

“The black and brown people are always left behind”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Neighborhoods, Southside August 24, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the Southside* 

We’ve been thinking a lot about and talking a lot about systemic racism.

Gadfly couldn’t help but fold that in to the public comment by Southside Little League President Roy Ortiz at the August 18 City Council meeting.

The Southside Little League needs relocating.

Mr. Ortiz called attention to the perennial flooding of Southside’s field, a situation that impedes their play, a situation that the City has wasted money band-aiding for years.

Councilman Colon remembers the bad situation when he played ball.

And Gadfly can go back over twice as long to the days when he coached and administered in the Northeast and North Central Little Leagues.

That Southside field has always been trouble.

Mr. Ortiz observed that of the 6 city Little Leagues, the Southside always gets “the short end of the stick.” The field is not up to code; it should be condemned. “Our kids don’t deserve this,” he said, “begging” for relocation. Coming to Council because he hadn’t been able to connect with the Recreation director.

Mr. Ortiz got a sympathetic ear from Councilmen Reynolds and Colon, but it was Councilwoman Negron, the conscience of the Southside, who put the button on the lingering situation.

“The bottom line is that it is always, always the problem that the lower income communities, the black and brown people are always left behind,” said Councilwoman Negron, “The attention is not there. And that is wrong. And it is time to right the wrong.”

Amen.