

BACKGROUND

The Town of Wellesley (the Town) has historically observed winter holidays by placing certain cultural symbols on the lawn at Town Hall and on other town buildings. For decades, the Town has also strung white lights on several of the trees and on lampposts in the Town's commercial centers. More recently, wreaths and garlands have been added to the facade of Town Hall and the library buildings, and lights have varied in color in the Town's commercial centers. Town employees have often decorated the interior of Town buildings in ways of their own choosing; for example, the Police Station has been decorated with a lighted tree and a menorah for the last several years.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Holiday Decorations Policy is to set interim Town guidelines for municipal recognition of winter holidays.

APPLICABILITY

“The Town reasserts once again its commitment to celebrate the winter holiday season without regard to any one or more specific religious traditions. Wellesley reaffirms that it is a fully inclusive community” (*Policy Statement re: Holiday Decorations, Nov. 8, 2005*). The Town celebrates winter holidays by displaying cultural symbols of the season without supporting any particular religion.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Select Board is authorized to create policies under Town of Wellesley Town Bylaws Article 19.3.

POLICY

For the winter holiday season of 2024-25:

1. Stringing of lights on town trees and lampposts in commercial districts and for time periods designated by the Select Board will continue in accordance with the Town's historical practice.
2. The placing of white lights, wreaths and garlands on the Town Hall and other municipal buildings will continue in accordance with recent practice.
3. A lighted tree, menorah, and crescent will be displayed in front of Town Hall in accordance with recent practice. These symbols will be as close to the same size as are

commercially available. They will be put up together and removed together on dates selected by the Select Board. They may be lit throughout the period or for such lesser time as the season dictates (For example, the menorah is expected to be lighted during the 8 days of Chanukah.).

4. The Select Board recognizes it does not have custody, care, and control of all municipal property. Boards having jurisdiction of other town land and buildings will be informed of this policy and asked to adopt it so that it will be respected town wide and uniformly followed. Any department wishing to display a tree or menorah will make its best efforts to make them of roughly equal size and prominence.

DEFINITION

Menorah: A candelabrum containing nine branches, eight of which are exactly the same size and the ninth of which is taller than the others. The candelabrum will have the ability to have lamps lit individually or in multiples.

ORIGINAL DATE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

November 8, 2005

Harriet Warshaw (Chair), Katherine L. Babson, Jr., Owen H. Dugan, David J. Himmelberger, Vincent Juliani, Jr.

REVISED AND APPROVED BY THE SELECT BOARD

Revised date: April 14, 2025

Colette E. Aufranc (Chair), Marjorie R. Freiman (Vice Chair), Thomas H. Ulfelder (Secretary), Elizabeth Sullivan Woods, Kenneth C. Largess, III