

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Proclamation

JUNETEENTH | 2024

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the events of June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger led Union soldiers into Galveston, Texas, bringing news that the Civil War had ended and that the Emancipation Proclamation had declared all enslaved people free nearly two and a half years earlier; and

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation changed the legal status under federal law of nearly 3.5 million enslaved Black and African Americans and the subsequent 13th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America abolished slavery and involuntary servitude; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth acknowledges the considerable lapse over a two-year period, from 1863 to 1865, when enslaved Black and African Americans remained in bondage and unaware of the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln that recognized and maintained the freedom of slaves in the United States.

WHEREAS, the celebration of Juneteenth is believed to be the oldest Black and African American holiday observance in our nation, and takes place annually throughout Durham, North Carolina and the Nation—often consisting of readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, prayer and worship services, family gatherings, cultural performances, educational activities, community service events, ceremonial observances and more; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, during the 105th United States Congress, House Joint Resolution 56 and Senate Joint Resolution 11 were passed, officially recognizing Juneteenth Independence Day; on August 23, 2007, Juneteenth National Freedom Day was recognized by the State of North Carolina; and Juneteenth has been celebrated in Durham, North Carolina since 1933; and

WHEREAS, as July 4, 1776, represents the birth of the United States of America and commemorates the United States’ independence from British rule, it did not offer independence and freedom to enslaved people; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is a stark reminder of the promises of liberation for Black and African Americans in the 21st century; currently our nation and indeed our Durham community is experiencing racial injustices and inequities at a record pace, demonstrating that despite great successes and achievements, Black and African Americans continue to bear the pain and burden of systemic racism and disparate treatment at every turn; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Cel-Liberation, and Juneteenth Independence Day and Juneteenth augments the nation’s promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the strength and resolve of Black and African Americans throughout our history and serves as an opportunity to celebrate the rich and numerous contributions of Black and African Americans to the Durham community, and the United States, and Juneteenth teaches our youth the importance of honoring Black and African American history and the impact of the institution of Chattel Slavery; and

WHEREAS, an official Juneteenth holiday signals that Durham County is committed to doing the work to identify and improve policies and processes that will improve access to opportunities for all employees and work to eliminate any vestiges of unequal treatment that exist in this organization.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Nida Allam, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2024, as

“JUNETEENTH”

in Durham County, North Carolina

This the 10th day of June 2024.

Nida Allam, Chair

Nimasheena Burns, Vice-Chair

Heidi Carter, Commissioner

Brenda Howerton, Commissioner

Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

