

I write to support the proposed resolution “Acknowledging Washington Grove’s Racially Exclusionary Past.”

I believe we should include all the clauses in the resolution because as a group *they tell the truth*. I know that these wrongs have been identified elsewhere. However, none of them are untruthful, and in a time where documenting the truth has been resisted by many, I hope our community can tell the story of what happened here. Acknowledging our past is not a punishment; rather it is an effort indicating that in that our country, and our town, we are willing to state that the truth has not always been told.

Why do we need to attend to old business before we move “forward” toward a more equitable future? In my conversations with many people from Emory Grove, I have come to realize that the racial inequity they experienced (and continue to experience in many ways and places) is not old business. It’s simply not possible to flip a switch and move forward. *The ancestors of Emory Grove and their surviving families still carry the trauma of racism*. Until we are able to acknowledge what happened – to tell the truth – any dedicated notion of healing is not possible. Healing requires truth, and until the truth is told, we cannot face our neighbors with integrity. One-sided healing rings pretty hollow.

When I was training to be a spiritual care worker at Johns Hopkins Hospital, one of my cohort was a Black man. As we worked and learned together, we shared many stories about difficult moments at the hospital – when people were estranged, when they were dying, when they were in pain – developing what felt to me like a growing friendship. At the end of the 400-hour course, each student was asked if we trusted one another. I was disappointed to hear my Black fellow student say that he truly could not trust me, even though he wanted to. Only then did I even begin to realize what the legacy of racism, and especially its telling of partial or inaccurate truths, has done in our country.

I urge the council to pass this resolution as it stands.

Respectfully,

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