



Resolution Number: 2023-01
Introduced: 02/10/23
Adopted: 05/08/23
Effective: 05/08/23

Resolution

Acknowledging Washington Grove's Racially Exclusionary Past and Committing to an Equitable and Inclusive Future

WHEREAS, racial disparities have existed in America for centuries, to the detriment of Black communities and people of color, and institutional racism persists even today, resulting in fewer opportunities for Black people to build wealth, own homes, exercise their voting rights, live in safe and healthful communities, access quality health care and education, and receive fair treatment by law enforcement officials and the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, such racial disparities are now so prevalent that they have created a public health crisis that requires action from all levels of government and civil society, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Public Health Association, and Montgomery County, Maryland; and

WHEREAS for much of the history of the Washington Grove community, the successive, evolving organizations that administered its affairs—first, the Washington Grove Camp Meeting Association, and later, the Washington Grove Association and the Town of Washington Grove (collectively, the “Town”)—engaged in Jim Crow racist policies and practices, that, regardless of their intentions, were not only demeaning, exclusionary and painful to neighboring communities, but were also emblematic of a persistent and deliberate refusal to confront the damaging effects of slavery; and

WHEREAS the Town acknowledges the cumulative effects of racist national, state, and local policies and Washington Grove’s complicity by failing to contest them, thereby contributing to the harm imposed upon the residents of Emory Grove and other neighboring communities, and

WHEREAS these national, state, and local policies and practices included:

- Black people consistently being paid wages lower than white people for comparable work. For example, in the segregated schools of Montgomery County, teachers at the substandard “colored” school named “Washington Grove” (also known informally as “Emory Grove”), were paid less than half what equivalently experienced and credentialed white teachers were paid at the white school that Washington Grove children attended.
- Black children having to attend substandard segregated 'colored' schools, thereby hindering their pace of advancement and contributing to lower intergenerational economic mobility compared to white students.
- Black people being relegated to segregated waiting areas in the railroad stations, including the Washington Grove B&O station; and

WHEREAS the Town acknowledges the policies and practices directly imposed by the Town that have caused harm to residents of Emory Grove and our other neighboring communities, both historically and currently, including these policies and practices:

- Selling properties with racially restrictive covenants and deed restrictions from 1929 to 1953, which prevented Black people (as well as Jewish people, Asian people, and people of other marginalized communities) from purchasing property in the Town.
- Denying a theater group access to the Town’s auditorium because the group would not agree to exclude Black people from attending shows.

- Closing its gates in 1897, forcing Black people traveling between the railroad stop at Washington Grove and the Emory Grove Camp Meeting to walk around Washington Grove's borders.
- Objecting to the construction of a county sidewalk on the Town's section of Washington Grove Lane from 1972 to 1980, which created an exclusionary environment by ending the sidewalk at the Town's border; and
- Producing annual parades and minstrel shows in which performers wore 'blackface' costumes, disrespecting Black people's dignity and ignoring the damaging history of slavery; and

WHEREAS, the Town understands the importance of examining its role in institutional racism, both historically and currently, and is ready to take measures to promote racial equity; and

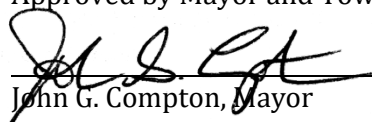
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF WASHINGTON GROVE:

- A. Acknowledge, apologize for, repudiate, reject and condemn all racially motivated, discriminatory, or exclusionary aspects of the Town's history, and deeply regret the pain, hurt, and suffering that has been caused; and
- B. Welcome all people; recognize the rights of individuals to live with dignity, free from discrimination based not only on race, but also on national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, spirituality or belief, and immigration status; value inclusion, equity and justice; unequivocally condemn racism and bigotry, whether in rhetoric or in action; and envision a Town that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
- C. Where they have authority and responsibility, will take steps that undo the effects of systemic racism, bias, discrimination, and inequities, which impact the quality of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for Town residents and our neighbors; and
- D. To these ends, will:
 - Commit to further engage in individual and collective work to understand bias.
 - Further address any policies or practices that may have the effect of being racially biased or harmful, and foster an unbiased and inclusive environment free of discrimination and harassment toward any person or group.
 - Treat all persons in a fair and equitable manner, regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, ability, or disability.
 - Support ties with neighboring communities, and consider their welfare and the impact that our policies or decisions will have on them; and
 - Continue building a Town where all people are welcomed to live and prosper.

Adopted this 8th day of May, 2023.

Note: Readers who wish to learn more about the national, state, local and Town policies and practices referred to in this document can review [this supporting document \(PDF\)](#), prepared by members of the Town's Racial and Social Equity Committee.

Approved by Mayor and Town Council:

 _____ 05/08/2023
 John G. Compton, Mayor Date

Attest: _____ /s/ _____
 Town Clerk Date