Juneteenth Committee of Asheville

Celebrating Juneteenth and Black Community in Asheville Throughout the Years

Purpose

To celebrate the local & national history of Juneteenth in Asheville, the history of the Black community in Asheville, and Black people as a whole. We are here to uplift Black community, youth, and entrepreneurs in and around Asheville.

Declaration

The Juneteenth of Asheville Committee is a group of individuals that have worked on, participated in, attended, provided funds, brought materials supported, attended and/or vended with Juneteenth of Asheville since 2011. This team cares about the Black community and neighborhoods here in Asheville. We prove it through the work that we do and how we show up for communities.

Our Team

This team consists of

Daniel Suber, Tye Mo of Go Diva Photography, Paul Howell, Damien “DJ Superman” Smith, Al D. Green of Young Struggle, Daniel Young of Turk Da Jerk Catering, Ray Mapp, and Genitta Sconiers

Local History

The qualities of Juneteenth in Asheville of recent history are made possible from the example set in the neighborhood of Hillcrest by the efforts of Elder Johnny Hayes

He sought to educate community, engage, and put ideas into action while utilizing the community in its own betterment. We believe that Hillcrest was ready to hold Juneteenth because of what they had seen from Mr. Hayes as well as other community leaders. The example brought inspiration and set the stage for us

Local History

In 2011, the Women's Well Being and Development Foundation (WWD-F) and The Hillcrest Resident Association began our current series of Juneteenth celebrations

This surely would not have happened without great involvement from Itiyopia Ewart and Nicole Hinebaugh of WWD-F as well as the support of the entire neighborhood in making this possible

WWD-F was the host and main sponsor for this event for years until about 2015. LEAF, The MLK association, The Housing Authority of the City of Asheville, and Green Opportunities were regular faces of support alongside other non-profit/community groups as well as City Council members and other city officials

Local History

In 2015, Damien DJ Superman Smith began to coordinate this event. He had provided bounce house and play equipment at the events since the first in 2011. His influence was an integral part of this events aesthetics and execution

In 2017, in collaboration with Dewayne Barton and others, Daniel R. Suber began to coordinate this event with the support of the community of Hillcrest.

Local History

The Hillcrest community always embraced this event and members of the neighborhood regularly volunteered each year to make sure that it happened

The event grew bigger and bigger each year, with a variety of members of many public housing communities and people from across the city in attendance.

This is not necessarily the most easy thing to do considering the range of personalities and tendency for members of some predominately Black neighborhoods in Asheville to stay clear of one another

Every year, the event emerged peacefully and maintained that peace every year. This is something that we all worked really hard for. We knew that Juneteenth was a way to bring our communities together

Local History

Finally in 2020, Daniel Suber teamed up with Thomas Boyd of Tru Opportunist to coordinate a Juneteenth celebration in Hillcrest that finally had gained so much popularity that we could not contain it within the neighborhood any longer.

So, in 2021, Daniel Suber and Thomas Boyd worked with Paul Howell, Tye Mo, and Daniel Young amongst many others to start the beginnings of the Juneteenth of Asheville Committee. We coordinated that Juneteenth at MLK Park in East End with the support of the City of Asheville and in collaboration with My Daddy Taught Me That. Easily, 500-1500 could have attended that event throughout the day

Collaboration with the YMI and The City of Asheville Juneteenth 2022

Finally in 2022, we were able to collaborate with the City of Asheville to bring Juneteenth downtown with the YMI as our fiscal sponsor. Amid various challenges, the event was successful and easily the largest event that we have had. We estimate that thousands of people attended and our local Black vendors did well

Working through the negotiation process with the City of Asheville was a hassle though surely both parties were encountering situations that they had not yet encountered before.

After the event's completion, the Juneteenth of Asheville Committee decided to continue on without Tru Opportunist Promotions and still wishes Mr. Boyd well

A Local and National Holiday

The City of Asheville announced later in the year its new call for proposals to be submitted in order to get support for coordinating the Juneteenth event on behalf of the City of Asheville

Suddenly, we needed to compete in order to put on the event that we had been apart of for its recent history. The City of Asheville represented by Jon Filman would not budge on this. Our team realized that this put Black community members against each other and worse could possibly put Juneteenth in the hands of community outside of Asheville, even in the hands of a surely well meaning person or organization that is not Black or Black Centered, respectively

A Local and National Holiday

They mentioned this in their call for proposals:

Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day marks the anniversary of June 19, 1865, when enslaved African-Americans in Galveston, Texas were finally told they were free. Those enslaved people learned they were free two years after the Civil War was over.

A century and a half later, Asheville City Manager Debra Campbell designated Juneteenth as a City of Asheville holiday, and on June 8, 2021, City of Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer issued a ceremonial proclamation acknowledging Juneteenth as a day of celebration for African Americans. On June 17, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law, making it the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

A Local and National Holiday

Our team wondered, would the City of Asheville local government have even had Juneteenth on their radar if there was not such a local presence?

The City of Asheville was ahead of President Biden, but why?

Would it have been reasonable and within law to acknowledge the work that the Juneteenth of Asheville Committee has put into this event and simply invite others to collaborate with them?

We were disappointed and it felt degrading but our team attempted the submission process anyway

The City of Asheville seeks to contract with a non-profit organization to lead the development, management, and execution of a single event or series of events and engagements designed to commemorate the Juneteenth holiday in 2023.

The RFP is being issued to identify qualified non-profit organizations with the capacity to execute a celebration to commemorate the Juneteenth holiday on behalf of, and in conjunction with the City of Asheville in 2023.

This request seeks to identify a qualified producing organization with proven experience, and an innovative vision with the following objectives to be addressed within a 2023 programming agreement:

The City of Asheville’s Programming Juneteenth 2022 Objectives

- Celebrate the history and tell the story of Juneteenth
- Support small and minority businesses
- Work to eliminate racial disparities in education and equitable service delivery
- Promote environmental stewardship
- Preserve cultural identity within Asheville
- Enhance Asheville brand as an inclusive and diverse community

Projected Timeline

An informational webinar will be conducted via Google Meet on October 7 at 3:00 pm. (Attendance is optional.) Register to attend here.

Following the webinar, the online proposal form will open at 5:00 p.m. with submissions due by November 4 at 12:00 pm.

- Oct 7 – RFP Proposal Form Opens 5:00 p.m.
- Oct 18 – Deadline to Submit Questions 12:00 p.m.
- Nov. 4 – Proposals Due 12:00 p.m.
- December, 2022 – Projected start date of Project

Direct all inquiries regarding this RFP by email to: jfillman@ashevillenc.gov

Proposal Schedule

Non-Mandatory VIRTUAL Pre-Proposal Meeting: 3:00 p.m., October 7, 2022

Questions due by: 12:00 p.m., October 18, 2022

Proposals due by: 12:00 p.m., November 4, 2022

The newly formed “Selection Committee” Announces its choice January 2023 though Jon Filman has informed us that they have decided to work with a different group and will announce mid January once the contract is executed

The City of Asheville’s Response

We intend to make Juneteenth in Asheville a community-wide collaborative effort and invite you to join us in bringing this vision to reality. We're also interested in promoting other independent events commemorating the Juneteenth holiday in our region, which collectively could bring resources and attention to our area.

If you would like to learn more from the selected producer about how you could participate in the proposed concept, or if you would like to share information about another event scheduled for the weeks surrounding Juneteenth, please let me know and we'll share your information.

Our Request

An appeal of the selection process and a face to face meeting with the official Selection Committee

Reveal the identities of the Selection Committee and make it public record as well as the method used to select them to serve

If there must be a selection process to coordinate this event, then we request a reselection process giving more time to refine our submission

Otherwise, our growing group already has experience coordinating this event and has cemented it into Asheville history. We could use the support of the City of Asheville in coordinating a large event open to the public this coming year as we always do


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