



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: KURT TRIPLETT, CITY MANAGER

From: DAVID WOLBRECHT, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Date: JUNE 11, 2020

Subject: JUNETEENTH PROCLAMATION

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mayor proclaim June 19, 2020 as Juneteenth in Kirkland, Washington.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The horrifying and tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020 once again demonstrates the devastating impacts of structural racism on Black and brown people in the United States. Protests in response to Mr. Floyd's death, and more broadly to police violence against Black people, are necessary to raise awareness of painful and systemic racism that still plagues our nation.

The City remains steadfastly committed to the values embodied in the February 21, 2017, resolution to be a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community. As the country struggles to live up to America's great promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness during these tumultuous times, the need for City leadership to listen, to support marginalized communities - particularly Black people and African Americans - and then to take action, has never been more important.

Proclaiming June 19, 2020 as Juneteenth in Kirkland is one such action. Acknowledging milestones in the path to justice is important for the on-going process of understanding and undoing the history of institutional racism in the United States, in Washington State, and in Kirkland.

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. Despite the over 155 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.

By proclaiming June 19, 2020 as Juneteenth in Kirkland, the City reaffirms our strong commitment to doing the hard and necessary work to fight injustice and transform our country into one that is more equitable for all.



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Proclaiming June 19, 2020 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

WHEREAS, despite that over 155 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 recent murder of George Floyd by Minnesota police officers reminds us of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."; and

WHEREAS, recent protests that have occurred across the nation, including here in Kirkland, have brought these continued inequities and injustices to the forefront of our collective conscious and provided us with an opportunity to make meaningful change; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland strives to be a safe, inclusive and welcoming community for all, choosing to willingly engage in difficult conversations, participate in active listening about institutional racism, and taking action to address bias and injustice within our own systems;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Penny Sweet, Mayor of Kirkland do hereby proclaim June 19, 2020 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 finally achieve racial justice for all.

Signed this 19th day of June 2020

Penny Sweet, Mayor