

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, antisemitism, including harassment on the basis of actual or perceived Jewish origin, ancestry, ethnicity, identity, affiliation, or faith is an evil scourge on civilized societies throughout the world that must be identified and categorically rejected by all responsible individuals as well as private and public entities yet remains a persistent, pervasive, and disturbing problem in American society: and

**WHEREAS**, 700+ mayors and municipal leaders in the United States and around the world, including Mayor Benjamin D. Florsheim, joined in declaring unequivocally that antisemitism is incompatible with the democratic values that are at the very bedrock of our society by signing a statement about the need to combat antisemitism; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Middletown has a long history of categorically rejecting discrimination in all its forms, Jews continue to be a targeted minority in the United States and are consistently the most likely of all religious groups to be victimized by incidents of hate, and such incidents are increasing at an alarming rate;

**WHEREAS**, the deadliest attack against the American Jewish community took place on October 27, 2018 at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, killing eleven worshipers and injuring several more; and

**WHEREAS**, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), by a consensus vote of its members, adopted a Working Definition of Antisemitism May 2016, which has become the internationally recognized, authoritative definition for use by the governments and international organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, the non-legally binding definitions reads in full:

“Antisemitism is certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestation of antisemitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities”; and

**WHEREAS**, as an accompaniment to the definition, “to guide IHRA in its work, in the following example may serve as illustrations:

“Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it’s often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms, actions and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.”

**WHEREAS**, further guidance within the definition section sets forth that:

- **“Anti-Semitic acts are criminal** when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of Anti-Semitic materials in some countries).”
- **“Criminal acts are Anti-Semitic** when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property- such a buildings, schools places of worship and cemeteries- are selected because they are or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.”

- “**Anti-Semitic discrimination** is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many counties;” and

**WHEREAS**, the longer IHRA Working Definition has proven to be an essential tool used to determine contemporary manifestations of antisemitism; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the public interest that the City of Middletown join with numerous municipalities across the United States and over 30 governments internationally in adopting the IHRA’s definition of antisemitism in order to provide a definitive message for the public, expressly identifying those acts which constitutes antisemitism and are such deserving of categorical rebuke; and to aid the City’s government in cooperating with recognized organizations which combat antisemitism which have occurred or may occur in the town or elsewhere;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN** that the May 26, 2016 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism is hereby adopted by the City of Middletown as an official declaration of policy of the City of Middletown government to utilize the said working Definition of Antisemitism and attendant illustrative examples, of which the longer version can be found in its entirety on the City of Middletown website, in a continuing endeavor to cooperate with recognized organizations in educating residents about identifying acts of antisemitism which have occurred or may occur in the City of Middletown.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None

**SUBMITTED BY:** Councilman Anthony Gennaro

**APPROVED BY:** Human Relations Commission at the Regular Meeting on November 16, 2022

**Status: APPROVED**

**by Common Council, City of Middletown  
at its meeting held on: DECEMBER 5, 2022**