



A Proclamation Celebrating Juneteenth National Independence Day

WHEREAS: President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS: News of the Emancipation Proclamation did not reach parts of the southern and southwestern United States until June 19, 1865; and

WHEREAS: For two years, enslaved Black Americans in Texas remained in brutal bondage, immorally and illegally deprived of their freedom and basic rights; and

WHEREAS: The 19th of June, referred to as Juneteenth has been commemorated as the de facto ending of slavery by African American communities for over 150 years; and

WHEREAS: The State of Oregon enacted “black exclusion” laws preventing African Americans from settling in or owning property in the state; and

WHEREAS: We are reminded that America’s struggle for independence did not end in 1776 or 1865, but continues to this day; and

WHEREAS: The City of Ashland is committed to recognizing its history of racial discrimination and exclusion; and

WHEREAS: The Juneteenth National Independence Day Act was signed into law as a national holiday on Thursday, June 17, 2021; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tonya Graham, on behalf of the Ashland City Council, urge all our citizens to reflect on how far we have come and how far we must still go to meet the promise of our nation’s founding, and ask each of us to celebrate June 19 and the emancipation of all Black Americans as a call to eradicate systemic racism and to honor all those who have lived and died in pursuit of racial justice and social equity. In Ashland we are better together.

Dated June 6, 2023

Tonya Graham, Mayor

Melissa Huhtala, City Recorder

