



February 21, 2024

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

Thank you for the opportunity to present some recommendations.

The Racial and Social Equity Committee's (RASEC) goals are as follows:

- Take collective responsibility to understand our town's history as it connects with racial injustice in the United States
- Learn and grow together
- Recommend actions to promote a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community
- Foster justice in and beyond our community.

Our Town Resolution, "Acknowledging Washington Grove's Racially Exclusionary Past and Committing to an Equitable and Inclusive Future," shares these goals and has made the following commitments:

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 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 welcome to live and prosper.

Background and Workgroup Process

RASEC is proposing the attached recommendations to further the goals of the Town through actions that operationalize the approved resolution's intent. The recommendations are based on the following:

- Feedback from a discussion with representatives from the Emory Grove community regarding ways in which Washington Grove can make the aspirations of the Town Resolution a reality
- The Town survey data presentations and discussions
- Ongoing discussions at RASEC meetings
- Stories from joint events with Emory Grove
- Observations of Town practices, culture, and interactions

The workgroup process was as follows:

- Created a background statement
- Compiled suggested recommendations
- Ranked the recommendations as high, medium, low priority, or eliminated (done by each group member)
- Categorized the recommendations as those that required council action, committee action with council support, or committee action only (done by each group member)
- Compiled the data and if the majority ranked a recommendation as high, it became one of the final recommendations

Note: One recommendation, renaming McCathran Hall, was contentious and ended in a vote of 3 in favor, 1 abstention, and 1 vote to eliminate the recommendation.

- Discussed and came to consensus regarding whether the final recommendations required council action, committee action with council support, or committee action only

- Refined the wording and explained why it was important as it related to the Town Resolution, and delineated precisely the actions RASEC is requesting from the council (done by individual group members)
- Reviewed the wording and content of the recommendations written by individuals (whole group reviewed)
- Edited the recommendations based on group feedback (done by the individuals who wrote the draft recommendations)
- Decided on a written format for the recommendations

Note: The recommendation to consider restoring the name of McCathran Hall to “Town Hall” is accompanied by two slide presentations. One represents the majority group vote and the other represents the dissenting opinion of one group member.

The recommendations including the slide presentations are attached.

- Decided which group member(s) would answer questions posed by the council or residents regarding particular recommendations
- Presented the draft recommendation document to the Racial and Social Equity Committee for ratification
- Presented the final ratified packet to the Town Council and the Town Survey data.

The Recommendations

The recommendations are listed below. The order does not denote a hierarchy.

The full recommendations are attached.

- Recommendation to Create a Town Website Protocol – requires council action
- Recommendation to Collaborate with Neighboring Communities Regarding the Shared Use Path (includes two attachments) – requires council action
- Recommendation to Consider Restoring the Name of Our Town Hall to ‘Town Hall’ (includes two slide presentations) – requires council action
- Recommendation to Hire a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Specialist – requires committee action with council support
- Recommendation to Establish a Communication System between the Town of Washington Grove and Heritage Emory Grove – requires committee action with council support