Proclamation

CITY OF NORTHAMPTON
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Juneteenth Independence Day
June 19, 2021

WHEREAS, On June 19th, 1865, two and half years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Union soldiers led by Mayor General Gordon Granger, landed on Galveston Island, Texas with the news that the Civil War had ended and that all enslaved people were free; and

WHEREAS, Mayor General Granger announced to the residents of Texas that, "...in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and the rights of property, between former masters and slaves and the connection heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employers and hired labor"; and

WHEREAS, the first Juneteenth celebration was held in Texas in 1866. Since then, Juneteenth has been celebrated in communities across the United States, providing an opportunity to mark the emancipation of enslaved people; and

WHEREAS, in the 191st Session of the Massachusetts General Court in 2020, the Legislature passed a bill to make **Juneteenth Independence Day** a state holiday that was signed into law by Governor Charlie Baker on July 24. 2020; and

WHEREAS, the 117th United States Congress adopted a bill sponsored by Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts to make **Juneteenth Independence Day** a federal holiday that was signed into law by President Joe Biden on June 17, 2021; and

WHEREAS, **Juneteenth Independence Day** is a time when people of all races, nationalities, and religions can come together to recognize the painful history of slavery and lasting impact of systemic racism and racial injustice in the United States. It is also an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the goal of creating a more equal and just society; and

WHEREAS, the City of Northampton, with its longstanding commitment to the struggle for equality and social justice, is honored to join in both celebrating this important holiday and continuing the work to combat racism and injustice in our community; and so,

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor David J. Narkewicz proclaim June 19, 2021 as

Juneteenth Independence Day

and encourage all residents of Northampton to reflect on the stain of slavery on our national history and recommit ourselves to ending racism and inequality.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, **I have set my hand and have imprinted the seal of the City of Northampton on this 19th day of June, 2021.**

Mayor David J. Narkewicz