



January 28, 2022

Members of the Maryland State Assembly:

We are at an impasse in the history of this great country. Last year, President Joseph Biden, recognized June 19, 2021, also known as *the Juneteenth Day* for the 1st time in history on a national level.

Juneteenth (short for “June Nineteenth”) marks the day when Major General Gordon Granger and federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people were freed. The troops’ arrival came a full two (2) and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday.

For over 240 years this country maintained a system of slavery creating what was intended to be a permanent underclass. Much of the progress of this country was largely built by the labor of enslaved African Americans. The annual *Juneteenth* celebration pays homage to those countless millions of people and serves as a day of Memoriam.

To quote General Granger, “This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property, between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor. The Freedmen were advised to remain at their present homes and work for wages. They were informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts, and they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.”

In 2021, many states, counties, cities, and towns recognized the annual *Juneteenth* celebration, but we also know that without legislation safeguarding this historic day, we stand to lose what gains were made. Therefore, the Town of Brentwood supports the official recognition of June 19th as *Juneteenth*, in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Steffan Leggin, Vice Mayor