

Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band Council Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the structure, responsibilities, and procedures of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band Council, in accordance with traditional governance practices. This policy ensures that governance remains culturally grounded, community-centered, and accountable to the people and homelands of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band.

I. Structure of the Band Council

1. The Band Council shall consist of **fifteen (15) seats**, including:
 - Thirteen (13) council members representing the family lines of the Band;
 - One (1) Elder Seat to reflect intergenerational wisdom;
 - One (1) **Sonksq**, the female leader of the Band.
 2. Each family line shall select a council representative through internal family processes. These representatives must be affirmed by the current band council.
 3. All council members shall serve a term of **five (5) years**.
-

II. Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for service on the Band Council, a candidate must:

1. Be an enrolled member of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band.
 2. Belong to one of the established family lines with a seat on the Council.
 3. Have demonstrated **a minimum of three (3) years of recent service to the community** in a recognized capacity.
 4. Be in good standing within the community.
-

III. Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Council is responsible for making decisions that affect the governance, cultural preservation, land stewardship, and community well-being of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band.

2. All decisions shall be made **by consensus**, in alignment with traditional Nipmuc governance practices.
 3. Council members shall:
 - Attend all scheduled Council meetings;
 - Participate actively in decision-making processes;
 - Represent their family line and the broader interests of the Band;
 - Uphold and model the cultural values and responsibilities of the Nipmuc people;
 - Maintain confidentiality in all matters deemed private or sensitive to the governance and protection of the Band.
 - Must actively serve on a tribal committee or project.
-

IV. Confidentiality and Oath of Service

1. Upon selection and prior to being seated, each Council member shall **sign a Confidentiality Agreement** committing to uphold the privacy and integrity of Council discussions and decisions.
 2. All new Council members shall be **seated through a public ceremony** that includes:
 - A cultural acknowledgment of their responsibility to the people and homelands;
 - An affirmation of their duty to serve with honor, respect, and humility;
 - The formal recognition of their authority as representatives of their family line and the Band.
-

V. Accountability and Conduct

1. Council members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Nipmuc cultural values, community responsibilities, and any relevant policies established by the Band.
2. A Council member may be **removed** from their seat for any of the following reasons:

- **Violation of any Band policy, ethical standards, or confidentiality agreement** as determined by a consensus of the remaining Council members;
 - **Three (3) unexcused absences** from official Council meetings within a calendar year.
3. Removal shall follow a transparent process that includes:
- A review of the facts by the Council;
 - An opportunity for the member to provide explanation or defense;
 - A final consensus decision by the remaining members.
-

VI. Vacancies and Replacements

1. In the event of a vacancy, the corresponding family line shall nominate a new representative to complete the term.
 2. If the vacancy is the Elder Seat or Sonksq, the Council shall use the pre-existing culturally appropriate selection process in consultation with the Elders Council.
-

VII. Cultural and Community Orientation

1. Newly seated Council members shall participate in an orientation session focused on:
 - Nipmuc history and traditional governance;
 - Responsibilities of Council service;
 - The principles of consensus-based decision-making;
 - Community engagement and transparency;
 - Confidentiality and respectful communication.
-

VIII. Amendments

This policy may be reviewed and revised as needed by the consensus of the full Council to ensure it remains aligned with the evolving needs and traditions of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band.

Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band Council Oath of Office

I, [Full Name], having been chosen to serve on the Band Council of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band, do solemnly affirm the following:

I commit to uphold the values, responsibilities, and teachings of our Nipmuc people.

I will serve our community with honesty, humility, and respect for all generations—past, present, and yet to come.

I recognize the sacred trust placed in me by my family line and by our people, and I will carry out my duties with care, courage, and integrity.

I will listen deeply, speak truthfully, and act in a manner that honors our ancestors and strengthens our future.

I will protect the privacy of our deliberations, safeguard the wellbeing of our homelands, and promote the unity and resilience of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band.

I will seek consensus in all decisions and remain accountable to our community and our traditional ways.

This I affirm with a good heart and clear mind, before our people, our ancestors, and the spirits who walk with us.