

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	July 20, 2020
Action Required:	Ordinance Amendment
Staff Contacts:	John Blair, City Attorney
Presenters:	Mayor Nikuyah Walker John Blair, City Attorney
Title:	Amend Section 2-6 of the Charlottesville City Code

Background:

On January 4, 1971, the Charlottesville City Council enacted City Code Section 2-189.1 codifying the legal holidays observed by the City of Charlottesville.

The City Council establishes the legal holidays observed by the City of Charlottesville in Charlottesville City Code Section 2-6. A legal holiday results in the closure of the City of Charlottesville's offices for business on the designated day.

The City Council last amended the City's official holiday schedule on July 1, 2019, by adding March 3, Liberation and Freedom Day, as a holiday and removed April 13, the observance of Thomas Jefferson's birthday, as a holiday.

Discussion:

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free enslaved people in states that were in rebellion against the United States. Due to the rebellion, many enslaved individuals did not experience freedom upon the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation.

United States Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas on June 18, 1865. On June 19, 1865, General Granger read aloud General Order 3 which stated, "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free..." Formerly enslaved individuals immediately celebrated their freedom.

On June 19, 1866, formerly enslaved individuals gathered in Galveston, Texas to celebrate the first anniversary of their freedom. This celebration became an annual tradition, and it is now celebrated as Juneteenth. Juneteenth celebrates Black freedom and achievement. It is a day to celebrate formerly enslaved individuals, subjected to inhumane and evil conditions, gaining their freedom and to honor their contributions to this nation.

The celebration of Juneteenth as an official government holiday began in Texas in 1980.

Governor Northam recently stated that he intends to introduce legislation to make Juneteenth an official state holiday in Virginia in 2021.

Budgetary Impact:

An additional city holiday would have a budgetary impact of approximately \$62,500 in Fiscal Year 2021 if the Council adopts the proposal to make June 19 an official City holiday.

Attachments:

Proposed Ordinance Adding June 19 as an Official City Holiday

**AN ORDINANCE
AMENDING SECTION 2-6
OF CHAPTER 2 (ADMINISTRATION)**

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation 95, known as the “Emancipation Proclamation” which freed enslaved people in states “in rebellion against the United States”; and

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation was not enforced in many areas of the United States then in rebellion; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, United States Major General Gordon Granger read General Order Number 3 to the residents of Galveston, Texas; and

WHEREAS, General Order Number 3 stated, “The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free” and formerly enslaved people celebrated upon General Granger’s statement; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1866, formerly enslaved individuals celebrated the first anniversary of General Granger’s statement by establishing the holiday now known as Juneteenth; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is a celebration of Black freedom and achievement that the Charlottesville City Council desires to celebrate on an annual basis.

NOWE, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council for the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that:

Section 2-6 of Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of Charlottesville (1990) is amended as follows:

Sec. 2-6. - Legal holidays.

In each year, the first day of January (New Year's Day), the third Monday in January (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), the third Monday in February (George Washington Day), the third day of March (Freedom and Liberation Day), the last Monday in May (Memorial Day), the nineteenth day of June (Juneteenth), the fourth day of July (Independence Day), the first Monday in September (Labor Day), the eleventh day of November (Veterans Day), the fourth Thursday in November (Thanksgiving Day), the Friday after the fourth Thursday in November, the twenty-fifth day of December (Christmas Day) or, whenever any of such days shall fall on Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be a legal holiday, and whenever such days shall fall on Sunday, the Monday next following such day shall be a legal holiday.