

Renaming our town hall

To the Mayor and all Councilors:

I appreciate the Town Council taking time to think about and read more feedback on the important topic of renaming our town hall. As you consider the next steps I urge you to think through a core logic flow:

If you as Town Council members believe that it's important to keep your eyes on the future of Washington Grove...

And that the Town Council approved the anti-racism resolution in May 2023 with sincerity, commitment, a hope for a more inclusive and welcoming town, and energy for change...

And that you reviewed the facts from the published information included below on Roy McCathran's leadership in the specific racist behaviors pointed out in the resolution as things that we as a town condemn and repudiate...

...Is it logical to reaffirm for the future that the right name for our town hall and community gathering spot is a building named in honor of Roy McCathran and the times in which he lived?

Change is so difficult, and in this case particularly so for the McCathran family and friends, for whom there's a painful personal component in these discussions, and for many in the older generation of Grove residents who have lived here the longest. It's clear there are many for whom the thought of this name change is very unsettling and who want to see the published historical facts as 'lies', or this RASEC recommendation as driven by a 'witch hunt' mentality, or as a slippery slope to other changes we're certainly not suggesting. And it seems there are some who see this recommendation as being focused on how we want others outside the town to see us versus how we as town residents want to see ourselves. These are all natural and common reactions in these situations and need to be addressed with respect, open dialogue and understanding.

At the end of the day, this is a moment to affirm where we stand one way or the other. The role of the Town Council is, among other things, to 'maintain the community values' and 'strive to improve'. When I moved here last year and read the anti-racism resolution it was clear that Washington Grove had inclusion as a core community value.

After hearing all input, your decision as Town Council members needs to be made objectively based on your moral compasses on our community value of inclusion and on what you believe is best for the future, not the past, of Washington Grove. A good litmus test could be:

- Does the decision on our town hall name align with the approved anti-racism resolution put in place in May 2023?;
- Is it a welcoming name to all residents and community neighbors?;
- Theoretically, would we be proud and comfortable to see the decision written up in a local newspaper article?;

- Can today's decision easily stand the test of time with residents to come to avoid this difficult process in the future?;
- And is it a logical and appropriate building name to use in town notices and invitations as our meeting location and gathering spot for future inclusive events?

I'm very grateful for your time, energy and commitment through this difficult process and for your focus on what's best for the future of Washington Grove.