



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

File #: 2021-518, Version: 1

Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, July 06, 2021

Consent

SUBJECT:

CONSIDER APPROVING THE FLYING OF THE OFFICIAL JUNETEENTH FLAG DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE COMMEMORATING JUNETEENTH IN THE CITY OF CARSON (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

This agenda item is being presented at the request of Mayor Lula Davis-Holmes.

Since its incorporation in 1968, the City of Carson has advocated for justice and freedom for all. The Mayor and City Council remain vigilant that the residents of Carson enjoy a quality of life that is equal for all. Through advocacy and community education efforts, there has been increased attention paid to the Juneteenth holiday.

Juneteenth, also known as "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Emancipation Day," "Emancipation Celebration," and "Freedom Day," is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

On June 18, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. signed a bill to recognize June 19, 2021, as Juneteenth Day of Observance, the celebration to commemorate the end of chattel slavery in the United States as a federal holiday. The City of Carson would like to fly the nationally recognized flag during the month of June moving forward.

II. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE the flying of a flag at City Hall during the month of June commemorating Juneteenth in Carson.

1.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action that the City Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

On June 19, 1865, two years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to inform enslaved African Americans of General Order Number 3: "The people of Texas are informed that in 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 hired laborer."

In 1980, Texas became the first state to designate Juneteenth as a holiday. Since then, 48 other states and the District of Columbia have moved to officially recognize the day, although most of these recognitions are largely symbolic. California has recognized Juneteenth as a ceremonial holiday since 2003.

The Juneteenth Flag is a symbolic representation of the end of slavery in the United States. The flag is the brainchild of activist Ben Haith, founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation (NJCF). Haith created the flag in 1997 with the help of collaborators and Boston-based illustrator Lisa Jeanne Graf brought their vision to life. The flag was revised in 2000 into the version we know today, according to the National Juneteenth Observation Foundation. Seven years later, the date "June 19, 1865" was added, commemorating the day that Union Army Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas and told enslaved African Americans of their emancipation.

Each element of the flag has meaning and representation:

The Star

Firstly, it represents Texas, the Lone Star State. It was in Galveston in 1865 where Union soldiers informed the country's last remaining enslaved people that, under the Emancipation Proclamation issued two years earlier, they were free.

Secondly, the star also goes beyond Texas, representing the freedom of African Americans in all 50 states.

The Burst

The bursting outline around the star is inspired by a nova, a term that astronomers use to mean a new star. On the Juneteenth flag, this represents a new beginning for the African Americans of Galveston and throughout the land.

The Arc

The curve that extends across the width of the flag represents a new horizon: the opportunities and promise that lay ahead for black Americans.

The Colors

The red, white and blue represents the American flag, a reminder that slaves and their descendants were and are Americans.

The Date

June 19, 1865, represents the day that enslaved black people in Galveston, Texas, became Americans under the law.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

The cost associated with the approval of approving the flying of the Juneteenth flag at City Hall will be absorbed through allocated funds within the Public Works department.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Picture of official Juneteenth flag.

Prepared by: David C. Roberts, Jr., Assistant City Manager