

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION TO FORMALLY RECOGNIZE AND OBSERVE JUNETEENTH

WHEREAS, the United States of America is made up of people from every nation on Earth, who are declared equal not only in freedom but also in justice, both of which are essential for a healthy human civilization; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America was established on July 4, 1776, with the Declaration of Independence stating: *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”*; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, providing that all persons enslaved within any state or designated part of a state *“shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free”*; and

WHEREAS, news of the end of slavery did not reach the frontier areas of the United States, in particular the State of Texas and the other Southwestern States, until months after the conclusion of the Civil War, more than two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were free from bondage; and

WHEREAS, as those who were formerly enslaved were recognized for the first time as citizens, Black/African Americans came to commemorate June 19th, commonly known as “Juneteenth Independence Day,” as inspiration and encouragement for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the faith and strength of character demonstrated by formerly enslaved people and the descendants of formerly enslaved people remain an example for all people of the United States, regardless of background, religion, or race; and

WHEREAS, slavery was not officially abolished until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in 1865, and this date is commemorated by the observance of National Freedom Day on February 1 of each year; and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2021, President Joseph Biden, Jr., proclaimed June 19 as Juneteenth Day of Observance and called upon the people of the United States to acknowledge and celebrate the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of Black/African Americans and commit together to eradicate systemic racism that still undermines our founding ideals and collective prosperity; and

WHEREAS, on July 7, 2020, the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, adopted a resolution in recognition that Black Lives Matter and

committed to explore ways to work with community leaders to establish Juneteenth as a local annual holiday and celebration; and

WHEREAS, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County can never heal the trauma of Black/African American people nor fully erase the past but can empathize, recognize, and commit to working on building real equity and supporting the local observance of Juneteenth.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia:

Section 1: That during the month of June, the Juneteenth Flag shall be flown at City Hall from June 17 to June 26, 2022, in compliance with ACCGov Administrative Policy CSD-002 in order to demonstrate the Unified Government's support and recognition of June 19, 1865; and

Section 2: That the Unified Government shall explore ways to work with community leaders to support Juneteenth events; and

Section 3: That the Mayor and Commission hereby direct the Manager to support this resolution.

SO RESOLVED, this day the 9 of June, 2022.

APPROVED:


Kelly Girtz, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jean Spratlin, Clerk of Commission