



HUMAN RIGHTS DAY PROCLAMATION 2023

Councilor Sponsors: Rooney, Taub, Griesemer, Hanneke, De Angelis

Community Sponsors: Human Rights Commission

WHEREAS, Human Rights Day is observed annually each December 10th, commemorating the day on which, in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the United Nations calls on everyone to stand up for someone's rights on Human Rights Day; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations states that “Many among us are fearful about the direction of our country and our world. Disrespect for basic human rights continues to be wide-spread in all parts of the globe. Extremist movements subject people to horrific violence. Messages of intolerance and hatred prey on our fears. Humane values are under attack.” Locally, we have heard expressions of similar concerns from several local organizations. The Town of Amherst hereby affirms its support of these local organizations, which supports marginalized groups such as immigrants and refugees choosing to make the Town of Amherst their home; and

WHEREAS, community members of Amherst have expressed their belief in and commitment to protecting the Human Rights we all share by consistently adopting actions that demonstrate the values we hold as a community; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, Town Meeting adopted a Human Rights Bylaw, establishing the Human Rights Commission, and asserting that it shall be the policy of the Town that no person, public or private, shall be denied any rights guaranteed pursuant to local, state and/or federal law on the basis of race or color, gender, physical or mental ability, religion, socio-economic status, ethnic or national origin, affectional or sexual preference, lifestyle or age. In 2011 this definition was expanded to include gender identity or expression and genetic information; and

WHEREAS, Town Meeting has also adopted a Sanctuary Community By-Law, established Race Amity Day and authorized the Select Board to file a special legislation seeking the ability to provide local voting rights for legal permanent residents residing in Amherst, so that residents may vote in local elections and be elected to local offices in the Community in which they live. It has passed resolutions to create a Human Rights Culture, to assist in the safe resettlement of cleared Guantanamo detainees and does not conduct business with the State of Arizona due to its immigration laws; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has issued, among others, Proclamations in support of Black History Month, Puerto Rico Heritage Month, Tibet Day, Race Amity Day, and Human Rights Day, and has filed special legislation seeking the ability to provide voting rights to legal permanent residents; and

WHEREAS, these actions collectively reinforce the Town of Amherst’s dedication to the fundamental proposition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights- that each one of us, everywhere and at all times, is entitled to the full range of human rights, and that it is every person’s responsibility to uphold them. They bind us together as a global community.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Amherst Town Council hereby proclaims December 10, 2023 Human Rights Day, encourages our community to embrace every opportunity to reflect and embody the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in their work for the community, and urges Amherst residents to celebrate this day with a communal reading of the Declaration of Human Rights at the Bangs Community Center, December 10, 2023, at 4:00 pm. Please join us.

Voted this 4th day of December 2023

Lynn Griesemer,
Amherst Town Council President