



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH

Diversity & Inclusion Committee

June 19, 2021

Dear Northborough Community,

June 19th, 2021 marks the 156th year since Juneteenth originated and the first year that it is celebrated as a federal holiday. Also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day, Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. On September 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that declared that enslaved people “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” Though slavery had been outlawed, federal troops were deployed to enforce the release of slaves. It was, thus, not until almost two and a half years later that slaves in the farthest parts of the country became free. The following year, in 1865, freedmen in Galveston, Texas organized the first Juneteenth celebration.

Since then, annually, African Americans have celebrated Juneteenth with food, festivals, and fellowship. By making Juneteenth a federal holiday, President Joe Biden has made this day significant for ALL Americans. This act signals a national recognition of our past, an opportunity for us to openly acknowledge that slavery was an atrocity that has lasting impacts of inequity and exclusion in our society today.

Justice and equity for Black people in our communities is an ongoing work that requires the contribution of each community member. In our town, we are proud to say that we are in step with the nation as we make strides to promote equity and inclusion. With the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion committee, we have begun the process of understanding the needs of our community. We look forward to next year when we can gather in person to commemorate Juneteenth. For now, let us celebrate the end of slavery in our country individually and look to a future time when its impacts have been eradicated.

To learn more about the history of Juneteenth, please visit the links below.

[Juneteenth](#)

[History.com | What is Juneteenth?](#)

[Juneteenth flag](#)

[How Juneteenth became a national holiday](#)