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Council Meeting: 04/11/2023

Agenda Item No. 10

Francis Remkiewicz '74  
133 Reed Rd.  
Oakdale, CA 95361  
209-848-4433  
email:fremkiewicz@gmail.com

April 9, 2023

Mayor and City Council  
City of Whittier  
13230 Penn Street  
Whittier, CA 90602

Dear Mayor Vinatieri and City Council Members,

In 1965 and again in 1966 I appeared before this body on two different issues. In 1965 it was about skateboarding in uptown Whittier. In 1966 I was one of a small number of teenagers that appeared before the City Council to ask for your support for moving the "Friendly Cup", the city's first teen night club from the First Friends Church to the Whittier Community Center. In fact the city and the Friends Church did strike a partnership with "The Friendly Cup". For several years this partnership had the most successful and peaceful teen night clubs in all of Southern California. Unfortunately, duty called and I enlisted in the Marine Corps and left this great partnership behind.

It is now 54 years later, I am no longer a teenager, but I am once again coming to you to ask to reinvigorate that partnership from so many years ago. Allow me to quote the Centennial sermon from October 5, 1966. The Associate Pastor of First Friends Church said this, "Whittier is not a community that happened accidentally. A group of Quakers decided to form a Friends community in the west, and they came here for that purpose."

Kinsey noted: "Quakers have always had a concern for education." It is not unusual for them to have established an "academy" the year they laid the foundation stones of a city. This academy later became Whittier College.

In keeping with their belief in God in every person, Kinsey added the college was for girls and boys. Also, the schools were open to all in the community.

CC: CM; ACM; CA; Council; Original to CC; Public Binder; Department

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“Specifically, the Quaker influence is often invisible because Quakers don’t need to dominate,” Moody said. But what they insist on is education. “This Quaker idea that if we gather together in a corporate search for knowledge that the spirit will guide the search,” he said. (My emphasis added).

Both Moody and Kinsey noted that Quakerism rests on the principle that each person is divine in the eyes of God.

“There is that sense of God in everyone. It means each person can learn what God wants them to learn. We have to treat each person spiritually as a spark of God,” Moody said.”

“Founded in 1887 as a Quaker Colony, Whittier is a city rich with traditions and history, a convenient location, and a small-town feel. A strong sense of this heritage, which stresses the protection of landmark structures and sites, is shared by the people who call Whittier home. Whittier’s unique combination of community identity, spirit and cooperation have helped make it one of the most attractive and desirable residential and business locations in Southern California.”  
Joe Vinatieri, Mayor of Whittier

The President and the Whittier College Board of Trustees have placed the Historical Wardman House, better known as the Whittier College President’s home, on the real estate market. That very act is a citywide tragedy and a Whittier College President and Board of Trustees disgrace. Furthermore, it is an insult to the mayor and the city council. It will destroy the unique qualities of Whittier College and the unique community of the city of Whittier. Ask any current or recent home buyer why they came to the city of Whittier and bought their home. I believe the majority will say things like “good schools”, “good shopping”, “good city services”, and a”safe place to live”. That is the direct result of over 100 years of Quaker values, history, and tradition. If the city council is unable or unwilling to stop the sale of this precious piece of Whittier history it will erode away the very things that make Whittier, Whittier. If you doubt this then please listen to any of President Oubre’s speeches, podcasts, and talks. The President wants to forever change the face of the city of Whittier, i.e. Whittier College. Please do not let that happen. Please stop the sale of the Whittier College President's home.

Sincerely,

/s/

Francis L. Remkiewicz