

## Change the Stapleton Name

Let me begin by making a few things clear. 1) Forest City and its representatives, including the CAB, SUN and an array of sub committees have failed to deliver on stated commitments to diversity and equity and 2) The negative perceptions and reality of living in Stapleton, are well known and well documented.

We do not need any more “talk” and “study” about these issues. Following are selected conclusions that are taken directly from a 2015 Forest City Marketing Plan:

“Higher demand for limited affordable housing”, “Stapleton is exclusive to higher income levels”, The community is “homogenous and uninviting to people of color”, “The community is named for a former mayor who was a registered Klan member, Mayor Ben Stapleton, which evokes perceptions of exclusivity and suggests ties to a racist history.” “A gated community essence with a largely affluent resident base who have access to more parks, schools and major amenities than any other neighborhood in the city.” “Strollersville”. (page 5)

These are not charges or observations that have been fabricated by disgruntled community critics. These are the facts as understood by Forest City and their collaborators. Contrary to the promise of a New Urbanism, Forest City development has been a boon for the white and affluent... at the expense of people of color and difference. The academic terms for this include racism, environmental racism, white privilege and white supremacy. Perhaps a fitting tribute to the legacy of Ben Stapleton.

The continued use of the name “Stapleton” serves as exemplar of what some academics describe as “Symbolic Violence”. Symbolic Violence (Bourdieu, 1998) is an extension of the concept of physical violence that represents an imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (in this case, Stapleton, KKK and white supremacy”) upon groups, subgroups or classes...ACCEPTED AS LEGITIMATE.” Symbolic violence is a soft, nice violence that is practiced and repeated every day as part of routine, “normal” life. It is taken for granted by members of the dominant culture and prac-

### Don't Wait: **Lead!**

It is past the time that Forest City, the CAB, SUN and others should move away from using the name Stapleton.

Change your names. Begin to dismantle our community monuments to white supremacy. Changing the names will only be symbolic. Changing the names...now...**today**...will only represent one, small step for the redress of a **hostile community climate** for minorities, which the developers have created for more than a decade. Do not delay.

The time is now to do what is right. Truthfully, this should have been accomplished many years ago. Now is the time. No more talk. No more study. No more search for “consensus”. Do not wait.

### Lead.

