

Feb. 25, 2024

To the Mayor and Members of the Washington Grove Town Council,

We argue against changing the name of the Grove's town hall from 'McCathran Hall' to 'Washington Grove Town Hall', following a RASEC vote (Racial and Social Equity Committee).

(1) As the reason for the name change is real or perceived racism, why would we replace McCathran with Washington? Washington was an enslaver, McCathran was not.

(2) Roy McCathran did engage in minstrel shows, but this was not the reason for naming the hall after him. The reason was his 20 years of service as the Grove's first mayor, in addition to his prior service to the Camp Meeting Association. Roy McCathran is not responsible for the sins of the white race.

(3) A history by R. Shantz (1975) said that the first mayor stressed the importance of "selling property to the right people", but the context for this is Roy McCathran's vision of the Grove as a year-round community of owners, versus the vision of Shantz's grandfather (Major Walker) that the Grove be a summer community for investors to rent out.

(4) Transparency is important. Like anyone – white, black or other – Roy McCathran had good aspects and other-than-good aspects (when perceived by current standards). Rather than hide his story, showcase it. Leave his name on the town hall. Add a plaque to document what the naming of the town hall was celebrating, what it was not celebrating, and the context of those times.

*"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." - George Santayana, The Life of Reason, 1905.*

(5) The RASEC vote on town-hall naming included Grove non-residents. We would like to know what the vote was for RASEC's Grove residents.

Respectfully,

John C. Brasunas and Kathleen A. McCann  
405 6<sup>th</sup> Ave (since February 1988)