

Dear neighbors, friends and family,

I am writing this letter because I care deeply about the town where I grew up. It was for this reason that I, along with fellow grover Julia Cavicchi, founded a committee to promote racial equity, diversity and inclusion. We believed in the community that raised us and wanted to invest in making it a better place for all its residents, not just those that look like us.

A dear friend of mine, with an almost two-year-old and another on the way, is looking at houses in Washington Grove. She fell in love with cottage-style homes, the woods, and fields where her daughter could play. When she asked me about my experience growing up here, I spoke of the town's narnia-like charm, running around barefoot as a kid, the memories I'll always cherish. But when she asked me about the racial diversity of the town, if there would be people who look like her and her daughter, I paused.

If Washington Grove does not pass this resolution to acknowledge its racist past and work towards an anti-racist future, I would find it very difficult to convince my friend that she should move here. Her family would be such a wonderful addition to town – they're community- and family-oriented, generous, kind and warm. They remind me of the neighbors I grew up around who treated me as one of their chosen family. But how can I tell her that they will be welcomed with open arms into a neighborhood that voted against the resolution: "Washington Grove welcomes all people and recognizes the rights of individuals to live their lives with dignity, free from discrimination" (clause 16)?

The thing about the resolution is it's not *really* about the past. It's about what it signals to current and future (potential) town residents.

I am writing to express my complete support of this resolution as a step toward Washington Grove becoming an anti-racist community. The historical facts, as presented in the resolution, are well-researched and well-cited. And the intention for the future of Washington Grove is clear. There is still healing, learning and action to be done, but this resolution lays an essential groundwork for reconciliation and community building.

Sincerely,

Sita Strother