



City of Foster City

ESTERO MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

610 FOSTER CITY BOULEVARD
FOSTER CITY, CA 94404-2222

June 18, 2020

Dear Foster City Community,

I want to formally recognize the significance of June 19th (or Juneteenth) as the official day slavery ended in America. It marks the day in 1865 that enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas finally received news that the Civil War had ended, and learned that the Emancipation Proclamation freed them from slavery more than two years earlier. As a black man, Juneteenth represents a story of pride, resilience, and the determination of African Americans during one of the darkest times in our nation's history. For this reason, June 19th will always be a beacon of historical importance for me.

The death of George Floyd and the recent civil unrest coursing through our nation stirs up a range of personal emotions. I am saddened and angered by what I saw three and a half weeks ago in Minnesota where George Floyd begged the officers on the scene for help as he took his last breaths. I have (and still do) experience acts of racism and racial bias in my personal life. I am encouraged that people around the world are discussing racism and looking for lasting change. But I also know that Supporting African Americans or supporting law enforcement is not a binary choice – both are important, and the issues are much more complex. The solution rests in maintaining an authentic connection between the police department and the community it serves. Meaningful police reform must include building bridges of trust, communication, and accountability between law enforcement and the neighborhoods they have sworn to serve and protect.

Juneteenth is the oldest known commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States. Although Juneteenth has yet to be recognized as a nationwide holiday, I hope that through the observance of this day, we can draw awareness to our country's history of slavery and continue meaningful conversations. Together we must all acknowledge that racial inequality exists and seek solutions that support the equity of all people. Please join our community partners and me in celebrating this day of freedom by reflecting on the importance and meaning of Juneteenth. I hope tomorrow will be a day of both remembrance and action for everyone.

Sincerely,

Dante G. Hall, ICMA-CM
Interim City/District Manager
City of Foster City