

## RESOLUTION – 2020-13

### COMMEMORATION OF JUNETEENTH AS AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF BLACK ECONOMIC LIBERATION

**WHEREAS**, According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, between 1525 and 1866, the duration of the transatlantic slave trade to the Americas, an estimated 12.5 million men, women and children were captured and forcibly transported in bondage from their African homelands to the Americas providing economic enrichment of many in the Greater Philadelphia area; and

**WHEREAS**, History characterizes the transatlantic slave trade as a brutal and horrific commercial and economic enterprise and the enslavement of Africans from Congo, Angola, Senegambia, and Nigeria as cruel, exploitative and dehumanizing; and

**WHEREAS**, Lasting for nearly four centuries, the transatlantic slave trade represents one of the longest and most sustained assaults on the life, integrity and dignity of human beings in history and one of the greatest tragedies in the history of humanity; and

**WHEREAS**, President Abraham Lincoln first issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freeing all enslaved Americans within the states in Rebellion in the South. And, southern slave owners ignored that proclamation. On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1865, Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas and enforced the president's order, freeing all enslaved African-Americans two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued; and

**WHEREAS**, Union Army General Gordon Granger issued a declaration stating that, "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free," which proclaimed all slaves were free with absolute equality and civil rights. Thus, June 19th marked the day when the economic system of chattel slavery was effectively ended in America; and

**WHEREAS**, Slavery, as an institution, was not officially abolished until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States on December 6, 1865; and

**WHEREAS**, the newly freed African-American men and women and Freedmen's Bureau resisted the violence and terror of their former masters by organizing the first "Jubilee Day" in 1866 in recognition of the reading of the General orders banning slavery the previous year. And, the holiday became an annual celebration that spread first in Texas and then spread throughout the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the ceremonial celebration of Juneteenth in the African-American community was recognized officially for the first time as an official holiday in 1938 by the Governor of Texas. And, through the subsequent expansion of the celebration from Texas and Louisiana to numerous Northern States by members of the African-American community the during the period known historically as the Great Migration from 1940 to 1970.

**WHEREAS**, the celebration of Juneteenth gained greater symbolic economic significance through the efforts of Civil Rights campaigners in Atlanta in the 1960s. And, "Juneteenth," June 19th 1968 was named, "Solidarity Day of the Poor People's Campaign" by Reverend Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. And, the "Poor People's Campaign" resulted in an Economic Bill of Rights presented to Congress by representatives of a diverse coalition of leaders from throughout the

country--including: a meaningful job at a living wage; a secure and adequate income for all those unable to find a job; access to land; access to capital; and access to government for all poor people.

**WHEREAS**, "Juneteenth" is recognized currently as the "Second Day of National Independence."

**WHEREAS**, In 1997, the 105th Congress of the United States passed House Joint Resolution 56 and Senate Joint Resolution 11 to officially recognize Juneteenth as Independence Day for Americans of African descent; and "Juneteenth" was officially designated a National Day of Observance in 2013 through a bipartisan vote in both Houses of Congress; and

**WHEREAS**, "Juneteenth" is recognized as a day of observance in 47 of the 50 States. And, in 2019 Governor Tom Wolf signed into law the permanent recognition and observance of "Juneteenth" as "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" in Pennsylvania.

**WHEREAS**, People nationwide join together to celebrate June 19 as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in recognition of the end of slavery in all regions of the United States and to commemorate the survival and determination of African men, women and children who survived the month-long journeys across the Atlantic Ocean (the Middle Passage) and debarked to a life as slaves; and

**WHEREAS**, The faith, courage and strength of character demonstrated by former slaves and the descendants of former slaves remain an example for all people of the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, The United States is the worldwide symbol of democracy and freedom;

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Lansdowne is dedicated to the celebration and recognition of all members of the Lansdowne community; and, Borough of Lansdowne is dedicated to the economic success and advancement of African-American economic empowerment in our community, our County, and Commonwealth through our support of the businesses in our community, the education of our youth in our schools, and investment in cultural programming that supports African-American Arts and Cultural Celebrations;

**Therefore**, be it resolved, that the Borough of Lansdowne:

(1) observe June 19, 2020, as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in Pennsylvania in honor of the memory, resilience, courage and determination of enslaved persons and of all Americans, living and dead, who embody Dr. King's quote: "None are free until all are free"; and

(2) recognizes Juneteenth as an annual celebration of the past, present, and future of black economic liberation and those who work towards that liberation; and

(3) empower the Lansdowne Boards and Commissions and civic organizations to develop a celebration for Juneteenth annually; and

(4) recognize that the abolition of slavery, integration of neighborhoods, and equality of all residents is part of the history and heritage of this Borough; and

(5 ) acknowledges the historical legacy of redlining, racial exclusion from Federal and State business programs; and advocates within our County, State, and Federal governments for financial support for Minority owned businesses within Lansdowne and Delaware County; and

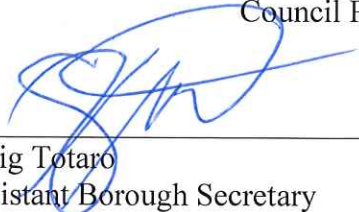
(6) Upon approval, asserts a copy of this resolution will be sent to surrounding Boroughs and Townships in Delaware County, our representatives on County Council; our representatives in the Pennsylvania Legislature; and our representatives in Washington, D.C

**ADOPTED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2020**



Benjamin D. Hover  
Council President

ATTEST:

  
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Craig Totaro  
Assistant Borough Secretary