

MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, June 21, 2022

TITLE: EMANCIPATION DAY IN VAUGHAN

FROM:

Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua

Whereas, the British Parliament abolished slavery in the British Empire on August 1, 1834; and

Whereas, abolitionists and others who struggled against slavery, including those who arrived in Ontario by the underground railroad, have celebrated August 1 as Emancipation Day in the past; and

Whereas, the years 2015 to 2024 have been designated by the United Nations as the International Decade for People of African Descent and in 2018, Vaughan Council endorsed this proclamation; and

Whereas, in light of this understanding, we acknowledge the significance of the 230th anniversary of the Exodus of Black Loyalist from Halifax Harbour on 15 ships to Sierra Leone; and

Whereas, the International Decade for People of African Descent provides a unique opportunity to highlight the important contributions that people of African descent have made to Canadian society, and also provides a platform for engaging in the fight against anti-Black racism, discrimination and the inequalities that Canadians of African descent continue to face; and

Whereas, it is important to recognize the heritage of Canada's Black communities and the contributions they have made and continue to make to the city of Vaughan and all of Canada; and

Whereas, the Province of Ontario proclaimed Emancipation Day in 2008; and

Whereas, it is appropriate to recognize August 1 formally as Emancipation Day and to observe it as a meaningful reminder of an abhorrent period in Canada's history in order to allow Vaughan residents and all Canadians to reflect upon the imperative to continue to commit to eliminating discrimination in all its forms.

It is therefore recommended:

1. **THAT** as the City of Vaughan proclaims every August 1 as Emancipation Day, that August 1, 2022 specially acknowledge the 230th anniversary of the Exodus of Black Loyalist from Halifax Harbour on 15 ships to Sierra Leone;
2. **THAT** the proclamation be posted on the City's website and the Corporate and Strategic Communications department be directed to promote the proclamation on corporate communications channels.