

9/1/2017

Dear Tom Gleason:

Forest City, knowingly, chose to use the name Stapleton in their branding and marketing. I appreciate that they haven't named any neighborhoods, parks, pools, etc. using the name; however, the Stapleton name is seen left and right as you drive, walk, bike, skip, or jog through NE Denver. Instead of phasing it out, as we were promised, Forest City has normalized this symbolic violence.

A name that Forest City, and those who worked to create our neighborhood in the most NE corner of Denver, intended to only be used as a "locator". A name that knowledgeable and concerned Denver residents were promised would not be honored is now found in at least 140 businesses. Why is that? Did 140 business owners think it was a terrific idea to use a Klansman's name to represent their businesses? The truth is many residents and business owners didn't or don't know the history of Benjamin F. Stapleton, but Forest City did and does.

It is time to turn the momentum around. The world is watching as symbols of hatred are being removed all around our nation. I would love to see you and Forest City join that movement. You have all been so successful on so many levels. You can be better. Not the same NE Denver. Not the Denver of the 20s, 30s, and 40s (Stapleton's reign). Embrace that message. The urban planning and energy efficient homes, the variety of builders... it's cutting edge. The green book was idealistic in it's vision. Get back to that. There are a lot of very liberal people in Denver. People who live in the neighborhood located at the former airport and people that might want to live there... this name is a hindrance to us and should be to Forest City. Use it in a different way. Remove the name. Nobody is going to be up in arms about this. It will create a ripple effect. People will be patting themselves on the back that they live in a neighborhood that is so progressive.

Make a statement. Put out a press release that you are removing the name and moving forward. This is happening at colleges, universities, and in public spaces all over the United States. Make it a positive change. This name is a stain on your organization. It will cost Forest City money to do this, but Forest City has largely created and absolutely perpetuated this problem. It's time to make it right. Stop profiting off of a white supremacist brand. Start profiting from a welcoming and forward moving campaign. I, personally, would be so proud to see this.

If you don't do this, you are making us all complicit and that is not acceptable. The public outcry is intensifying. Denver residents are becoming more and more active every day. We are organized and we are not going away this time. This is absolutely a national movement and local and national media will catch on to Denver's fight. Join us. The time is now.

Respectfully,
Genevieve Swift