

TOWN OF HAMILTON
SELECT BOARD

Hamilton Human Rights Commission

Adopted 11/23/2020
Amended 11/16/2023

Purpose. There shall hereby be established an advisory committee to the Board of Selectmen to be known as the Hamilton Human Rights Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "Commission." The purpose of creating the Commission is to affirm that the Town of Hamilton is an inclusive community that has, as one of its core values, the freedom from discrimination, intolerance, disrespect, bigotry, other forms of micro- or macroaggressions, hatred and oppression, and to reaffirm the Town's commitment to upholding and defending the rights of all individuals to enjoy the free and equal exercise of their rights and privileges, as secured by the Constitutions of the United States and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To that end, the Commission strives to ensure that all persons feel safe in Hamilton and enjoy the equal opportunity to participate in local affairs, including but not limited to education, public accommodation, access to Town services, insurance, credit, banking and health care, regardless of race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, marital or familial status, military or veteran status, socioeconomic status, and/or ex- offender status.

Composition. The Town Manager shall serve as an ex officio member of the Commission. The Commission shall consist of nine (9) voting members:

Town Government Representatives:

1. The Chief of Police or designee;
2. One member of the Hamilton Board of Selectmen, as designated by the Hamilton Board of Selectmen;
3. The Director of the Council on Aging;
4. Non-voting student representative of Hamilton.

At-Large Community Members:

The Board of Selectmen shall appoint six (6) at-large members who shall be Town residents, one of whom may be a high school student. Appointments of the Town residents shall be representative of the demographics of the Town, including without limitation, representative of race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, marital or family status, military or veteran status, socioeconomic status. It is also preferable that the Town residents seeking appointment to the Commission have some demonstrated interest or background in human rights issues. Appointment to the Commission, however, remains within the sole discretion of the Board of Selectmen.

Term. The members who are Town government representatives shall be appointed for terms of three years and shall cease to serve on the Commission if they no longer hold their underlying positions. The six (6) members who are residents of the Town shall be appointed initially as follows, and thereafter for terms of three years: two members for a three-year term; two members for a two-year term; and one member for a one-year term. Any at-large member may be removed with or without cause by the Select Board. Any vacancy that occurs other than by the expiration of a term shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term. The members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

Duties. The Commission shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Select Board, and shall have the following charge and responsibilities:

Recommend program, policies and initiatives to promote diversity, inclusion, awareness and anti-discrimination in the Town:

1. Promote an understanding of the diverse cultures within the Town and surrounding areas by working with other municipal, local and regional human rights organizations through education, organization of community events, conferences, public speaking programs, educational panels, celebrations and other community actions;
2. Serve as a resource to the Select Board with respect to issues that challenge any individual or group's enjoyment of their basic human rights in the community;
3. Annually, and more often as may be requested, provide a written report to the Select Board on the Commission's activities;
4. As often as is desired by the Commission or requested by the Select Board, prepare written or oral reports on racial, religious, ethnic, gender, disability, age, and civic initiatives or relationships, including on police relations, to cultivate and encourage an atmosphere of mutual understanding and harmonious intergroup relationships in Town;
5. Attend and support panels, meetings, conferences, celebrations or other educational or community events held by municipal or regional human rights committees, private or public corporations, organizations, high schools, colleges or universities.
6. Serve as a portal for residents or visitors to report concerns, complaints or questions of real or perceived discrimination or unequal treatment of individuals within the Town of Hamilton.
7. The Commission may report and render recommendations on certain issues involving the Town.
8. The Commission may also report any concerns, complaints, questions or other issues raised by residents or visitors to the Town Manager. The Commission does not have the authority to formally investigate complaints, the power

to subpoena witnesses or take sworn testimony, or the power to adjudicate or mediate the resolution of disputes between individuals or entities.

9. Procedures. The Commission shall annually select from amongst its members a chair, vice- chair and clerk, and may decide whether to select from amongst its members a liaison to the Town of Wenham's Human Rights Commission, if any. The clerk shall be responsible for the preparation of meeting minutes, agendas, and other administrative matters for the Commission. The Commission shall decide on a preliminary calendar of meetings for the _____ year, supplemented as desired by meetings with the Wenham Human Rights Commission, all of which shall be posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
10. A majority of members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, and a majority of those present and voting shall be sufficient for any action taken by the Commission, unless otherwise required by law. The Commission shall be subject to and governed by the requirements of the Open Meeting and Public Records Laws.

This policy may from time to time, be amended by a vote of the Board of Selectmen.

This policy was adopted 11/23/20.

This policy was amended 11/16/2023.

Human Rights Commission Charter Appendix A:

These terms evolve over time and are subject to change.

Further Definitions:

Age: the length of time that a person has lived

Ancestry: one's familial or ethnic descent

Color: the color of one's skin (skin pigmentation other than and especially darker than what is considered characteristic of people typically defined as white)

Disability: any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for, or alters how, the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

Ex Offender Status: one's status as an individual who has been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor offense punishable by incarceration

Familial Status: the actual or supposed condition of having minor children living with the individual or not.

Gender expression: external presentation of one's gender identity, often through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice, which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Gender identity: An individual's personal sense of having a particular gender. One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither- how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

- **Cisgender:** of or relating to a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender:** of or relating to a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. This umbrella term may refer to someone whose gender identity is woman or man, or to someone whose gender identity is nonbinary (see below).
- **Nonbinary:** of or relating to a person who does not identify, or identify solely, as either a woman or a man. More specific nonbinary identifiers include but are not limited to terms such as *agender* and *gender fluid* (see below).
- **Gender fluid:** of or relating to individuals whose identity shifts among genders. This term overlaps with terms such as *genderqueer* and *bigender*, implying movement among gender identities and/or presentations.
- **Agender:** of or relating to a person who does not identify with any gender, or who identifies as neutral or genderless.

Marital Status: means the actual or supposed state of being or having been married, separated or divorced, or not.

Military or Veteran Status: the actual or supposed condition of being or having been in the service of the military, or not.

National Origin: the nation where a person was born

Race: any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits regarded as common among people of shared ancestry

Religion: a particular system of faith and worship, includes lack of religion or atheism

Sexual orientation/ sexuality: a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted.

Examples: heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual.

An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

Socioeconomic Status: one's status relating to or concerned with the interaction of social and economic factors. A place within the social hierarchy based on factors, like education, income and occupation.

Please also see these additional resources for more in depth and expansive definitions:

Cambridge Code of Ordinances: Chapter 2.76 - Human Rights Commission

https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT2ADPE_CH2.76HURICO

CDC: Disability and Health Overview

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>

Human Rights Campaign: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions>

National Council of Teachers of English

<https://ncte.org!statement/genderfairuseoflang/>

Oxford English Dictionary: <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/transgender/transgender-identity-terms-and-labels>

University of Michigan: Inclusion, Diversity & Equity

<https://www.umsystem.edu/media/hr/inclusive-language-handouts.pdf>

Wanna Learn More: Gender identity and sexual orientation visual and terms:

<https://wannalearnmore.com/poster/>