

March 1, 2024

To: Mayor and Town Council of Washington Grove Maryland

From: Sylvia Rynex Appleby and Thomas Appleby

We are responding to the Resolution Number 2023-01 adopted on 5/8/2023 in Washington Grove Maryland. I want to address some issues that were presented in the Resolution as being from a family that was here continually from the start of the current Town of Washington Grove Maryland.

Irving McCathran became the first mayor of Washington Grove in 1937 and continued through 1957. He started during the Great Depression of 1929-1939. This was a time that Washington Grove was at its lowest because of the Great Depression. Many residents lost their homes the community suffered greatly. He had to learn and establish a town without previous guidelines which took great dedication and commitment. Washington Grove started to grow and especially during WWII because of the housing shortages in the District of Columbia. We started receiving their residents and this was noted to attribute to a more diverse community for our Town.

Montgomery County Maryland was responsible for the education of children in this part of the state of Maryland. In 1885 Oakmont School was a one room school house that Washington Grove children attended until 1956. My father and his sister attended it from 1909 to 1917 as an elementary school.

In 1956 Washington Grove Elementary School was opened and I attended it from 1958 to 1964 which was kindergarten to 6th grade.

Longview Elementary was located in Emory Grove and opened by Montgomery County in 1950 as Colored School. (In their words). It was a combination of Emory Grove, Germantown, Laytonsville and Shepherds Town residents. In 1959 it became integrated and the Emory Grove children attended Washington Grove Elementary. I attended Washington Grove Elementary with the Emory Grove students and we became friends. We continued through Gaithersburg Junior and Gaithersburg High School together. I am still friends with many of my schoolmates after 60 years. The Town of Washington Grove was not responsible for or had any education issues with these schools.

The restrictive covenants were not created by the Town of Washington Grove. The business world trying to validate higher priced properties tried to add this to contracts to increase their profits. Unfortunately, it was not recognized that some unsavory businesses were trying to incorporate this, until more recently. Our Town has tried to respond to these, outrageous terms and conditions.

Segregation was not initiated by Washington Grove Maryland. These were decisions made by the United States that was enforced by the States. Yes, it was a very bad times for America, when people for treated as second class because of their race, color or religion. My mother's side of the family were Irish and they were treated terribly when they came to America. They were discriminated against and were lucky if they could find any type of job.

The McCathran family has had three mayors that have worked a total of 30 years for the Town of Washington Grove Maryland. Plus other members of their family have held jobs related to the survival of the Town of Washington Grove. I don't know of any other family that has done so much for the Town.

We should keep the name of McCathran Hall, because of all the good that was done by the family for the Town of Washington Grove.

Sincerely

Sylvia Rynex Appleby

Thomas Appleby