

## Recommendation for Town Website Protocol

### Requires council action

Develop a protocol if racist, discriminatory, insulting, accusatory, harassing, threatening, or anonymous statements are submitted for Town website posting.

Definition of terms in this context:

**Racist:** a statement that reflects racism, the doctrine that one's racial group is superior or that a particular racial group is inferior to the others.

**Discriminatory:** a statement that shows prejudicial treatment, especially as an indication of bias related to age, race, skin color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, etc.

**Insulting:** a statement that is degrading, derogatory, disparaging, or ridiculing.

**Accusatory:** a statement suggesting that an individual or group has done something wrong with the intention of doing so.

**Harassing:** a statement that demonstrates aggressive pressure or intimidation directed toward an individual or group.

**Threatening:** a statement that expresses or suggests an intention of harm or harassment.

**Anonymous:** a statement without a name.

### Importance

This recommendation furthers the promise in the Washington Grove Resolution, Acknowledging Washington Grove's Racially Exclusionary Past and Committing to an Equitable and Inclusive Future, to:

- 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 fairly and equitably, regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, ability, disability, or other individual characteristics.
- work towards building a town where all people are welcome to live and prosper.

### Purpose

- To prevent postings that conflict with the aspirations expressed in the Town Resolution.
- To actively demonstrate to residents and others that the town will not tolerate exclusionary, racist, discriminatory, insulting, accusatory, harassing, threatening, or anonymous posts submitted for posting on the Town website.

### **Suggested Actions**

- Select three people to review questionable submitted posts that the webmaster determines may not follow the guidelines. The decision could be:
  - a. Do not post and notify the resident that the submitted post conflicts with the Town Resolution and reference specific sections.
  - b. If the posting does not clearly conflict with the resolution, post it with a disclaimer.
- Add a notice on the town website home page that Washington Grove does not post exclusionary, racist, discriminatory, insulting, accusatory, harassing, threatening, or anonymous submissions. Add the link to the Town Resolution with the statement: “For further understanding see the Town of Washington Grove Resolution which commits to an equitable and inclusive future.”

**Note:** The Council may want to seek legal advice so that the guidelines conform with any First Amendment and MD law issues.