

The McKinley Statue - a suggestion by Susan Ornelas

The City Council has been thinking about the McKinley statue at the center of the Plaza – some for many years, others for at least the last nine months. We have been studying U.S. history, examining local history, checking references, learning about an Armenian artist from S.F.(Haig Patigain), listening to testimony at community meetings, reading emails, etc. Just the Council packet of information for the February 21st meeting is a reflection of the depth in which this subject has been researched. Based on these experiences - the Council voted 4-1 to remove the McKinley Statue from the Plaza.

Yet we realize - The McKinley Statue is a big, unique issue in our town. He has been on the Plaza for 112 years, and is a commissioned piece of sculpture gifted to the citizens of Arcata. People have opinions about him, as is evident with the debate this decision has stirred in the town. Citizens want to have their opinion be heard. Can we put something like the following on the ballot to an advisory vote?

The Arcata City Council voted to remove the McKinley Statue from the Plaza center. Where would you like to see this historic statue?

Please Check One

- Arcata Veterans Hall, J Street, Arcata
 - Haig Patigian Art Museum (the statue artist, it is in Oakland)
 - A Corner of the Plaza
 - Phillips House (historic house on 7th & Union, Arcata)
 - Plaza Center
 - A local history museum, in the County (i.e. Clarke Museum, Fort Humboldt, etc.)
 - McKinley Museum in Ohio
 - McKinleyville
 - Other _____
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Removal of the statue will take an EIR, and in the report will be a study of alternatives analysis, with impacts to historic content. Where the statue ends up is an important parameter of the EIR. A vote like this will give the Council a more nuanced understanding of the intent of the citizens of Arcata regarding the statue. I propose we have a community education theme for the year around this subject of McKinley, Arcata's history, the late 1800's – early 1900's in Humboldt, and the sculpture of Haig Patigain.

The Council had a chance to say something about this statue; I think it is fair to let the citizens have a say. I support an advisory vote in November. This gives the community time to have an educated discussion. It is all part of a process.