



**In the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen**

**Upon the recommendation of Councilors Alisa F. Klein and Maureen T. Carney, and the Northampton Human Rights Commission**

**16.093**

**A Resolution**

**Recognizing the Second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton recognizes that the Indigenous Peoples of the lands that would later become known as the Americas have occupied these lands since time immemorial; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton recognizes that Northampton is built upon the ancestral homelands and villages of the Indigenous Peoples of this region without whom the building of the City would not have been possible, to wit, from the Mohegan Tribe the Nipmucs and the Pequots, and from the Mohican Tribe, the Pocumtucs who established the Village of Norwottuck – or Nonotuck -- upon which much of present-day Northampton is situated; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton wishes to uplift the indigenous roots and history of, and contributions to, our city and this country;

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton is committed to respecting and protecting the full range of human rights as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international human rights treaties; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton, in an effort to promote truth, healing, reconciliation, redress, and justice, acknowledges the ongoing trauma and historical harms, acts of genocide, and violations of the human rights of Native American, Alaskan Native, and other American Indigenous Peoples; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton has a responsibility to oppose the systemic racism towards Indigenous People in the United States which perpetuates their income, health, educational, and social inequality; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the fact that the federal government guaranteed the health, safety, and welfare of tribal nations in exchange for over 450 million acres of tribal land, American Indian and Alaska Native citizens experience higher disease rates, lower life expectancy rates, higher dropout rates, and higher poverty rates than any other racial or ethnic group in the country<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the median income of American Indian and Alaska Native households is 70 percent of the median income of all U.S. households, and 28.4 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in poverty compared to 15.3 Americans as a whole<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indians and Alaska Natives have a life expectancy that is 4.2 years less than all other races in the United States and die at higher rates than other Americans from many diseases and harms including

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<sup>1</sup> National Congress of American Indians, "Education, Health, and Human Services," <http://www.ncai.org/policy-issues/education-health-human-services>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census, CB11-FF.22, 11/1/2011

[http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb11-ff22.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb11-ff22.html)

chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, diabetes, assault and homicide, and intentional self-harm and suicide<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that on average, less than 50 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students graduate from high school<sup>4</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Northampton understands that in order to help close the equity gap, government entities, organizations, and other public institutions should change their policies and practices to better reflect and significantly improve the experiences and outcomes of American Indian people; and

**WHEREAS**, the idea of Indigenous Peoples Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native nations to the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas<sup>5</sup>; 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<sup>6</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States federal government, the State of Massachusetts, and the City of Northampton recognize Columbus Day on the second Monday of October, in accordance with the federal holiday established in 1937;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of Northampton, Massachusetts

1. Hereby proclaims that the second Monday in October each year will be known as Indigenous Peoples Day; and
2. Celebrates and honors the foundational contributions of Indigenous People to the history of our City, the State of Massachusetts, and our country; and
3. Encourages the City's schools and other institutions to use Indigenous Peoples Day as a point from which to, throughout the year, reflect upon and learn about the historical abuses and continuing struggles of indigenous nations, and to celebrate the magnificent foundations of the indigenous people of this land upon which our city, state, and country were built; and
4. Encourages businesses and organizations in Northampton to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day; and
5. Shall continue to promote racial, economic, educational, health, and social equity and justice for all people and oppose discrimination towards Indigenous Peoples as it is perpetuated through inequities in income, health, and education.

***~ This resolution was developed thanks to Northampton resident Rachael Naismith who initiated the project and gathered data for inclusion in the resolution. Thanks, as well, to the Smith Campus School sixth grade class of Tom Weiner and Joe Golossi for their December 17, 2015 presentation to the City Council on Columbus and the need for an Indigenous Peoples Day in Northampton.~***

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<sup>3</sup> Indian Health Service, Disparities, January, 2015 <https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities/>

<sup>4</sup> Faircloth, S.C. & Tippeconic, J.W., The Dropout/Graduation Crisis Among American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Failure to Respond Places the Future of Native Peoples at Risk, January, 2010 <http://bit.ly/1cQEDoI>

<sup>5</sup> Curl, John. *Archives of Indigenous Peoples Day*. Retrieved from [http://ipdpowwow.org/Archives\\_1.html](http://ipdpowwow.org/Archives_1.html)

<sup>6</sup> Feeney, Nolan. (2014, Oct 13). How Indigenous People Day Came to Be. *Time*, Retrieved from <http://time.com/3495071/indigenous-peoples-day/>