



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Legislation Text

File #: [20-0571], Version: 1

Designate Juneteenth an Official Town Holiday.

Staff:

Maurice Jones, Town Manager
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Department:

Town Manager's Office
Business Management

Overview: Juneteenth is a holiday observing the end of slavery in the United States. On June 19th, 1865, two months after the Civil War ended and two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, General Gordon Granger of the United States Army declared the end of slavery in the state of Texas. One year later, a group of freedman celebrated the first "Jubilee Day" to commemorate the occasion. Jubilee Day eventually became known as Juneteenth. Although observed in many states around the country, few states honor the event as an official holiday. A number of localities around the state of North Carolina have recently voted to make Juneteenth an official holiday or are considering doing so.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Council designate Juneteenth as an official town holiday beginning June 19th, 2021 and urge our state and federal legislators to sponsor legislation making Juneteenth an official state and federal holiday.

Key Issues:

- If approved, Juneteenth will become the Town's 12th official holiday.

Fiscal Impact/Resources: Additional costs associated with an official Town holiday are primarily related to the holiday pay for employees who must work during the holiday.

**Attachments:**

- Resolution

A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING JUNETEENTH AN OFFICIAL TOWN HOLIDAY (2020-09-09/R-5)

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1st, 1863, declaring "all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free;" and

WHEREAS, Confederate General Robert E. Lee, surrendered to United States General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9th, 1865, thus effectively ending the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, slavery, although prohibited, continued in the state of Texas well after the end of the war; and

WHEREAS, United States General Gordon Granger was assigned command of Texas and traveled to Galveston to announce the surrender of General Lee; and

WHEREAS, on June 19th, 1865 General Granger declared through General Order Number 3 that "The people of Texas are informed that in the accordance with a Proclamation from the executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer"; and

WHEREAS, freedmen in Texas organized the first "Jubilee Day" on June 19th, 1866; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known Liberation Day and Emancipation Day, has become a worldwide celebration for African-Americans to honor their freedom and their ancestors' perseverance in the face of bondage and indescribable cruelty; and

WHEREAS, Governor Beverly Eaves Perdue was the first governor to proclaim the observance of Juneteenth in the State of North Carolina in June 2010; and

WHEREAS, an official Town holiday recognizing Juneteenth would encourage Town employees and Chapel Hill residents to honor those who were held in bondage for centuries and acknowledge the joy felt by millions of people upon their release from slavery.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill Town that the Council designate Juneteenth as an official town holiday beginning June 19th, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council urge our state and federal legislators to sponsor legislation making Juneteenth an official state and federal holiday.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chapel Hill Town Council directs the Town's Clerk to send a copy of this resolution to the Orange County Board of Commissioners, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Board, Orange County Board of Education, Carrboro Town Council and the Hillsborough Board of Commissioners.

This the 9th day of September, 2020.

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

By adopting the resolution, the Council designates Juneteenth as an official town holiday beginning June 19th, 2021.