

Proposed Resolution Acknowledging Racially Exclusionary Past

Shelley Winkler

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Dear Mayor and Council, and Interested Residents (through the Town website),

Just about every letter commenting on the proposed resolution for "racial equity" supports an acknowledgement of the need for the Town to apologize for the racial exclusions in our history and legacy. I hope this general agreement is not lost or unappreciated in the discussions!

I am concerned that the original draft is not written as a municipal resolution. Such a document may be appropriate in an interpersonal forum but is not a form suited for a municipal resolution, where every word can be parsed for legal meaning, potential legal action and legal consequences. They are simply different. The examples of resolutions from other places circulated with the original draft are an example of that.

Because so many (and I!) agree on the need for a resolution, I urge the Mayor and Council to represent all of us in a way that is appropriate for a municipality, with review of a proposed draft by legally trained individuals, before adopting it. Marc Hansen, for example, raised various questions relating to the draft and those should be carefully considered.

I agree with those who have endorsed Christine Dibble's revision. I think it is written in a more appropriate format and solves many of the issues, and I am so grateful to her for taking the time to do this. But I would defer to Marc with his broad and long municipal experience and suggest that the Mayor and Council review each word in this revision and ensure that only words that can be clearly understood in a legal sense (which is often much different from a psychological or even historic sense) be part of the municipal resolution. Dave Cosson also raised some important considerations in his suggested guidelines.

The resolution certainly does not preclude actions Town residents can take to reach out to our neighbors and pursue interpersonal relationships and proactive or reparative measures. It sounds like many Town residents would support those!

Sincerely,

Shelley
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