

To: Mayor and members of the Washington Grove Town Council

February 10, 2023

From: Joan Mahaffey, 102 Ridge Road, Washington Grove

Re: Resolution of the Town of Washington Grove, MD acknowledging Washington Grove's racially exclusionary past.

I am a descendant of two founding families in Washington Grove: the Osborn family (Albert Osborn was founding pastor of the Washington Grove United Methodist Church) and the McCathran family (Roy McCathran was active in the Camp Meeting Association and later was elected first mayor of Washington Grove). I have serious concerns about the aggressive, self-deprecating Resolution which will be presented by the Racial and Social Equity Committee to the Town Council at the Town Meeting on Monday, February 13. I am a member of RASEC and have tried to voice my concerns through letter writing to the Committee and at RASEC meetings but to no avail.

I ask that the Town Council not take action on this Resolution on Monday evening. It has not been widely publicized. The Resolution passed out of RASEC at the January meeting with the majority but not all of the seven voting members present voting for referral to the Town Council. Three of these voting members are not Town residents.

I acknowledge that Washington Grove is part of our country's racial past. There are two directions for dealing with institutionalized racism. The first is to work to correct vestiges of institutional racism and discrimination. I support the work of RASEC in removing restrictive covenants and in supporting Heritage Washington Grove. The second direction is to dig into the past to reveal institutional discrimination which was nationwide.

This document carries the second direction to an extreme. As written it has an extremely negative perception with biased information interpreted with a progress piety mentality to cast judgment of people and actions more than 100 years ago. I especially object to the inclusion of the attached PowerPoint. It details how Washington Grove residents allegedly practiced and profited from this institutional discrimination. The authors selected and misinterpreted "facts" which reflect the authors' opinion. I am astounded that RASEC would go to such depths to disparage Washington Grove and its past residents.

One of many examples is Rosalee Shantz's statement referred to in her book Grove Gatherings that Roy McCathran warned people to be careful whom they sold their property to. This is interpreted as a racist comment. My family's view is different. There were two visions for Washington Grove: one was spearheaded by Col. Walker, Rosalee's relative who wanted to sell properties for investment to rent during the summers. My grandfather's vision was that Washington Grove would become a year-round community where families could raise their children. Washington Grove is the town it is today because my grandfather won that debate. These opposing opinions are documented in Phil Edwards' book but ignored by the authors. There is no evidence that there was ever a restrictive covenant on 111 Maple Avenue, Roy McCathran's home, or on 109 Maple Avenue, Albert Osborn's home. I have many other examples of misinterpretation in this PowerPoint. I am happy to discuss them with you.

Please do not approve this Resolution on Monday when it is introduced. It should be more widely publicized. There needs to be more discussion of issues raised. As it stands the Resolution and especially the accompanying PowerPoint is offensive and very hurtful to me. It will do more harm than good toward repairing relations between the two communities of Washington Grove and Emory Grove.