

1 masters by running away to seek freedom; and

2
3 **WHEREAS**, although the United States outlawed the transatlantic slave trade in 1808, the
4 domestic slave trade in Annapolis and the colonies and illegal importation
5 continued for several decades; and

6
7 **WHEREAS**, slavery, or the "Peculiar Institution," in the United States resembled no other
8 form of involuntary servitude, as Africans were captured and sold at auction
9 as chattel, like inanimate property or animals; and

10
11 **WHEREAS**, to prime Africans for slavery, the ethos of the Africans was shattered, they
12 were brutalized, humiliated, dehumanized, and subjected to the indignity of
13 being stripped of their names and heritage, and families were disassembled
14 as husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, and fathers and sons were
15 sold into slavery apart from one another; and

16
17 **WHEREAS**, a series of complex colonial laws were enacted to relegate the status of
18 Africans and their descendants to slavery, in spite of their loyalty, dedication,
19 and service to the country, including heroic and distinguished service in the
20 Civil War; and

21
22 **WHEREAS**, the system of slavery had become entrenched in American history and the
23 social fabric, and the issue of enslaved Africans had to be addressed as a
24 national issue, contributing to the Civil War from 1861 through 1865 and the
25 passage of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which
26 abolished slavery and involuntary servitude on December 18, 1865; and

27
28 **WHEREAS**, after emancipation from 246 years of slavery, African Americans soon saw the
29 political, social, and economic gains they made during Reconstruction
30 dissipated by rabid racism, lynchings and, disenfranchisement of African-
31 American voters; Black Codes designed to reimpose the subordination of
32 African Americans; and Jim Crow laws that instituted a rigid system of de jure
33 segregation in virtually all areas of life, lasting until the passage of the 1964
34 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and

35
36 **WHEREAS**, throughout their existence in America and even in the decades after the Civil
37 Rights Movement, African Americans have found the struggle to overcome
38 the bitter legacy of slavery long and arduous, with many African Americans
39 bearing psychological scars clouding their vision of the future and of
40 America's many promises of equality and freedom; and

41
42 **WHEREAS**, in 2003, during a trip to Goree Island, Senegal, a former slave port, President

1 George W. Bush stated, "Slavery is one of the greatest crimes of history, and
2 its legacy still vexes the United States. Small men took on the powers and airs
3 of tyrants and masters. Years of unpunished brutality and bullying and rape
4 produced a dullness and hardness of conscience. Christian men and women
5 became blind to the clearest commands of their faith and added hypocrisy to
6 injustice ... While physical slavery is dead [in the United States], the legacy is
7 alive. My nation's journey toward justice has not been easy, and it is not over.
8 For racial bigotry fed by slavery did not end with slavery or with segregation ...
9 and many of the issues that still trouble America have roots in the bitter
10 experience of other times ... But however long the journey, our destiny is set:
11 liberty and justice for all"; and
12

13 **WHEREAS**, the City of Annapolis acknowledges its participation in the slave trade and
14 these remaining vestiges of slavery ever before our African American citizens;
15 and
16

17 **WHEREAS**, European and African nations and the State of Virginia have apologized for
18 their roles in what history calls the worst holocaust of humankind, the Atlantic
19 Slave Trade, and racial reconciliation is impossible without some
20 acknowledgment of the moral and legal injustices perpetrated upon our fellow
21 African American citizens; and
22

23 **WHEREAS**, an apology for centuries of brutal dehumanization and injustices cannot erase
24 the past, but confession of the wrongs can speed racial healing and
25 reconciliation and help African American and white citizens confront the
26 ghosts of their collective pasts together; and
27

28 **WHEREAS**, the story of the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, the human
29 carnage, and the dehumanizing atrocities committed during slavery should not
30 be purged from our history or discounted; moreover, the faith, perseverance,
31 hope, and endless triumphs of African Americans and their significant
32 contributions to the development of Annapolis and the nation should be
33 embraced, celebrated, and retold for generations to come; and
34

35 **WHEREAS**, the perpetual pain, distrust, and bitterness of many African Americans could
36 be assuaged and the principles espoused by the Founding Fathers would be
37 affirmed, and great strides toward unifying all Annapolitans and inspiring the
38 nation to acquiesce might be accomplished, if now at this present time and on
39 the eve of Charter 300 celebrating 300 years of our status as a royally
40 chartered City, Annapolis acknowledged and atoned for its pivotal role in the
41 slavery of Africans.
42

1 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY** that the City hereby
2 atones for its participation in the involuntary servitude of African men, women and children
3 and calls for reconciliation among all citizens of Annapolis.
4

5 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that a copy of
6 this resolution shall be transmitted to the the Anne Arundel County Chapter of the
7 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Sojourner-Douglass College,
8 and the Kunta Kinte - Alex Haley Foundation, requesting that they further disseminate
9 copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they may be apprised of the
10 sense of the Annapolis City Council in this matter.
11

12 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that this
13 resolution is being introduced in the memory of the following Annapolitans who dedicated
14 their lives to racial reconciliation: the late Morris H. Blum, a Jewish businessman; the late
15 Rev. Leroy Bowman, an African American Baptist minister; the late Leonard Blackshear,
16 founder of the Kunta-Kinte - Alex Haley Foundation; and the late Marion Satterwaite, a
17 prominent white member of the Eastport community.
18

19 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL**, that we call for
20 a Week of Atonement from Octoberr 22 through 28, 2007, in which schools and civic
21 organizations will provide forums for discussion about Annapolis's past involvement in the
22 African slave trade; culminating with churches, synagogues and other religious groups
23 leading our community in sermons and prayers for forgiveness and racial reconciliation.
24
25

26 **ADOPTED** this ___ day of _____, 2007.
27
28

29 **ATTEST:**
30
31

THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL

32 _____
33 **Regina C. Watkins-Eldridge, CMC**
34 **City Clerk**
35
36

BY: _____
ELLEN O. MOYER, MAYOR