



# TOWN OF OSSINING

*The Volunteer Spirited Town*

16 CROTON AVENUE  
OSSINING, N.Y. 10562

PHONE: 914-762-6000 FAX: 914-801-5289

[www.townofossining.com](http://www.townofossining.com)

**Dana A. Levenberg**  
*Supervisor*

**Elizabeth R. Feldman**  
*Council Member*

**Gregory Meyer**  
*Council Member*

**Jackie G. Shaw**  
*Council Member*

**Northern Wilcher, Jr.**  
*Council Member*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 18, 2020

**Contact:** Dana Levenberg

914-762-6001

## **Town of Ossining Recognizes Juneteenth and Declares it a Paid Holiday for Town Employees**

Tomorrow is Juneteenth, a holiday celebrating the day in 1865 when news of the end of the Civil War and Emancipation reached those enslaved in Texas. This date was nearly two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, but the news was delayed in getting to rural Texas as the war raged and many refused to free those they had enslaved. **Governor Cuomo signed an Executive Order this week making Juneteenth a paid holiday for state employees. The Governor has also proposed legislation to add Juneteenth to the calendar as a holiday in future years.**

As children we learned that July 4<sup>th</sup> was the day freedom was granted to all Americans. While this date represents the day the American colonies declared freedom from England, it is important to recognize that a significant portion of the population was not considered *eligible* for freedom on that day. Black Americans, even those that had fought in the American Revolution, were not guaranteed the same rights as their White counterparts. Juneteenth is a holiday celebrated throughout the United States in observance of the day freedom was extended to Black Americans. The day has been celebrated in festivals and gatherings throughout the years, especially in Texas. Recent calls for justice and equality have drawn attention to Juneteenth as a day that is necessary to celebrate nationwide.

**In Ossining, we are proud to announce we will be observing the 155<sup>th</sup> Juneteenth, and anticipate announcing adopting a resolution on Tuesday recognizing we plan do so from this year forward.** Our offices will be closed tomorrow in observance of the holiday. We encourage you to leave us a message so we can get back to you on Monday. As a reminder, emergency services are always available and essential employees may still be working (they will be offered a compensatory day off for the holiday). In the Unincorporated Town, refuse pick up will still continue as scheduled.

Ossining has been host to forums, rallies, and protests over the last month, spreading ideas through conversation. The work of our Community Equity Task Force is just ramping up. These calls for reform and progress can in no way be satisfied by the adoption of Juneteenth as a holiday, however we are grateful the state has taken this step, and now Westchester County has as well, toward education and recognition. We feel it is important we join in taking this step in the Town. Understanding our history can help us bridge the gap between our current institutions and a more balanced, equitable future. We hope you take some time tomorrow to learn about Juneteenth.

