

cause for concern about his decision-making (52)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 2 W. Market St., Serious Issues December 13, 2018

(52nd is a series of posts about 2 W. Market St.)

Barbara Diamond enjoys retirement as Lehigh University Director of Foundation Relations by engaging in various activities and organizations hopefully for the betterment of the community. Her particular interests at the moment are preventing gun violence, local government ethics reform, and Bethlehem Democratic Committee work.

Gadfly:

Regarding BC's first point, the existing uses such as schools, funeral homes etc are permitted in the RT zone. Mr. Rij's office is not. It is a fallacious argument that because there are permitted entities operating there, the zoning code should be amended to now permit his business. The particular property is non-conforming because it predates the zoning code, but the code specifically states that a non-conforming use can't be expanded. The only option is to conform with the residential zoning for that location. If BC believes that it is hard to define Market St as residential, then he only needs to look at the color-coded exhibit presented by Tim Stevens to see that it is predominantly residential. Disregarding laws, rules, regulations, established professional practices and policies in favor of one's subjective feelings is a disservice to the community and is cause for concern about his decision-making on this and other issues. The fact that Mr. Rij did a nice job or is a nice guy has nothing to do with this matter.

BC & WR's concern for our neighborhood's relationships is misplaced. We will be fine. What they should be concerned about is the creeping commercial development of Market Street that they are abetting. Council and the Mayor should be supporting improvements to our existing commercial district to attract businesses, and they should be opposing incursion into residential neighborhoods.

Barbara