

Good evening Mayor Vinatieri and Council members. My name is James Becerra and I am speaking as a concerned resident of Whittier and as current Chair of the HRC.

It appears that the HRC was misled, if not completely uninformed regarding the handling of the historic streetlights in Uptown Whittier. From your slide show on 2/ 20 slide 14 shows a meeting of the City Council taking place on 5.9.23 where “historic lights discussed”. The Historic Resources Commission did not meet until the next day, May 10th. The HRC was never apprised of the Council’s discussion. More importantly, the HRC is to be presented with issues within its purview to make to recommendations/decisions to and for the Council BEFORE the Council meets. Ironically enough, the only item on the HRC agenda on May 10th was a presentation from City Staff on Laws, Ethics, and Brown Act training.

Additionally, Slide 26 shows “Replacement of concrete poles that actually meet SOI standards”. Who determined that these replacements met SOI standards? Enforcement of compliance with SOI standards is well within the HRC’s purview. Why was the HRC never informed?

The City Manager stated the historic streetlights would be removed and refurbished? This type of action, removal and refurbishment, again, is well within the HRC’s purview; the HRC makes decisions on compliance with SOI. Why was the HRC never informed? More importantly, will HRC be receiving a presentation on the street lights, concrete poles, and refurbished streetlights at a subsequent meeting?

I speak not in favor of more trees, less trees, smaller budgets, nor small businesses.

I speak in the interest of good, proper, responsible governance and transparency. You will hear, once again, from my fellow residents, how political expediency has created a situation of duplicity and obfuscation, possible illegality and litigation, in the furtherance of a localized minority of merchants and their political allies.

In short, and I'll leave the fancy words behind, this type of governance is how great cities devolve to mediocrity. It is how cities with the highest civic pedigree and history vanish. It is how cities, once vibrant and functioning with honor and integrity, become a political morass of short sighted goals and soulless development. This is precisely what you are creating.

Please, respect process, admit mistakes & miscalculations, and vigorously embrace honest and transparent governance for the residents of Whittier.

How you embrace honesty and transparency in governance will be your personal legacy as a member of the Whittier City Council. As you have been tasked with upholding the laws and ethics of our community.

Thank you