

Chatter around Gadfly's water-cooler about funding the Bethlehem Food Co-Op through a government grant

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Food Co-Op, City government, Co-Op, Bethlehem Food, Serious Issues November 3, 2019

 *The latest in a series of posts on City government* 

Gadfly's ear has picked up the following:

- I think I've convinced myself that the store will have a significant impact on low-income residents, especially if it's located on/very near a bus line.
- How many low-income people have paid to join the Co-Op?
- The city government should stay out of private business.
- What are the results of the William Penn program? I haven't heard of it.
- No one says it has to be located in a "blighted" area but that would certainly be a plus, especially as far as CDBG is concerned.
- What programs in other cities are the Co-Op following?
- The problem with low/mod benefit is that you need to be able to justify and quantify it to qualify for funding.
- To my mind, you just take the hand of the needy and share your table with them. Simple.
- The CDBG funds are "once and done" — when the store is open it will not need that kind of funding. Unlike, say, a non-profit offering a service, which in theory will be back year after year unless the need goes away (not likely).

- Is there anything on the [BFC web site](#) that would indicate its mission with low and moderate income families? It would not appear so.
- “The end doesn’t justify the means.”
- Presumably BFC will be paying more property taxes than the current building owner, the process of improving the building will provide jobs and purchase of materials from local sources, and the store, when open, will provide new jobs. So definitely adding to the local economy.
- It’s a noble effort but shouldn’t receive public funds.
- If I was sitting in a Council seat I could convince myself to vote for it, on its merits. But I do admit that I find the potential conflict of interest question an interesting one, as the potential to profit from the Co-Op is real.
- If the City ok’d it, it should be ok.
- With so many Council members — and the mayor — members, what would Robert’s Rules of Order dictate if they all recused themselves?
- It does seem odd that “blight,” which is in the CDBG guidelines, gets so little and the BFC, whose status is a bit questionable, gets so much.
- Have other Co-Ops across the country successfully applied for CDBG funding? Or have they been deemed ineligible?
- Is it “Co-Op” or “Co-op”?

What are you hearing?