

## comments on RASEC resolution

**From:** Peggy Koniz-Booher <peggykb@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Sunday, April 9, 2023 9:41 AM

**To:** Town of Washington Grove <washgrove@comcast.net>

**Cc:** Christine Dibble <christinedibble@outlook.com>; Robert Gilmore <robertbrucegilmore@gmail.com>; David Cosson <dcosson@rcn.com>; Eva Patrone <evamarie.patrone@gmail.com>; Sylvie Favret <favrets2010@gmail.com>; Barbara Raimondo <baraimondo@me.com>; John Compton <johncompton@me.com>

**Subject:** Re: [WG Listserv] comments on RASEC resolution

To Town Council Members and the Mayor:

We are seeing lots of good points made in the comments on this important resolution and are moved by many of them. Reverend Warner's comment that racism is in the air we ALL breathe, and that our souls are hungry for resolution, is especially powerful. We feel strongly that it is absolutely critical for the Town to take this first step – to adopt a resolution - as part of a journey toward both confronting the racist actions of our past as we continue to grapple with how to move forward. We agree with Christine's analysis of the RASEC Resolution, however, and feel that her draft alternative resolution is a thoughtful starting point for discussion.

Many in RASEC have advanced along that journey through their research and interactions with others over the last year and more, and we applaud the hard work that the committee has done. We know that many Grove residents have already engaged, by contributing to the drafting of the resolution or participating in a number of events sponsored by the committee, but it would be good if RASEC could help some of the rest of us catch up so that ultimately, the final resolution and actions will express a truly shared vision.

We agree that understanding and confronting the past actions of our Town is hard, but essential to the process. We believe that what we learn from this process can ultimately guide our CURRENT and FUTURE decision-making and actions. We acknowledge that commonly held beliefs, world views, concerns and fears will continue to impact our decisions. The issues that face us today – conversations and decisions about how to make the Town more diverse and inclusive, whether or not to invite others to use our resources, and how to sustain and evolve our traditions – are and will continue to be driven by a complex set of realities.

Bob and I have prided ourselves over the last 33 year for living in a town that is different from all the areas around us. We love that we have held onto our historic houses, our forests, our walkable community, our train station, our volunteer government and ritual gatherings, all while we have seen our surroundings go from farmland to full blown suburbia. Why we have remained almost completely white, while the neighboring communities are some of the most diverse in the nation, continues to concern us, and has bothered members of our racially diverse extended family and many in our network of friends and neighbors for a long time.

Like many other Grovers, we have gone to battle over the development pressures around us – Amity; the ICC; plans to develop the meadow area, Towne Crest, and the bridge; etc - which have all threatened the uniqueness of the Town in the recent past. Not unlike the early founders of the Methodist Camp and the Town, we cherish our uniqueness, and volunteer our time to preserve and protect the many aspects of the town that we love - that drew us here. We can't help but take pride in living in 'a place apart', a 'Town within a Forest', so different from the suburbanized landscape that continues to unfold around us.

As we study the wording of the RASEC Resolution, read the background documentation, and re-read the histories of the Grove, we are struck by the fact that the decisions and actions of our predecessors were not really very different from many of our more recent actions – motivated by basically good intentions. There is no denying that Washington Grove developed as a private 'utopian ideal' -- an homogeneous, close knit community wanting a getaway from the big city. It sought to protect its “campgrounds” from those around it that lived differently (see the comments from the Historic Preservation Commission in the list of comments from Town Commissions). We believe that many or most of the decisions made by our predecessors were made in the mindset of protecting 'something special'. The intent of those decisions was influenced by the nexus of issues both societal and practical. As we are learning, however, the impacts were fairly clear and extremely hurtful to our black neighbors living in Emory Grove.

The offenses listed in the RASEC Resolution were and continue to be felt by our neighbors, whether the actions taken at that time were INTENDED to be offensive or not. Our current decisions are likely also having negative impacts that we have not stopped to consider, and as Oscar said in his statement, we need to open our eyes to those impacts. As we move forward in this journey, we need to create opportunities to engage in respectful discussion and constructive debate. We need to be aware of and reflect on how decisions and actions taken in the past have led to impacts that we never fully understood or considered. We need to commit to discussing the impacts of our CURRENT and FUTURE decisions on the communities around us. It's going to take a lot of hard work and deliberate, collective actions by the Town – it's Council, volunteer commissions and committees, and all of the families living here -- to help dissolve the hurtful barriers that we have intentionally and unintentionally built around us.

This collective action is complicated and will NOT be easy. We are both fully committed to seeing a final resolution pass, and to engaging in the journey forward.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peggy Koniz-Booher and Bob Booher  
111 Maple Ave

On Sat, Apr 8, 2023 at 2:10 PM Christine Dibble <[christinedibble@outlook.com](mailto:christinedibble@outlook.com)> wrote:

Hi Grovers, comments on the proposed resolution submitted by RASEC are still coming in. If you are interested in this topic, you can review the submitted comments at <https://washingtongrovemd.org/government/government-overview/internal-correspondence-table/> . In addition, two non-residents have submitted comments, which are available off of <https://washingtongrovemd.org/whats-happening/general-news/proposed-rasec-resolution-acknowledging-racist-past/> .

Cheers,

Christine  
240-702-6719  
[christinedibble@outlook.com](mailto:christinedibble@outlook.com)

The best way to get a quick response from me is to email me rather than to call or text me.

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*Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?*

—Mary Oliver

*Do not get lost in a sea of despair... Be hopeful,  
be optimistic. Never, ever be afraid to make some*

*noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.*

—John Lewis

*Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.*

—RFK

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