

Dear Members of the Town Council,

I am writing to voice my emphatic support for the resolution “Acknowledging Washington Grove’s Racially Exclusionary Past,” which I believe should be passed in its entirety. As a person who grew up in Washington Grove and cares deeply about the town, I firmly believe it is our responsibility to acknowledge and apologize for past racially-motivated exclusions in order to work toward a Washington Grove that is welcoming to all.

Having read the resolution and references, I am convinced that this statement is a necessary and important step for Washington Grove and effectively accomplishes three core objectives: document and acknowledge exclusionary practices in the town’s past; apologize for the harms that resulted from these actions, whether intentional or not; and lay a foundation for equitable and inclusive practices in the town’s present and future.

This resolution offers an important, evidence-based acknowledgment of events that occurred in the town and is necessary to recognize the locally specific history and ongoing effects of racism. The resolution’s enumeration of the many contributing factors demonstrates that each occurrence happened not in isolation but amounted to a pattern of race-based exclusion. This pattern had clear negative impacts for people who were the targets of this exclusion and the effects of these patterns are still felt by residents, young and old, within Washington Grove and beyond its boundaries.

I experienced the ongoing reality of this history and urgent need for acknowledgment and apology on behalf of Washington Grove in the deeply moving History Walking Tour by residents of Emory Grove and Washington Grove in June 2022. Listening to the intertwined histories of these towns, I was particularly impacted by accounts from Emory Grove residents of their encounters with Washington Grove that led to a sense of not belonging, even as they valued the resilience and vitality of the Emory Grove community. I believe that in order for Washington Grove to offer a full apology for past discrimination, we must recognize the actions and consequences of our history.

This resolution succinctly addresses these points and has potential to serve as the basis for historically-informed antiracist decision-making in the future of the town. For young people growing up in Washington Grove now and in the future, this resolution can be a compelling model for why the town must choose to intentionally prioritize collaboration with our neighbors and to foster an inclusive, welcoming environment for all. I urge the Council to vote in favor of the resolution’s passage.

Sincerely,
Violet Cavicchi Muñoz