



EUREKA BRANCH - 1036

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March 15, 2018

Dear Mayor Pereira and Council Members Pitino, Ornelas and Watson:

The Eureka Branch of the NAACP acknowledges you for your vote to remove both the statue of William McKinley and the Jacoby Storehouse plaque from the Arcata Plaza. We cannot rewrite history; however, the residents of Humboldt County can acknowledge the full history of this area including the genocide of Indigenous Peoples and choose to move forward in the creation of an inclusive, respectful, equitable and just community. We support your decision and encourage you to stay strong and to move forward in this positive, healing direction.

Mindful of the community we envision, we respectfully urge you to consider and pass a Resolution of Censure against your colleague, Michael Winkler, for his open letter published in the Mad River Union in the February 28th issue, and in the Eureka Times Standard in the March 1st issue. Likening the atmosphere of the council meeting to that of a "lynch mob/vigilante" was nothing short of racially inflammatory. Mr. Winkler's very public attempt at vindicating his own political position and castigating you as a council and in particular Mayor Pereira is rife with coded language known to trigger painful memories for Indigenous People and people of color, often inciting racists and violent action. His choice of words was perceived as a demagogic effort to stir up racial animosities in a community with a history of deep-seated racism. A review of online discussions about the McKinley statue removal shows that crude, racist and threatening attitudes abound in our community. Such crass and abhorrent expressions manifest in behaviors and actions that injure and endanger our already beleaguered community members of color. Of course Mr. Winkler is entitled to his opinion on the matter of the fate of the McKinley statue. However, as a public official, the way in which he expresses his opinion matters. Words matter. We hold our public officials to a higher standard of conduct and submit that Mr. Winkler's behavior is worthy of censure by a conscientious Arcata City Council.

Sincerely,

Leslie Rodelander for the Executive Committee
Secretary, NAACP Eureka Branch

cc. Karen Diemer
cc. David Loya

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