

1 **..Title**

2 **Recognizing and Remembering Racial Injustice – An Apology** - For the purpose of  
3 supporting the Equal Justice Initiative; moving toward a more complete history of race relations;  
4 and affirming the City’s commitment to truth, freedom and equity.

5 **..Body**

6 **CITY COUNCIL OF THE**

7 *City of Annapolis*

8  
9 **Resolution 21-18**

10  
11 **Introduced by: Alderwomen Tierney and Pindell Charles**

12  
13  
14 **A RESOLUTION** concerning

15  
16 **Recognizing and Remembering Racial Injustice - An Apology**

17  
18 **FOR** the purpose of supporting the Equal Justice Initiative; moving toward a more complete  
19 history of race relations; and affirming the City’s commitment to truth, freedom and  
20 equity.

21  
22 **WHEREAS,** the City Council supports the nationwide effort of the Equal Justice Initiative,  
23 specifically, in acknowledging and condemning the lynching of thousands of  
24 victims; and

25  
26 **WHEREAS,** 120 years ago, Alderman Wiley H. Bates offered a similar resolution condemning  
27 the lynching of Wright Smith, a black man accused of assaulting two white  
28 women, which resolution obtained only one other favorable vote and was defeated  
29 by the City Council; and

30  
31 **WHEREAS,** “the horrific practice of lynching is a stain on our nation - and on our souls. There  
32 were over 4,700 documented lynchings in the United States. There were 29  
33 documented lynchings in Maryland. These lynchings were public events, with  
34 members of the community colluding - either directly or indirectly - in this  
35 horrifying practice. It was no accident that they made them public - they were  
36 sending a message to other African Americans in the community. These crimes  
37 left thousands of people dead and families and communities scarred, yet 99% of  
38 these murderers were never arrested or tried for their crimes; and

39  
40 **WHEREAS,** “for many in Maryland, the history of lynchings is the history of their family or  
41 their community. One such victim of lynching was Henry Davis who in 1906 was  
42 lynched here in Annapolis on a bluff near College Creek just days before  
43 Christmas. The remains of Henry Davis rest in Brewer Hill Cemetery in  
44 Annapolis. His grave is not marked, so the date of his ‘burial’ is unknown. In fact,  
45 as there is no census record, his age is uncertain. His last name could have been  
46 Chambers or Lee. His first name could have been William. He had no known

1 home. His lynchers were never found. The Maryland State Archives in Annapolis  
2 houses two records: one certificate from 1900 admitting Prisoner 15521 to the  
3 Maryland Penitentiary at age 17 for assaulting a black woman, and one  
4 certification of his death by gunshot wound on December 21, 1906, at age 30; and  
5

6 **WHEREAS,** “on December 14, 1906, Mrs. Annie Reid, wife of a Crownsville storekeeper John  
7 Reid, was on her way to Annapolis when she was dragged from her buggy by a  
8 black man limping along the road near Best's Gate train station. Reid fought her  
9 assailant with a horse whip before being knocked to the ground. Henry Davis was  
10 arrested December 17<sup>th</sup>, three days after the attack. Two days after his arrest,  
11 Davis was taken to Annie Reid’s house, where she identified him as her assailant.  
12 Davis then allegedly admitted to the assault, according to newspaper accounts.  
13 Aware of the potential for mob violence, the sheriff pleaded for a jury to be  
14 convened immediately, but Reid had not yet recovered from her injuries and  
15 could not testify. Davis was placed in the Annapolis Jail.  
16

17 **WHEREAS,** “the next day, a group of lynchers marched from St. John’s to the Annapolis jail,  
18 at the corner of Calvert and Clay streets. The leaders of the mob tried to trick the  
19 four guards by ringing the jailhouse bell around 1:50 a.m., claiming they were  
20 police officers with a prisoner. As the guards sensed a problem and refused to  
21 unlock the jail, the attackers pounded on the door, tearing a hole with a pick taken  
22 from a nearby blacksmith’s shop and attacked with a sledgehammer. The door  
23 quickly collapsed. Men holding revolvers asked the guards to put their hands up  
24 and hand over the keys to Davis’s third-floor cell, which they did. Davis was  
25 hauled from the jail down Calvert Street toward West Street. Black residents were  
26 terrified and stayed inside while many whites, awakened by the noise, joined the  
27 crowd as it turned onto West Washington Street and headed toward a  
28 neighborhood known as Brick Yard Hill. They dragged Davis, who could not  
29 walk quickly because of his missing toes, to a bluff overlooking College Creek,  
30 continuing to hit him according to reports in the Baltimore Sun. The report states  
31 that Davis supposedly admitted to the attack again. The crowd then slid a thin  
32 white rope around his neck and hoisted him up a large tree. Someone gave a  
33 signal to commence firing. The rope broke, but the shooting continued. More than  
34 100 shots were fired. Davis was struck directly in his chest, his neck, hand, back  
35 of head and face. His bloody body was left on the banks of College Creek where  
36 hundreds of people, white and black, came to look at the gruesome sight.  
37 Photographs were taken of the corpse and allegedly made into postcards. That  
38 afternoon, the body was examined by a coroner and later buried in an unmarked  
39 grave in the smallpox section of Brewer Hill Cemetery. In April 1907, an inquest  
40 was convened to look into the details of the Henry Davis lynching. Judge Revell  
41 reminded the members of the jury that this was a lawless act and must be  
42 investigated. After a month of investigation, the jury was unable to ‘fix’ the  
43 lynching to any one person or persons;” and  
44

45 **WHEREAS,** the City Council supports the sentiment of the Equal Justice Initiative that “a  
46 history of racial injustice must be acknowledged and mass atrocities and abuse

1 must be recognized and remembered before a society can recover from mass  
2 violence;” and  
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4 **WHEREAS**, the City Council further supports the Equal Justice Initiative that “public  
5 commemoration plays a significant role in prompting community-wide  
6 reconciliation.”  
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9 **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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11 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the members of the City  
12 Council express their deepest sympathies and most solemn regrets to the descendants of all  
13 victims of lynching, the ancestors of whom were deprived of life, human dignity, and the  
14 constitutional protections accorded all citizens of the United States.  
15

16 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that a copy  
17 of this resolution shall be sent to the Equal Justice Initiative.  
18

19 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that this  
20 resolution shall take effect from the date of its passage.  
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22  
23 **EXPLANATION**

24 Underlining indicates matter added to existing law.  
25 [~~Strikethrough~~] indicates matter stricken from existing law.  
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