

Dear Mayor Compton and Council Members,

I am writing in support of the goals, activities, and achievements of the Racial and Social Equity Committee.

The committee has done important work to open residents' eyes to the exclusionary history of our beloved town, to systemic and ingrained racism, and to the pain these continue to evoke. Among other things, in the last couple of years RASEC has

- • educated us about restrictive covenants and initiated an effort that led to state
- legislation so Maryland municipalities can remove them from deeds;
- • taught us about mortgage redlining and its impoverishing effects; and
- advocated for Accessory Dwelling Units to increase housing opportunities in our town; and
- sponsored social events and conversations with our Emory Grove neighbors.

Anti-racist work is worth undertaking by us as individuals and as a town. I have not agreed with every decision taken or resolution drafted by RASEC, nor have I expected to. I'm glad to see more people becoming involved in the committee's work, so that actions aligned with the town's Resolution 2023-01 can be discussed more fully and perhaps gain a consensus of support.

It's worth remembering that the committee was started by young people who grew up here, returned during the pandemic, did not see the diversity they found on their campuses reflected here, and asked uncomfortable questions. We should all be asking those questions and finding better ways forward. Missteps will happen, because this is difficult, but it would sure be wonderful if Grovers could assume the good intentions of Grovers with whom they disagree and argue accordingly.

On a second topic, I support allowing non-residents to serve on and vote in town committees, as long as they meet attendance requirements and don't form a majority of the committee.

Both the existing resolution about committee governance and its proposed amended version say that the role of committees is "in advising and assisting the Town Council, the Mayor, and the citizens of Washington Grove on various matters pertinent to the Town's well-being, and also in coordinating many events and volunteer activities." Why preclude non-resident volunteers from advising and assisting? Will we always have sufficient expertise, experience, good ideas, and willingness to serve within our small population?

Further, committees' budgets are not theirs to spend without action by the treasurer and the mayor and agreement of the council. So why fear non-resident committee members participating fully? Some residents say they are worried that their tax money will be spent in ways they don't support. That certainly happens--at every level of government. Here in our small town, voices raised in protest are heard, as we have all witnessed.

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