

## Re: Proposed resolution acknowledging the Grove's racist past

Robert Gilmore <robertbrucegilmore@gmail.com>

Thu 4/13/2023 11:43 AM

To: Marc Hansen <Marc.Hansen201@outlook.com>

Cc: Christine Dibble <christinedibble@outlook.com>; John Compton <johncompton@me.com>; Eva Patrone <counciloreva@gmail.com>; Barbara Raimondo <councilorbarb@gmail.com>; Sylvie Favret <favrets2010@gmail.com>; David Cosson <dcosson@rcn.com>; Tom Land <thomasland@outlook.com>; BetsyKlinger <betsyklinger@aol.com>; Paula Puglisi <paulajpuglisi@gmail.com>; Shelley Winkler <stopwink@gmail.com>; GRETCHEN HORLACHER <gretchenhorlacher2008@comcast.net>; Virginia Quesada <vq@qmediainc.com>; Don Henninger <phanphil@verizon.net>; Jane Seegal <jseegal@gmail.com>; Joan Mahaffey <joanmahaffey@gmail.com>; Elizabeth Everhart <lizeverhart9@gmail.com>; jcbbox@earthlink.net <jcbbox@earthlink.net>; oscar.ramos.01@gmail.com <oscar.ramos.01@gmail.com>; emmastrother@hks.harvard.edu <emmastrother@hks.harvard.edu>; Ann Philips <aphilips@igc.org>

To all:

I overlooked Marc Hansen's response to my email or I would have responded earlier. To a certain extent, given the further work being done on the Resolution, perhaps the discussion has been overtaken by events. Having said that, however, I feel compelled to respond.

Marc, I don't know you personally. I know of you and your past service with the Town, and have the general sense that people in Town respected you. So I am willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. But a number of your statements in your email strike me as incredibly harmful and negative, and I think it's very unfortunate that a former leader of Town has made them in a public context, particularly this one.

In your email, you write the following (with my emphasis added):

**I join Councilmember Dibble in wondering what “antiracist” means. Does it mean the Town should adopt policies that confer special treatment to individuals based on race—a practice prohibited by the US Constitution and federal law**

The "special treatment" bugaboo is one that opponents of civil rights legislation, opponents of anti-discriminatory measures -- opponents of equality -- have historically raised as a way to mask their opposition. I hope that isn't the case with you, and your choice of wording merely is imprudent and unintended. But please understand, it certainly strikes me, and I suspect many others, as, at best, racially insensitive. [NB: I believe I know Christine well enough to be pretty confident she does **not** join you in this sentiment, but she can of course speak for herself].

I have a similar reaction to your parade of horrors about Maple Lake. My comment was an observation that our exclusion of non-residents from swimming in the (publicly-owned) lake cannot help but be viewed through a racial or ethnic prism, given that Town residents are overwhelmingly white, but our surrounding neighbors are mostly people of color, and every day those neighbors see a lake from which they are excluded, literally sitting in their backyard or right next to paths through the woods that they frequent. Your listing of a number of frankly irrelevant points about other pools, and access fees, comes across as a rather rank example of whataboutism intended to distract from the point I was making: that this and other facets of our current existence reinforce racial separateness, which is an ongoing legacy of the more overt racial hostility of our Town's (and our broader society's) past.

As for my views expressed in my letter, I did not say that I am opposed to any and all modifications of the Resolution. If there is a statement in the Resolution that can be demonstrated to be straight out

inaccurate, I am all for correcting such a statement. But I **am** opposed to modifications that reduce the content or soften the language, because I believe that doing so is at cross-purposes with our objectives in adopting this sort of statement. It is true that the Resolution as drafted by RASEC goes beyond the particular issues of racial prejudice from the Town's history. But that is appropriate, because the Resolution should not merely be an acknowledgment and expression of regret for past racial animus. Rather, it should also embrace the Town's current commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, which - in 2023 - means embracing the incredibly diverse, multi-ethnic, broader community in which we reside and with which we want to interact on a just and equitable basis. I believe very strongly that expressing our Town's commitment to a racially inclusive and diverse present and future is just as important an objective of the Resolution as acknowledging the past racist practices and beliefs. For this reason, I disagree with the idea that the Resolution should be substantially pared back to only focus on the past.

Finally, I look forward to the further work on the Resolution that will be undertaken by Barbara, Christine, and others, per the decision at this past Monday's Town Council meeting. I hope that the result of their work will be a Resolution that is improved, and that enjoys even broader support than that of the current draft (and I believe that the current draft issued by RASEC enjoys overwhelming support in Town). For me to support the revised Resolution, it will need to remain a powerful and detailed statement from the Town expressing regret for the racial prejudice and exclusiveness of the past, and committing to a racially inclusive and just present and future.

On Sat, Apr 8, 2023 at 8:57 AM Marc Hansen <[Marc.Hansen201@outlook.com](mailto:Marc.Hansen201@outlook.com)> wrote:

Dear Mayor and Council-

Councilmember Gilmore urges you to adopt Resolution 2023-1 (Resolution) without amendment—despite the flaws identified by Councilmember Dibble. The Resolution commits the Town to build “an antiracist Washington Grove”. I join Councilmember Dibble in wondering what “antiracist” means. Does it mean the Town should adopt policies that confer special treatment to individuals based on race—a practice prohibited by the US Constitution and federal law?

Councilmember Gilmore's message states that “making Maple Lake inaccessible to the (overwhelmingly, black and brown) people whose neighborhoods surround and overlook it . . . reinforce[s] racial separateness.” So, how does the Council envision the discussion will unfold, under the Resolution, when Councilmember Gilmore proposes opening Maple Lake to residents of adjoining communities? Would the Resolution's commitment to building an “antiracist” Town even permit the Town to weigh other factors relevant to opening the use of Maple Lake to non-residents given the imperative of “bend[ing] the moral arc of the country towards racial justice”—see Councilmember Gilmore's message, p. 1? Under the Resolution, what role, *if any*, would the following factors (and there likely other factors as well) play in this discussion?

1. The operation of Maple Lake is wholly funded by the Town. Is it appropriate to ask the Town's taxpayers to subsidize the residents of Gaithersburg and the County? The

City operates an Aquatic Center at 2 Teachers Way and charges an annual membership fee of \$250 to City residents but an annual fee of \$400 to Washington Grove residents. The County operates an outdoor pool on Emory Grove Road.

2. What impact would opening the use of Maple Lake to non-residents have on the Town's insurance premiums? What impact would opening the use of Maple Lake to non-residents have on the Town's liability caps under the Maryland Local Government Tort Claims Act?
3. What impact would the likely intensification of use of Maple Lake have on the enjoyment of the Lake by Town residents?
4. Would opening Maple Lake to non-residents impose an acceptable administrative burden on the volunteers who operate the Lake?

Councilmember Dibble's proposed revisions to the Resolution has much to commend it for the reasons she articulates—especially the revisions she makes to correct the Resolution's "straying from the topic". Nevertheless, the revised Resolution uses terms whose meanings are as unclear as the Resolution's use of the term "antiracist". The 4<sup>th</sup> Whereas clause provides that the Town "is ready to embark on a journey towards racial equity", and the 6<sup>th</sup> Whereas clause provides that the Town is "committed" to "undo the effects of systemic racism". The meaning of "racial equity" and "systemic racism" are no clearer than the term "antiracism". How would these two Whereas clauses play out in the Council's discussion of opening Maple Lake to non-residents of the Grove?

All of this is to say, that the Council needs to be clear on what it is committing itself to do under any Resolution it adopts when taking government action. The Council should not approve a Resolution that could back itself into corners when addressing issues (like opening Maple Lake to non-residents) or approve a Resolution that may appear to promise action that it cannot take under the equal protection guarantee of the US Constitution.

Respectfully,

Marc Hansen

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**From:** Robert Gilmore <[robertbrucegilmore@gmail.com](mailto:robertbrucegilmore@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Sunday, April 2, 2023 12:22 PM

**To:** Christine Dibble <[christinedibble@outlook.com](mailto:christinedibble@outlook.com)>

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**Subject:** Re: Proposed resolution acknowledging the Grove's racist past

Mayor Compton, Town Councilors, and Concerned Citizens -

Attached is my statement in support of the proposed antiracism resolution, Resolution 2023-01. John and Kathy, please include on the Town website along with the other statements concerning the proposed resolution.

Best regards,

Rob Gilmore