

Alternative Text for Resolution on Racism

KENNETH MCCATHRAN <kmccathran@verizon.net>

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Kathy,

Please include this letter, and the attached proposed alternative text for the Resolution on Racism, in the Town Council packets for Monday's Special Town Council Meeting.

Thanks,
Ken

Town of Washington Grove
PO Box 216
Washington Grove, MD 20880

2 the Circle
General Delivery
Washington Grove, MD 20880
March 23, 2023

Dear Mayor and members of the Washington Grove Town Council:

Please consider the alternative resolution which is attached to this message. I firmly believe this more accurately reflects Washington Grove's past, and encourages moving forward.

There are many issues I have with what the RASEC resolution, and accompanying documentation contains. Some of these concerns are:

The Mayor and Town Council of Washington Grove should not speak for, or act on, what the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association did. The association was part of the Methodist Church, which would have to address the issues that occurred under their purview. The United Methodist General Conference, which speaks for the church, released a statement on May 5, 2000.

A resolution by the Mayor and Town Council of Washington Grove need not reference the CDC, and should not shoulder the burden of what the Montgomery County Schools, or B&O Railroad did. It should only address those issues since Washington Grove became an incorporated town in 1937 when the Mayor and Town Council were empowered to take action.

Much of the alleged supporting documentation is incomplete, incorrect, or misleading. I respectfully request that only the text of the resolution, without footnotes or supporting files, be considered.

As for the statement about Washington Grove paying lower wages than of white people, a single data point is mentioned, with no other data point to compare to. A conclusion cannot be based on a single data point.

The statements about the theatre group are inaccurate and misleading. The application was not rejected. It failed because the council was tied, and the Mayor refused to break the tie. He did, however, encourage the theatre group to keep trying. I see this as the Mayor not wanting to create division, but rather encouraging the Town Council and the theatre group to reach a consensus.

While Washington Grove did have minstrel shows, I do not believe they were done with the intent described: "which disregarded the dignity of and mocked African Americans, and ignored the damaging history of slavery" but rather because minstrel shows were enormously popular at the time. We recognize now how inappropriate they were, but I believe Washington Grove would not have held minstrel shows if aware of the harm they caused.

A resolution that expresses regret, and vows to move forward is welcome. Many volunteers have worked hard to create and maintain Washington Grove. Condemning those volunteers is not helpful, and I would prefer our energies be spent correcting the rampant racism that exists today all around us. There is much we all can do to move beyond racism and hatred.

I also request all documentation omit any personal references such as names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or other personally identifiable information.

We should be celebrating who we are, and honoring those who made Washington Grove the place where we enjoy our neighbors, homes, and parks. We should of course strive to make Washington Grove more inclusive and welcoming, which will make our community better. I believe the alternative resolution, attached to this message, better indicates what Washington Grove is.

Respectfully,

/s/

Kenneth M. McCathran

2 the Circle

DRAFT 03-22-2023

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN of Washington Grove, MD, acknowledging Washington Grove's racially exclusionary past.

WHEREAS, racial disparities have existed in America for centuries, and particularly during the Jim Crow period, to the detriment of African American communities and people of color, and such disparities were also present in Washington Grove; and

WHEREAS at its founding the Town of Washington Grove specified that many homes adopt racially restrictive covenants and deed restrictions that kept African Americans and other marginalized communities from purchasing property in Washington Grove; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Washington Grove is committed to honestly and directly undoing, where it exists and for which it has authority and responsibility as a municipal government, the effects of systemic racism, bias, discrimination, and inequities that impact the quality of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for Washington Grove residents and our neighbors; and

WHEREAS, Washington Grove welcomes all people and recognizes the rights of individuals to live their lives with dignity, free from discrimination based on their religion, spirituality or belief, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or immigration status;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WASHINGTON GROVE does hereby resolve, declare, and determine, as follows:

(A) The Mayor and Town Council of Washington Grove acknowledges racially-motivated, discriminatory, or exclusionary aspects of the Town's history, and expresses deep regret for the pain, hurt, and suffering that has been caused; and

(B) The Mayor and Town Council of Washington Grove and their representatives shall treat all persons in a fair, equitable and objective manner, without consideration of their race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religious dress, ability or disability or other individual characteristics.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2023.