of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas are worthy of being promoted, their history is rich, diverse, and worthy of celebration; and

WHEREAS the actions and policies of European colonizers of the Americas actively destroyed and suppressed parts of those cultures, and racism has served to perpetuate high rates of poverty for Indigenous Peoples and led to inequities in health, education, and housing, as illustrated most recently with the severe impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous communities; and

WHEREAS the Town has a history of opposing racism, and prominent residents throughout history such as Cyrus Dallin were particularly active in advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS Indigenous Peoples Day was first proposed in Geneva in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas; and

WHEREAS in 1990, representatives from 120 Indigenous nations at the First Continental Conference on 500 Years of Indian Resistance unanimously passed a resolution to transform Columbus Day into an occasion to strengthen the process of continental unity and struggle towards liberation, and thereby use the occasion to reveal a more accurate historical record; and

WHEREAS the District of Columbia, States of Alaska, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin, and localities including Somerville MA, Cambridge MA, Brookline MA, Newton MA, Marblehead MA, Northampton MA, Amherst MA, Portland ME, Los Angeles CA, San Francisco CA, Denver CO, Portland OR, Seattle WA, Columbus OH and many more have adopted Indigenous Peoples Day as a counter-celebration, in lieu of Columbus Day, to promote Indigenous cultures and commemorate the history of Indigenous Peoples; and

WHEREAS Columbus Day commemorates the landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas specifically on the Caribbean islands of The Bahamas on October 12, 1492 and, later, on Hispaniola (present-day countries of the Dominican Republic and Haiti); and voyages of Columbus to the Americas initiated the transatlantic slave trade and the era of conquest, and his

governorship of the Caribbean instituted systematic policies of slavery and extermination of Indigenous populations, especially the Taino/Arawak people whose population was reduced from approximately 8 million to 100,000, being further reduced by the continuation of his policies until near-extinction in 1542.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Select Board votes to proclaim that the second Monday of October shall be commemorated as Indigenous Peoples Day in Arlington, superseding local references to Columbus Day and in recognition of the position of Indigenous Peoples as native to these lands, and the suffering they faced during and since the European conquest; and be it further

RESOLVED that the people of Arlington, as well as local businesses, organizations, and public institutions are encouraged to observe Indigenous Peoples Day by reflecting upon the dispossession of the homelands and villages of the Massachusetts people of this region who lived here for millennia prior to the arrival of European settlers, and upon the history of the other Indigenous Peoples who have lived in Arlington, and by celebrating the survival of Indigenous Peoples and recognizing their struggle to perpetuate and celebrate their ancestral heritage and practices, as well as celebrating the thriving cultures and values that Indigenous Peoples have brought and continue to bring to our Town and the wider community; and be it further

RESOLVED that in any observances, Arlington shall endeavor to include Indigenous representation from amongst its residents and from the Massachusetts tribe and will also seek representation from Indigenous organizations in the area such as the North American Indian Center of Boston, United American Indians of New England, Cultural Survival, and IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org as well as other Arlington community representation from segments of the community; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Arlington Public Schools are encouraged to join in this observance with appropriate exercises and/or instruction in all schools around the time of Indigenous Peoples Day, to the end that the culture, history and diversity of Indigenous Peoples be celebrated and perpetuated; and be it further

RESOLVED that local businesses, organizations, and public institutions are encouraged to evaluate their imagery and insignia, to ensure that representations of Indigenous Peoples are not misappropriated, with a preference for using the Town Seal in official capacities; and be it further

RESOLVED that all Town entities are encouraged to celebrate and recognize the heritage of the peoples indigenous to Massachusetts and Arlington by including the following land acknowledgement at the beginning of all of the Town's public meetings:

“We acknowledge that the Town of Arlington is located on the ancestral lands of the Massachusetts Tribe, the tribe of Indigenous peoples from whom the Colony, Province, and Commonwealth have taken their names. We pay our respects to the ancestral bloodline of the Massachusetts Tribe and their descendants who still inhabit historic Massachusetts territories today.”

; and be it further

RESOLVED that it is requested that the Town Clerk ensure that the Massachusetts Commission of Indian Affairs, North American Indian Center of Boston, IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org, United American Indians of New England, Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness, the Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag, Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribal Council, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), the Nipmuc Nation Tribal Council (including the Hassanamisco and Natick), the Assonet Band of Wampanoags, the Chappaquiddick Wampanoags, the Chaubunagungamaug Nipmuc, the Pocasset Wampanoag, the Herring Pond Wampanoag, and the Seaconke Wampanoag, all of which include descendants of those people indigenous to Massachusetts, as well as the Arlington School Committee, Arlington Advocate, and YourArlington.com receive electronic or paper copies of this Resolution.