



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 5951
October 5, 2021
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5951: First Reading of Ordinance No. 21C-24 amending the Mercer Island City Code Section 2.08.020(A) to establish Juneteenth as a City holiday.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed:
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Set Ordinance No. 21C-24 for second reading and adoption on the October 19 Consent Agenda.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT:	City Attorney
STAFF:	Jessi Bon, City Manager Bio Park, City Attorney
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Ordinance No. 21C-24
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

SUMMARY

This ordinance amends Mercer Island City Code 2.08.020(A) to add Juneteenth as an official City holiday effective in 2022.

BACKGROUND

On June 19, 1865, more than two years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, enslaved Americans in Galveston, Texas, finally received word that they were free from bondage. As those who were formerly enslaved were recognized for the first time as citizens, June 19 came to be known as "Juneteenth," a celebration of freedom.

STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING JUNETEENTH AS A HOLIDAY

Washington Governor Jay Inslee signed [Substitute House Bill 1016](#) on May 13, 2021 establishing Juneteenth as a state legal holiday in 2022; and United States President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into Law on June 17, 2021 to immediately establish Juneteenth as a federal legal holiday.

Pursuant to [RCW 1.16.050](#), employees of the state and local government are entitled to a paid holiday on state legal holidays. Consequently, City Council approval of Ordinance 21C-24 will amend the Mercer Island City Code 2.08.020(A) to add Juneteenth as an official City holiday effective in 2022.

NEXT STEPS

During the previous two years, One MI, a community group focused on equity and the advancement of cultural competency, partnered with the City to provide an installation recognizing Juneteenth. This recognition came in the form of an artistic installation at Mercedale Park respectively titled “Say Their Names” and “What Freedom Means to Me.” The installation featured posters and murals created by community members.

In June 2022, the City will again be partnering with One MI and other community groups to coordinate a community event recognizing the historical significance of the Juneteenth holiday. This is anticipated to be an annual event.

The City is also engaged in discussions with One MI and other community partners on a collaboration to host community conversations on diversity, equity, and inclusion in 2022. The proposal is in final review and will be presented to the City Council for funding consideration before the end of the year.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Set Ordinance No. 21C-24 for a second reading and adoption on the October 19, 2021, Consent Agenda or soon thereafter.