

Mayor and Town Council members:

I'm sorry to send this so close to the time of the Town Council Meeting, but I wanted to add my voice to the letter that was sent by some other members of RASEC. I agree whole-heartedly with the sentiments expressed in the letter (duplicated below). I hope that our mayor and councilors will consider the arguments and revise any guidelines they propose.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Betsy Klinger  
410 Center St. Washington Grove, MD

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I am a resident of Washington Grove, and I am signing my name below in opposition to the proposed resolution of the Town Council that would establish new restrictions on non-residents participating in Town advisory committees.

Since all Town committees are advisory in nature and receive funds to spend only for particular purposes approved by the Mayor and the Town Council, welcoming non-residents to have voting or leadership roles does not mean that they are directing how the Town is spending its funds. That is the role of the Mayor and the Town Council. Any concerns about spending can and should be dealt with by rules or guidance applicable to committees in general and regardless of their composition. Although it is extremely unlikely that this would ever happen, no committee should have a majority of non-resident voting members.

The proposed resolution misguidedly delegates all non-residents to non-voting, non-leadership roles. For a town that relies on volunteerism, we should encourage the full and equal participation of those among our neighbors who are interested and willing to help. Committees have functioned for decades without these proposed restrictions on non-residents.

The participation and perspectives of non-residents are particularly important to the work of the Racial & Social Equity Committee (RASEC). One of RASEC's goals is specifically to build relationships and make amends with neighboring communities. The Town's resolution acknowledging its racially exclusionary past recognized racist policies and practices that were "demeaning, exclusionary and painful to neighboring communities." The Mayor and the Town Council committed to "support ties with neighboring communities, and consider their welfare and the impact that our policies or decisions will have on them."

To accomplish the difficult work of moving on from the past, the Town should encourage the full participation of anyone who can help us understand how to take steps that undo the effects of systemic

racism and bias. We should fully welcome neighbors outside of the Town to volunteer their time, energy, expertise, lived experiences and wisdom to help us better understand and make progress towards our goal of a diverse and inclusive town. Telling our neighbors, including and particularly those who are people of color, that we welcome their participation, but they are not allowed to vote or to take on a leadership role, does the opposite.