

1 **Resolution 21-18**

2 **Recognizing and Remembering Racial Injustice - An Apology**

3 **Staff Report**

4
5
6
7
8 The purpose of this Resolution is for the City Council to express its support for the Equal Justice
9 Initiative, to move toward a more complete history of race relations and to affirm the City’s
10 commitment to truth, freedom and equity.

11
12 On Sunday April 28, 2018, The Sunday Capital, a Capital-Gazette Newspaper, printed an article
13 calling upon the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County to confront the history of
14 lynchings.

15
16 The Equal Justice Initiative, a nonprofit group, in a nationwide effort to memorialize the victims
17 of thousands of lynchings in the United States between 1877 and 1950 believes that “a history of
18 racial injustice must be acknowledged and mass atrocities and abuse must be recognized and
19 remembered before a society can recover from mass violence.”¹ To that end, the City Council
20 wishes to express its support for the Equal Justice Initiative: “public commemoration plays a
21 significant role in prompting community-wide reconciliation.” *Id.*

22
23 120 years ago, Alderman Wiley H. Bates offered a similar resolution condemning the lynching
24 of Wright Smith, a black man accused of assaulting two white women. That resolution obtained
25 only one other favorable vote and was eventually defeated by the City Council.

26
27 As Senator Barbara Mikulski stated in 2005, when she and several of her colleagues introduced
28 legislation which apologized to the victims of lynching and for the failure of the Senate to enact
29 anti-lynching legislation earlier, “the horrific practice of lynching is a stain on our nation - and
30 on our souls. There were over 4,700 documented lynchings in the United States. There were 29
31 documented lynchings in Maryland. These lynchings were public events, with members of the
32 community colluding - either directly or indirectly - in this horrifying practice. It was no accident
33 that they made them public - they were sending a message to other African Americans in the
34 community. These crimes left thousands of people dead and families and communities scarred,
35 yet 99% of these murderers were never arrested or tried for their crimes.”²

36
37 For many in Maryland, the history of lynchings is the history of their family or their community.
38 This Resolution is an apology to the descendants of all victims of lynching, the ancestors of
39 whom were deprived of life, human dignity, and the constitutional protections accorded all
40 citizens of the United States.

41
42 **Footnotes of Resources:**

- 43 1. <https://eji.org/national-lynching-memorial>.
44 2. <http://somd.com/news/headlines/2005/2172.php>