



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Name of Department**  
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033  
425-587-3000

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager  
**From:** David Wolbrecht, Communications Program Manager  
**Date:** May 26, 2022  
**Subject:** Juneteenth Proclamation

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Mayor proclaim June 19, 2021 as Juneteenth in Kirkland, Washington.

### **BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth recognizes the day of June 19, 1865, when enslaved African Americans in Texas were informed by Major General Gordon Granger that they were "free," ending 246 years of chattel slavery. This was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation which had become official January 1, 1863.

Today, Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement. It is a day, a week, and in some areas, a month marked with celebrations, special events, picnics, and family gatherings. It is a time for reflection and rejoicing. It is a time for assessment and self-improvement and for planning the future. In cities across the country, people of all races, nationalities and religions are encouraged to join together to truthfully acknowledge a period in U.S. history that shaped and continues to influence our society today.

Despite the over 156 years have passed since chattel slavery was officially ended in the United States, people of African descent continue to have to fight to dismantle anti-Black systems and policies of oppression in our country. The tragic killing of George Floyd by a police officer on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, MN sparked national dialog about structural racism. Numerous marches and rallies in Kirkland called for an end to structural racism and for the City of Kirkland to demonstrate that Black lives matter.

On August 4, 2020 the City passed legislation (R-5434) related to examining and dismantling institutional and structural racism in Kirkland. The City committed significant funding to support many actions outlined in the legislation. Many elements called for in the legislation have been completed or are close to completion, including an organizational equity assessment, creation of use of force and other dashboards, and creating a Community Responder Program. For more information, visit [www.kirklandwa.gov/5434](http://www.kirklandwa.gov/5434).

There are some community events throughout the broader Eastside region celebrating Juneteenth, including "Eastside Honoring Juneteenth" hosted by Eastside Embrace, Eastside For All, Eastside Race and Leadership Coalition, and the cities of Redmond and Kirkland.

Information about the event can be found here:  
<https://m.facebook.com/events/1389923084727193/>

By proclaiming June 19, 2022 as Juneteenth in Kirkland, the City reaffirms its strong commitment to doing the hard and necessary work to fight racism and injustice and transform this country into one that is more equitable for all.



# A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

## Proclaiming June 19, 2022 as "Juneteenth" in Kirkland, Washington

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth recognizes and commemorates the day of June 19, 1865, when enslaved African Americans in Texas were informed by Major General Gordon Granger that they were "free," ending 246 years of chattel slavery; and

**WHEREAS**, though President Abraham Lincoln enacted the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, resistance to the Executive Order, as well as continued fighting in the state of Texas regarding the abolishment of slavery, significantly delayed the freedom of slaves; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 19, 1866, one year after Major Granger's announcement, the freed African American men and women in the state of Texas held the first "Juneteenth," or African American Independence Day celebration, and Juneteenth celebrations would later spread to all corners of the country; and

**WHEREAS**, for people of African descent in this country, Juneteenth is the closest occasion of a true "freedom day" to celebrate and the day is marked with special events, picnics, and family gatherings; and

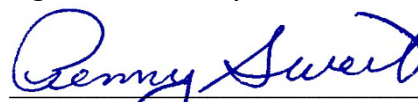
**WHEREAS**, despite that over 156 years have passed since chattel slavery was officially ended in the United States, the nation continues to struggle with dismantling the lingering effects of discriminatory systems and structural racism in our country; and

**WHEREAS**, the murder of George Floyd by Minnesota police officers in 2020 sparked a national dialog and protests across the United States, including here in Kirkland, bringing continued inequities and injustices to the forefront of our collective conscience and providing us with an opportunity to make meaningful change; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Kirkland strives to create a Kirkland where Black people feel safe and respected and interpersonal, institutional and structural racism no longer exists and on August 4, 2020 the City passed Resolution R-5434 to examine and dismantle institutional and structural racism in Kirkland and has since completed most actions called for in the R-5434 legislation;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, Mayor Penny Sweet, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2022 as Juneteenth in Kirkland, Washington, recognizing its historical importance and calling on our community to join us in listening, reflecting and acting so that we can continue to make progress on the arduous journey toward achieve racial justice for all.

Signed this 7<sup>th</sup> day of June 2022

  
Penny Sweet, Mayor