

I appreciate the City Council's interest in "diversity and inclusion" and the desire to make the city more reflective of the city's actual makeup. That being said, the most recent Race and Ethnicity profile found here: <https://www.stpaul.gov/books/race> indicates, much to the Council's disappointment, that our fair city is, in fact, over 54% white. In addition, if one were to look back in St. Paul's history it is abundantly clear that the success of St. Paul can be largely attributed to people of whiteness. I certainly don't mean to, in any way, shape, or form, discount the contributions of minority communities. I'm just saying that your decision to "whitewash" the history of our city by tacitly discounting the many good contributors to our success because of their color is racism in its own right.

Please make an attempt to celebrate our history by art that might actually compliment those contributions and not shaming them by your contemporary judgements.

As was stated in an opinion piece in today's St. Paul newspaper... "We are increasingly electing people who are frighteningly too comfortable with erasing history rather than understanding it."

By the way, looking at the composition of our current city council hardly reflects the actual composition of St. Paul as I doubt 57% of our city is female and only 28% white males.

David Paton

TO: DEBBIE ORTH and  
COUNCIL CONTACT:

**Would you please forward this email "Letter to Editor" to the Council members and Commissioners. Also, would please let me know that you've received this email. Thank You!**

***COUNCIL and COMMISSIONERS: Attached is a "Letter to Editor" of St. Paul Pioneer Press. I don't know if it will be published; therefore I'm sending you a copy. Bonnie M. Barnak***

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Gary/Bonnie Barnak** <[bgbarnak@gmail.com](mailto:bgbarnak@gmail.com)>

Date: Thu, Dec 13, 2018 at 2:05 PM

Subject: Artwork at City Hall

To: Editor at Pioneer Press <[editor@pioneerpress.com](mailto:editor@pioneerpress.com)>

LETTER TO EDITOR

I find it disturbing that several Council members think four pieces of City Hall artwork need to be changed or removed because, in their opinion, these pieces are "images of servitude, conversion and humility!" The council needs to view the artwork in the historical context of when they were painted and installed in the 1930's, not judge them by today's very different standards. Joe Souchery's Dec.10 column cited some very important historical background and information about this artwork, the artist and the rationale for displaying the art in the Courthouse. I wonder how much research the council did before opining the art as offensive.

An example of a piece of art incorrectly labeled "offensive and racially-tinged" is the art pictured in the Nov. 29 story "Council: change City Hall artwork." This picture is described as "Native Americans bowing their heads before a white minister with a cross." Anyone familiar with Christian tradition

knows that kneeling and bowing while praying is a sign of reverence to God. Even though the missionary priest (which he appears to be) is standing holding a cross, the Native Americans are **not** bowing to him!

The council president stated that "more than one person of color at the microphone has commented on the artwork." That sounds like a very small number of people object to the artwork; this leads me to believe that a very large number of people do not object. Why is it that a small number of people can dictate what artwork we, the silent majority, can display and view?

I hope the task force being established is knowledgeable about the history of these four artwork pieces and makes a wise recommendation. I would expect their suggested solution to be a better result than the council's ideas that include covering up the panels or pulling a shade on the art.

Bonnie M. Barnak  
Woodbury

An anonymous caller wanted to express to Council that she dislikes the idea that you will be changing or replacing the artwork in chambers. It should stay as is, it's beautiful and it's a part of St. Paul's history. It's honoring people who are doing their jobs weather they are African American, white or Indian. Other people she has spoken to about the artwork agree with this opinion. You should ask St. Paul citizens what they want and leave the artwork as is.

She also disagrees with the recreational marijuana issue and about legalizing it.

St Paul City Council,

As a home property tax payer in St Paul I am very much opposed to your wasteful spending to rewrite history in an Orwellian fashion. The \$34,000 you want to waste on replacing beautiful art murals from the 1930's is exactly why Donald Trump was elected president in response to your kind of political correctness. Spend the money instead on real problems such as our failing roads and Ash tree replacement! Also, it is a liberal sham that you are allowing the waiving of fines and fees permanently on lost and stolen library materials while raising the library budget. This will just encourage more irresponsibility. You are taxing us out of our homes.

Larry Reinsch  
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