

Comments on Resolution regarding Racially Exclusionary Past

Shelley Winkler

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Dear Mayor and Council:

I have general comments to make on the proposed resolution. I believe the text of the resolution itself is fair, I hope it is reviewed by the Town's lawyer to be sure we are not inviting any lawsuits, etc., by its terms. But of course we must forcefully reject the racial and cultural exclusions of the past and vow to work to eliminate that from our future and to correct inherent problems that may exist now or develop in the future. I am so pleased the Town is considering taking this step. I guess my only question is whether it makes sense to single out Emory Grove by name, as I bet there are other neighboring areas where this distinction created disadvantage and exclusion as well.

I, for one, would not have been allowed to live here, so it is also personal.

My big concern is that the preamble lists a lot of very specific items, all done in one sentence type "sins" but devoid of the historic context and meaning in the time the events occurred. History is complex, people are complex, and singling out an item without context tends to impart pure evil intent and paint a portrait of horrible people, when the reality may be much more nuanced, and some of the actions mentioned (such as employing the Town's neighbors) may have been taken with the idea, at the time, that it was a good thing to do and may even have been appreciated by our neighbors, albeit not with the kind of true equal treatment we all would want today.

For example, have you watched any movies from the early 60's lately? The treatment of women and their acceptance of it -- society's full acceptance of it -- is unbelievably demeaning. Yet it does not mean that, at the time, everyone involved with that movie had ill intentions toward women or any awareness of the issues, even though they should have. I am not equating sexual with racial discrimination, just trying to make the point that the whole societal structure at the time complicates things.

The preamble does not read like a government resolution and I believe it needs to be written so that it states the facts of inequality and exclusion without a whole list of things, many of which are complex in themselves.

Thank you,

Shelley Winkler