

The Town of Hilton Head Island

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is often referred to as our country's second independence day and has long been celebrated among the African American community, its historical significance has largely been omitted from educational curricula, making it relatively unknown to the wider population; and

WHEREAS, January 1, 1863 was the day President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation abolishing the practice and institution of slavery in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, despite the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln and passage of the 13th Amendment by the U.S. Congress, more than 250,000 enslaved Africans and their descendants remained in bondage in the State of Texas until the arrival of Union troops at Galveston on the 19th day of June, 1865; and

WHEREAS, when the news of their emancipation spread, following the reading of "General Order Number Three" by Major General Gordon Granger, the formerly enslaved people of Texas reacted with joyous celebrations, launching what would become an annual event known as Juneteenth; and

WHEREAS, early celebrations of Juneteenth consisted of family and community gatherings filled not only with special food and festivities but also prayer, reflection and respect for ancestors who suffered under slavery; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrates African American freedom and achievement while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Hilton Head Island recognizes that the importance and value of celebrating Juneteenth lies in the acknowledgement that there remains much work to be done in addressing equal rights and equal access to opportunity in order to overcome racism in our country and in the community; and

WHEREAS, the elected leaders of the Town of Hilton Head Island and Town staff pledge to continue our efforts to lift up the importance and history of Juneteenth and work tirelessly to root out institutional racism wherever it exists and advance equity and inclusion for all members of our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John J. McCann, Mayor of the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, do hereby proclaim Saturday, June 19, 2021 as Juneteenth in the Town of Hilton Head Island and encourage all community members to observe this day with activities and reflections that celebrate freedom and justice for all people.



John J. McCann, Mayor

Attest:

Krista M. Wiedmeyer, Town Clerk