

Public Response to Parking Increases? (29) (1)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Communication survey, Gadfly's posts, Parking, Serious Issues October 8, 2018

*(29th in a series of posts on parking)
(1st in a series on the communication survey)*

Reminder: Public Safety Committee meeting Wednesday Oct 10 6:30 Town Hall to discuss the BPA parking fines proposal. The Mayor has already approved the BPA request to raise meter rates from \$1/hr to \$1.50/hr. See post #28 in this series for the BPA proposal on fines.

So Gadfly wonders what you've heard from the "public" in response to the increase in parking rates. And Gadfly is still wondering about a response from the business community — anybody hear anything from that sector? It's been quiet where Gadfly lives and plays.

- Maybe the 50% rise in meter rates met with acceptance with the public and business stakeholders.
- Maybe the response won't come till the parking proposal package is completed when Council takes action on the fines.
- Maybe it's a little too early — a week — for the *Morning Call* to be publishing a spread of Letters to the Editor, which is the place where Gadfly usually expects to see a register of public response.
- Maybe the reaction won't come till the moment of implementation January 1.
- Maybe "the people" really don't know about it yet.

Now this last "maybe" gives Gadfly pause.

How does the public find out about such decisions that affect them? Gadfly is an old timer, still loves his morning newspapers. But, let's face it, circulation in the *Morning Call* is way down from the time when Gadfly started to read it, and, adding in the *Bethlehem Press*, our town is

not saturated with newspaper coverage. Gadfly is used to depending on his newspaper for this kind of affecting local news. But, for instance, only 2 of the 15 houses in my block receive the *Morning Call*, when every house got it when my Gadflykiddies delivered the papers.

So, how does the public find out about such decisions that affect them? And the deliberations that precede those decisions?

I don't know details, but I am anxious for the Oct 24, 4PM, Town Hall meeting that we learned about in the Fall City newsletter that just came to our mailboxes, a meeting about "undertaking a comprehensive communications survey that will look to measure how residents are currently receiving information."

How should residents get news from the city? How should the City communicate important news to the residents? Good questions that Gadfly gathers the surveyors hope to illuminate by their survey. For instance, the City web site did not, as far as Gadfly can determine, announce the Sept 20 public meeting on meter rates, though it has announced this Wednesday's meeting. The Mayor mentioned a press release at the Sept 20 meeting, but I guess that just goes to the press, and then residents are dependent on their mediation.

The Mayor's approval letter to BPA on the rate increase was dated Oct. 1. There was a *Morning Call* news story Oct. 2. And probably by other news outlets as well. Is that the best way these days of media diversity yet fragmentation to get the word out?

Should the increase have been announced on the City web site? Odd to me, it wasn't. So, neither the public meeting about the increase of rates nor the decision about the increase of rates itself was announced on the City web site. The Gadfly thinks of the City web site as the official central location for this kind of news. That's where Gadfly would expect to get such news.

"Maybe 'the people' really don't know about it yet" kind of haunts me. Gadflies worry about such things.

As always, Gadfly expects a whack upside the head for faulty facts or thinking here.

But it seems to Gadfly that there are some things to figure out in the communication process between City Hall and residents. And Gadfly is glad about and looks forward to the communications survey launch October 24.