

Greetings Supervisors,

I planned to read the following text during public comment regarding the agenda item: *7.2 Consideration of an Internal Ad Hoc Committee to Review Recommendations of the Lake Countywide Community Visioning Forum Planning Committee.*

Unfortunately, the untimed items were discussed before my arrival.

I'd be happy to elaborate and speak more on this issue with any interested party.

Thank you,

Rachel White of Kelseyville, CA

I want to address some concerns about the Lake County Visioning Forum presentation following the Tuesday, June 18 meeting.

As I exited these chambers and descended the steps before the courthouse, I spoke briefly with one of the presenting committee members. After apologizing for how the name change issue detracted from their presentation, I also mentioned my disappointment in the name-calling during public comment. This committee member responded by telling me that my only concern with name-calling was that I was the target and that I would not have been affected had this aggression been aimed toward any other individual or racial group. Visibly perplexed by this remark, I noted I would never condone name-calling. Others present during this conversation echoed my sentiment. This person went on to say if someone called me a name, there must be some truth to it. To remind everyone, the term used during public comment was *White Supremacist*. Relentless, this individual immediately asked me how many times I had called someone "the N-word." Shocked by a question that I should not have dignified with an answer, I replied, NEVER, of course.

This committee member asserted that if they were to say the sky is green, I would have to agree. I wondered how entitled one has to be to believe one deserves to have society reinforce one's delusions. I said, I will not agree that the sky is green, but I will concede to knowing that no matter how many things I have in common with someone else, there is no way that I can ever fully understand another's life experience, good or bad. I don't know what kind of encounter this person has had with someone who looks like me, but I will not be made to feel guilty, nor will I take responsibility for the actions of others, past or present. I then excused myself from the conversation.

I look at people in one of two ways: human beings and individuals. As human beings, we all wish to be seen and heard. We all want to have our basic needs met, to be safe and healthy, to be able to feed our families and pay our bills. Do you think by looking at me, you can assume that my family has escaped poverty, unemployment, violence, mental and physical illness, drug addiction, incarceration, or homelessness? I can assure you, through personal experience, that generational trauma knows no racial boundaries. This is the nuance of being an individual.

I am not here to defend my character but to illustrate the gross hypocrisy that plagues DEI initiatives. One moment, we are hearing about creating welcoming environments to support vulnerability, and the next, I am being called a racist on the courthouse steps.

Isn't that the implicit bias we aim to avoid? I hope you don't spend another penny on this effort, especially when those with blatant (racist) personal and political agendas are in a position of influence.

The Visioning Forum committee was formed in March of 2021, and since that time, we have seen the Supreme Court overturn Affirmative Action. Preceding that decision, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. In the state of California, Proposition 209 of 1996 added Section 31 to the California Constitution's Declaration of Rights, which says that the state cannot discriminate against **or grant preferential treatment on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment**, public education, and public contracting. And the failure of Proposition 16 in 2020, aimed at repealing Prop 209, further rejected identity politics.

The only recommendation I agree with is to continue holding community forums and other engagement opportunities, such as small groups and one-on-one sessions, to capture the experiences and perceptions of community members - this is the being seen and heard part - and not just "historically and currently marginalized community members" but of ALL community members. We live in Lake County - the vast majority of us are marginalized. And listening to your constituents is your job.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means EVERYONE. In the words of the Visioning Forum committee, "honoring ALL voices."

Thank you.