

# New Myths perpetrated during the 2 West First Vote meeting on 12/4 (57)

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

*(57th in a series of posts on 2 W. Market St.)*

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*Follow up to [The 7 Myths of 2 West Market](#), post #40, December 3, 2018.*

Gadfly:

Interesting developments from the First Vote meeting including Mayor Donchez finally admitting that he in fact has been behind this project for several years as outlined in Myth #7. He comes out at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to officially throw his support for the project but **only** after Darlene Heller poisons the entire vote by declaring that no other property in the city will be impacted by this approval.

So while Myth #7 was now admitted to and verified by the Mayor, we now have Myth #8!!

**Myth #8) No other property in the city is impacted by this text:**

+Darlene Heller writes a clandestine email to council outlining a complete fabrication of the facts to assure the Council that their vote won't impact any other property in the city because there are no other properties that have Single Family "detached" dwellings and non-conforming commercial other than 2 West Market.

+Heller therefore even went so far as to discredit Atty Preston's exhibit submitted at the hearing of 7 other properties in the city that would be impacted.

+Heller used words like “separate” and “detached” in her comments at the prior hearing and also in her memo that don’t exist in the amendment nor in our zoning ordinance for that matter. She has completely fabricated something to distract the council away from the pervasiveness of this resident-originated zoning change across the city.

+This then provided the cover for the Mayor to now come public on his long time behind the scenes push to get this property approved for a major donor to an affiliate of the city Police Department. It then gave the same cover for 3 other council members subsequent dialogue and vote.

+Councilman Reynolds took that ammunition to focus the discussion to only spot zoning in one neighborhood and in his question to solicitor Spirk. It also gave councilman Martell the same cover for his preordained vote with his comment about No Domino Theory. Councilman Callahan focused his whole discussion to his recollection of the first block of West Market Street that in his mind is not a residential area.

This leads us to Myth #9.

**Myth #9) The first block of West Market Street is not residential:**

+The RT district begins at Heckewelder Place with the first block abutting the CB district going to east to New Street. In that block there are 26 buildings in addition to 2 West:

22 residences—18 single family/4 multifamily  
2 office buildings (non-conforming grandfathered)  
2 school buildings (permitted uses in RT)

+Clearly Councilman Callahan is mistaken about the character of the block where he formally resided, and his “No one can tell him differently” with respect to that neighborhood is characteristic of someone preordained on their vote for this major city donor.

**Myth #10) City zoning should be based upon what individual council members think should be in their neighborhood:**

+Councilman Reynolds’ deliberation comments included his personal preference for having commercial in his neighborhood as this is the city.

Therefore, implying that those residents living in the Historic District should move to the townships if they want to live in residential-only neighborhoods.

+Serious disconnect by an elected official with the city zoning ordinance that clearly defines separate residential and commercial neighborhoods and section 1323 that directs nonconforming properties toward conforming with specific provisions against expansion of nonconforming uses.

+Serious disconnect with the electorate that purchased property in areas of the city based upon such zoning ordinances and the city responsibility to uphold such ordinances. Total disregard for the residents of the historic district that care about their neighborhood and who spoke out 4:1 against this ordinance at the Hearing.

**Myth 11) The neighborhood is equally divided on this issue:**

+While at the hearing the speakers were reasonably equally divided on this issue, the vast majority of the speakers on behalf of the petitioner were either paid employees, contractors, clients, or family members that don't live in the Historic District. The actual count of residents speaking that night was 8-2 against the amendment.

+The petitioner speaks about a 3-year-old petition for a completely different amendment where neighbors were threatened if they didn't sign with low-income housing apartments if Quadrant didn't get approval. This petition is irrelevant to the decision in front of Council today and should be completely discredited.

On a final note, the petitioner and their employees continued to spread misinformation related to Myth #4 regarding the property sale process as languishing on the market for 2 years (Ms. Lannon). The facts are that this property was put under contract by Morningstar in less than 4 months and closed in less than 1 year. Hardly a test of the market for use as a single-family home during a very weak market in 2013/14.

7 come 11 Myths—How many more will we hear?

Bruce