

**Special Town Meeting - October 16, 2023**

**Article 16 - Fund Awareness and Educational Initiatives to Honor Indigenous Peoples**

**Finance Committee Vote on 10/5/23: 4-3-0  
On Behalf of the 3 Finance Committee "Nay" votes: Lynn Bruneau**

The Preamble of the recently updated Town Charter now includes 2 brief sentences that are also included in the Summary of Article 16:

"We acknowledge, with respect, that we are inhabiting the traditional lands of the Nauset and Wampanoag peoples who have always existed here. We value their roles as past, present, and future guardians of this land."

Select Board Goal #9 for FY24 - which likely most of you have not seen - commits the Select Board to "Engage with Wampanoag Nation & Indigenous People" with the stated Objective - "To learn from indigenous people their culture both past and present" and the Action - to "Meet with Wampanoag leadership and other indigenous community leadership to understand current and future initiatives and develop appropriate forward steps."

That's all. However, the goal to learn from the Indigenous People and to develop appropriate initiatives is a significant one and deserves a more developed course of action with input from all the involved stakeholders. Such a plan would have a clear elaboration on the purpose and magnitude of funding needed. It would likely include a multi-year plan.

This is why some of us voted against Warrant Article 16 as written. We certainly aren't against educational initiatives to honor the indigenous peoples - in fact, we endorse these educational initiatives. We are, however, concerned about dedicating funds without a clearly articulated purpose. It wouldn't hurt to wait for May Town Meeting - to take more time to figure out what we're going to do with the money - and whether \$15k is the right number.

Thank you.