



## **Commission to Investigate Racialized Harms Perpetrated Against Black Residents and Workers in Northampton, MA**

### **A Joint Special Commission of the Mayor and City Council**

#### **The Charge**

On February 16, 2023, the Northampton City Council passed Resolution R-23.239 acknowledging the city of Northampton’s history of slavery and complicity in the harmful effects of post-slavery racial segregation, discrimination and systemic racism and committing to the formation of a Commission to Investigate Racialized Harms Perpetrated Against Black Residents and Workers in Northampton (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”). The Commission is charged to consider what initiatives should be funded and implemented by the city to support redress and fair treatment for Black people who live, work, and learn in this community, examine ways to restore, grow, and nourish Black community and culture in Northampton for future generations, and suggest ways the city might meaningfully atone for historic wrongs.

#### **Size, Composition, and Appointment Process**

The Commission shall be a public body of at least nine (9) and not more than eleven (11) members made up of Northampton residents with a demonstrated interest, experience, or expertise in the issues under review by the special commission.

The Mayor and the City Council shall appoint all members by a review process to be determined by each appointing authority.

Appointments shall include the following:<sup>1</sup>

1. A member from the Northampton Human Rights Commission and the Northampton Youth Commission.
2. One representative member from among the community organizations who have advocated for the creation of this commission, such as, but not limited to the Northampton Reparations Committee or the Tikkun Olam Reparations Team.
3. One representative from among Northampton's historical organizations, such as Historic Northampton, Forbes Library, or the Ruggles Center.
4. City Council appointments shall include not more than two (2) City Councilors.
5. The remaining members shall be appointed by an application process administered by the sponsors in cooperation with the mayor's office.

The commission shall include representation of not less than 50% Black members. The commission shall elect its own co-chairs who shall be resident, non-elected members.

Northampton residents interested in serving should send a letter of interest by April 21, 2023, to the Mayor and/or the City Council by mail, email, or other arrangements if needed. Applicants seeking consideration as representatives pursuant to items 2 or 3 should note this in their letter. Organizations

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<sup>1</sup> Organizations nominating members under categories 1 - 4 are asked to prioritize the applications of interested Black members of their groups for consideration.

represented by items 2 and 3 may nominate people for consideration as representatives of their groups. The appointment process shall be completed on or before May 5, 2023, and the Commission shall convene its first organizational meeting no later than May 31, 2023.

### **Meetings, Public Hearings, and Staff Support**

The commission shall set its own meeting schedule as determined by the body. All meetings and public hearings shall comply with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

The Mayor shall file a financial order with the City Council to fund consulting or staff support.

The city will make available to the committee all requested public records and historical documents in its possession at no cost as deemed necessary by the committee.

### **Preliminary and Final Reporting Deadlines**

The Commission shall issue a preliminary report to the Mayor and the City Council on or before May 24, 2024, and release it for public review and comment.

The Commission shall issue a final report with recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council on or before October 5, 2024. If needed, the commission may request extensions of these deadlines.