



Town of Stow Select Board

Policy on Proclamations

Adopted February 28, 2023

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A proclamation is an official declaration or announcement issued by the Town of Stow's Select Board to recognize, honor, or commemorate certain people, events, activities, organizations, and issues. The goal of a proclamation is to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary achievements of local citizens and non-profit organizations, to honor occasions of importance and significance, and to increase public awareness of issues to improve the well-being of the citizens of Stow.

Whether to place a request for a proclamation on the Select Board's agenda, and whether to issue a proclamation that is adopted and communicated by the Town of Stow, lies solely within the discretion of the Select Board or the Town Administrator as its designee. Such decision is intended to communicate a message to the public on behalf of the Town, and as such it will be government speech for which the usual constraints of the First Amendment will not apply. In adopting this policy, the Select Board does not intend to open up a forum for public expression on any particular topic.

The Town encourages local and state individuals and organizations to coordinate their efforts with other similar groups before submitting a proclamation request, to ensure proclamations are not duplicative. These public service proclamations are strictly honorary, are not legally binding, and are not intended to be issued for conferences, birthdays, weddings, or anniversaries.

Proclamations will not be issued except in accordance with the Town's Policy on Proclamations (the "Policy"), which may be amended from time to time by the Select Board in the same manner in which it was adopted.

The Town encourages events and activities coordinated to recognize and support the purpose behind the Proclamation.

GUIDELINES

The issuance of a proclamation will comply with the following guidelines. Proclamations generally must have Town-wide significance and demonstrate relevancy to the Town of Stow.

Proclamations generally may be issued for the following purposes:

1. Memorializing special or exemplary events or days, including certain times of celebration, recognition, or mourning.

2. Recognizing retirements from the Town of Stow following twenty-five or more years of continuous service, whether in an employment or volunteer capacity.
3. Supporting local arts and cultural celebrations.
4. Recognizing unique or especially successful local school-related activities, including without limitation, those for academics, athletics, or music.
5. Honoring local nonprofit service groups for their work in the community.
6. Recognizing individuals for outstanding achievements in or for contributions to the community.
7. Supporting public awareness campaigns that have the potential to enhance public health, safety, or wellness.
8. Recognizing other exceptional events, activities, and/or people.

Proclamations generally will not be issued for the following:

1. Groups or individuals from outside the Town of Stow. This includes requests from national, international, or out-of-state organizations, unless a local chapter or office located in the Town of Stow is associated with the request.
2. Matters of a political, ideological, or religious nature.
3. Events or activities that do not benefit and/or relate to the Town of Stow.
4. Events, campaigns, or activities that are contrary to or in opposition to adopted Town policies, plans, regulations, or bylaws.
5. Personal activities that are not of a general public interest, including without limitation, deaths, family reunions, birthdays, anniversaries, groundbreaking, business events, etc.
6. Requests that are duplicative or redundant, particularly where a copy of the original proclamation may be provided instead.
7. Advertisements or commercial promotions.

PROCEDURE

All proclamation requests must be submitted in writing using the attached form at least fourteen (14) business days prior to a regular Select Board meeting. Submission of a proclamation request does not guarantee its issuance. The Select Board will have the discretion to affirm, modify, or deny any proclamation request, consistent with this Policy.

Individual(s) or organization(s) seeking a proclamation must accompany their request with:

1. The contact person's first and last name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address;
2. A brief history with an overview of the person, event, activity, organization, or issue for which a proclamation is sought;
3. Whether funds are to be raised for the event, and who will benefit from the event, if applicable;
4. The proposed name and text of a draft proclamation, which may be approved, modified, or rejected by the Select Board in its discretion;
5. The day, week, and month, when the requested event is to be proclaimed; and
6. Whether the requestor would like the proclamation to be mailed, held for pick-up, or presented during a Select Board meeting.

Upon receipt of a completed application, the Town Administrator or her/his designee shall transmit the proclamation request to the Chair of the Select Board, who may, but is not required to, place the matter on an upcoming Select Board agenda. The Board is under no obligation to consider proclamation requests or to place such requests on its agenda.

If the request for a proclamation is approved by the Select Board, the Board may delegate its preparation and finalization to the Town Administrator or her/his designee. A proclamation may be sent directly to the requestor, held for pick-up at Town Hall, or may be presented publicly at a Select Board meeting, at the sole discretion of the Select Board, depending on timing and the available time and space on the Select Board's agenda.