

**Acton, Massachusetts Select Board Chair Dean Charter's Remarks to the Audience
at the Independence Day Celebration Held at NARA Park on July 4, 2025**

GREETINGS, MY NAME IS DEAN CHARTER, AND I AM PRIVILEGED TO SERVE AS THE CHAIR OF THE ACTON SELECT BOARD THIS YEAR. ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO OUR INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION HERE AT NARA PARK.

EACH YEAR THE TAXPAYERS OF ACTON APPROVE A SIGNIFICANT FUND IN THE OPERATING BUDGET TO ALLOW THIS EVENT TO

CONTINUE. IN ADDITION TO THE BUDGET ALLOCATION, THIS CELEBRATION REPRESENTS A HUGE EFFORT BY TOWN STAFF, INCLUDING: DPW, RECREATION, OPERATIONS, MANAGERS OFFICE, AND OTHERS, AND NOTABLY OUR POLICE, FIRE, AND EMS PERSONNEL, ALL OF WHOM ARE ESSENTIAL TO HOST ALL OF YOU IN A SAFE AND EFFICIENT FASHION. ADDITIONALLY, WE NEED TO THANK THE MANY PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS WHO HAVE ALLOWED THE USE OF THE PARKING FACILITIES ON NAGOG PARK DRIVE. TO ALL OF THOSE, PLUS PROBABLY SOME I HAVE INADVERTANTLY FORGOTTEN, A HUGE THANK YOU!

INDEPENDENCE DAY NEEDS TO BE RECOGNIZED NOT AS JUST AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A DAY OFF TO ENJOY A COOK OUT, A CONCERT, AND FIREWORKS, ALTHOUGH IT IS ALL OF THAT. INDEPENDENCE DAY NEEDS TO BE CELEBRATED BECAUSE IT MARKS A MAJOR EVENT IN HUMAN HISTORY, WHERE THE COLONISTS BEGAN TO THROW OFF THE RULE OF AN INCREASINGLY REMOTE POWER, AND GUARANTEE THAT THE CITIZENS OF THIS NEW NATION WOULD BE FREE TO MAKE THEIR OWN WAY, GOVERNED BY THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY. IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO REALIZE THAT ONE OF THE FIRST ACTIONS OF THE BRITISH CROWN WAS TO TRY TO CURTAIL TOWN MEETING IN RESPONSE TO THE BOSTON TEA PARTY. NOW, 249 YEARS LATER, OUR OPEN TOWN MEETING CONTINUES TO ACT AS THE LEGISLATIVE BODY OF THE TOWN, WITH THE SELECT BOARD CHARGED WITH CARRYING OUT THE ACTIONS APPROVED AT TOWN MEETING EACH YEAR.

THE CITIZENS OF ACTON HAVE ALWAYS BEEN READY TO STEP FORWARD IN THE DEFENSE OF LIBERTY.

ACTON MILITIA HELPED TO OVERTHROW SIR EDMOND ANDROS, THE ROYAL GOVERNOR OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ENGLAND IN 1689 IN THE BOSTON REVOLT.



CAPTAIN ISAAC DAVIS, ABNER HOSMER, AND JAMES HAYWARD WERE KILLED AT THE BATTLE OF THE NORTH BRIDGE IN CONCORD ON APRIL 19, 1775, OPPOSING AN ATTEMPT BY THE BRITISH CROWN TO DISARM THE LOCAL COMPANIES OF MILITIA AND MINUTE, AND TO IMPOSE DIRECT CROWN RULE ON THE COLONIES. THEY ARE ENTOMBED IN THE MONUMENT ON THE ACTON TOWN COMMON. OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS THE ACTON 250 COMMITTEE HAS RUN A SERIES OF EVENTS, INCLUDING A SPEAKER SERIES, CELEBRATIONS, AND INTERPRETIVE WALKS TO HELP ACKNOWLEDGE AND EXPLAIN THE CAUSES AND IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION ON ACTON AND THE COUNTRY. A GENEROUS DESCENDENT OF CAPTAIN DAVIS HAS PROVIDED FUNDS FOR INTERPRETIVE SIGNS ALONG THE ISAAC DAVIS TRAIL FROM ACTON CENTER TO CONCORD, SO YOU CAN WALK IN THEIR HEROIC FOOTSTEPS.

I ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU TO VISIT THE TOWN WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE AND VIEW THE ARCHIVED LECTURES. THE CHARGE FOR THE ACTON 250 COMMITTEE RUNS UNTIL THE FALL OF 2026, SO THERE IS MORE TO LEARN AND ENJOY.

IN APRIL OF 1861 ACTON TROOPS, "THE DAVIS GUARDS", RESPONDING TO THE CALL FROM PRESIDENT LINCOLN TO DEFEND THE CAPITOL FROM THE SOUTHERN SECESSIONISTS, WERE MOBBED IN BALTIMORE AND SUSTAINED INJURIES IN THE BATTLE, BEFORE PROCEEDING TO WASHINGTON FOR SERVICE. THE ACTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY HOSTS AN EXCELLENT SMALL MUSEUM WITH MANY ARTIFACTS FROM THE REVOLUTION AND THE CIVIL WAR, AND IS WELL WORTH A VISIT.

NARA STANDS FOR THE NATHANIEL ALLEN RECREATION AREA, NAMED AFTER AN ACTON CITIZEN WHO SERVED IN THE CIVIL WAR, WAS AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR HIS HEROIC SERVICE, AND IS INTERRED AT WOODLAWN CEMETERY IN ACTON CENTER.

IN THOSE EARLY CONFLICTS AND IN OUR MANY MORE RECENT WARS, ACTONIANS HAVE ALWAYS STEPPED FORWARD.

INDEPENDENCE DAY NEEDS TO BE A TIME WHERE WE CELEBRATE THE CONCEPT OF BEING AMERICANS. THINK ABOUT WHAT THAT MEANS TO YOU, TO YOUR NEIGHBORS, AND TO THE WORLD. THIS NOBLE EXPERIMENT OF DEMOCRACY IS JUST 249 YEARS OLD TODAY, AND IT HAS WITHSTOOD AND OVERCOME CHALLENGES IN THE PAST, AND WILL OVERCOME CHALLENGES IN THE FUTURE. I AM PERSONALLY OPTIMISTIC, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT AMERICA WILL CONTINUE TO BE A BEACON OF HOPE TO THE WORLD AS WELL AS OUR HOMELAND.

LET ME FINISH WITH A FEW LINES FROM THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. THAT TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED.

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TONIGHT, HAVE A GREAT TIME, STAY SAFE, AND JOIN ME IN CELEBRATING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.