

Gotta be a better way

The Bethlehem Gadfly Armory December 2, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the Armory* 

Gadfly counted 17 phone callers during public comment last night at City Council (and that's counting George Roxandich, poor guy, who had to call in twice to get his piece spoken!) and, of course, mostly on the police/budget topic.

It will take Gadfly some time to organize some info for you on those police/budget callers, and, in the meantime, he didn't want callers on other subjects to get lost.

Like the resident of Rauch St., adjacent to the Armory and the new construction thereon.

We know that there was considerable tension with Armory neighbors over approval of that construction.

And we know that the inception of construction has exacerbated that tension with some of the neighbors.

And we know that this sincere, polite, respectful Rauch St. neighbor (atop the hill on the west side of the Armory backyard) has called Council more than once seeking some relief.





Some neighbors are worried that the construction (click [here](#) for Gadfly to remind you again of the pounding at the foot of that hill with which construction began) is causing structural damage to their quite old homes.

This sincere, polite, respectful Rauch St. resident is “sad” that the City has “washed its hands” of the situation and left the neighbors to the “mercy” of the developer who is represented by the former mayor and succeeded in gaining 14 code variances on the way to approval.

You or I would be crazed.

She is told the City does not do geological surveys of man-made hills. Why? What is the difference between a natural hill and a man-made hill when potential danger is involved? If not a “geological” survey, some other kind of survey? Gadfly finds it hard to believe that in the history of construction in Bethlehem, there has not been some cause to survey the nature of a man-made hill for good reason (pun intended). What is the reason the City won’t survey/inspect the hill?

She is told the City does not inspect homes in the way the resident seeks. But why? As far as Gadfly knows, no reason was given for not doing such inspections. Is the reason a city policy? If so, someone has the power to suspend it. Is the reason cost? If so, then someone has the power to rearrange priorities to make it happen. What is the reason the City doesn’t do these inspections?

She is told she must file a right-to-know request to get a traffic study. That’s such a little thing. A bureaucratic step. But she could be told the reason why that traffic study has to be RTK’d. And is it possible there’s just a bureaucratic reason rather than a legal one? Filing a form is a barrier for some people. Is it always necessary?

Gadfly envisions a day when a beneficent public servant of a mayor with a flush budget appoints a City Ombudsman to shepherd citizen requests like this through the maze of the City bureaucracy, acting as an advocate.

It is a sham to call in to City Council in situations like this. There is nothing President Waldron can do but listen sympathetically.

The system wears people down.

Not good.

Gotta be a better way.

The Bethlehem Gadfly