

“We love this building” (15)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 2 W. Market St., Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues November 14, 2018

(15th in a series of posts on 2 W. Market St.)

Everybody got that definition of “spot zoning”? Ok, let’s move on.

Attorney Preston made the legal case for the owners.

(Preston’s claim that the financial services business at 2 W. Market is now operating legally may not be right, though. See the City memo coming in the next post.)

Now we continue in our desire for understanding the petitioner’s viewpoint by listening to Kori Lannon, daughter of the owners and a member of the business, talking about her personal connection with the property.

The full text of Lannon’s presentation is also available: [Kori Lannon](#)

Lannon’s presentation complements Preston’s. It is crafted to answer a series of specific questions about the owners and their goals and motivations, so Gadfly has taken the liberty of breaking up her presentation in a way that aids better focus for us.

When and why did we become interested in the house?

- Our motivation to buy was the character of the house and well before we even had a business to house there; this was a house to start a business in, not a business looking for a house.

How did we see ourselves as owners?

- We saw ourselves aligned with goals of the historic district, “excited to have become the stewards of this majestic and historic property.”

What did we want to do?

- “We had a vision to restore the house to its magnificence of a century ago, to keep it true to the flavor of historic downtown Bethlehem.”

Who are we?

- We are not outsiders, but people with roots here: “We are a group of Lehigh Valley people”; many born, raised, educated, live, work, and play locally.
- We are active in and committed to the community, financially supporting the police, historical societies, the Arts, local and national charities.

How committed are we to the house?

- “It took over two years of effort and hard work to get the proper zoning approval”; it was over three years before we moved in.

Can the neighbors trust us?

- The evidence is plain to see: we have lived up to our promises and proposals, we have followed every guideline.

Have we had a negative impact on the neighborhood?

- We've kept the property nice, we keep the sidewalks clear, we have not created a parking problem, we have no signs.

Isn't the proof of our integrity plain to see?

- All the unknowns of legitimate concerns in the past are now knowns, and "favorable knowns."

Are we fighting for this property just for the business?

- "We love this building. We love being a part of historic downtown Bethlehem. And contributing to its preservation in a meaningful way."

What are our plans for the future?

- "We hope to expand the rehabilitation on this property, to preserve the green buildings that are part of our parcel . . . a significant commitment."

What are our long-term goals?

- "Our strong desire is to continue to be a good neighbor and a reliable steward of this very special property."

On what basis can we hope for your support?

- Our vision has already been approved by the Bethlehem Zoning Board and the Northampton County Court, and we have “much local residential support.”

That completes the presentation of the owner’s side of the case.

Do you have any questions? How are you feeling about the owner’s claims?

Before we listen to witnesses who testified at the Planning Commission hearing — for and against the petition — we’ll consider what the City has to say. After the Commonwealth Court overruled the County Court’s upholding of the Zoning Board decision on appeal by neighbors in May 2018, the City issued an enforcement notice to vacate the premises.