

# Starting the conversation about a “Community Engagement initiative”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Community Engagement Initiative, George Floyd killing, Police June 12, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the George Floyd killing* 

Some of this is naturally way ahead of the proposal at this point, of course, but it might help start the conversation.

- “Community Engagement Initiative”: Gadfly’s aphrodisiac words. Gadfly’s all in.
- The proposal is directed to the Chief. Is this the way to get this done? Options? What’s the Mayor’s role in this? What’s proper procedure and protocol?
- What’s Council’s role vis-a-vis the police dept? What power does Council have over the dept? Can Council be only facilitators, partners? Could Council mandate (not that you would want to maybe)? Is this basically the Mayor’s business and chain of command?
- Gadfly would be interested in a detailed list of police/community interactions. Off the top of his head, he knows block watch and a Junior cops program. What else? How about a detailed list and a sense of how many officers are involved.
- Gadfly is also curious about how many officers live in Bethlehem.
- The memo says the CEI would be “within” the police dept. That’s interesting. Not outside? Gadfly would like to hear more about that. Make it a dept activity under dept control rather than a separate entity with connotations of either oversight or impotency? (See Peter Crownfield’s comment to a recent post that “I also wonder if a community engagement effort will resolve current concerns if it’s conducted by and for the police department.”)
- So what is the connection of the CEI with the dept? Are there models of such as is envisioned by the Councilors that we could look at?
- Who leads the CEI?
- Who establishes the CEI?

- Who decides who is in the CEI? (The potential list looks enormous)
- What power does the CEI have?
- Would the CEI need a budget for staff and activities?
- Though Gadfly loves community and inclusion, the envisioned group does look enormous and potentially unwieldy for a working group. How get operational?
- If assuaging (good SAT word) race and ethnic issues is the motivation and goal of CEI, should Southside/Hispanic be highlighted — seems like there's a center of attention.
- If fostering a (very) large community group to create its own agenda, it would be interesting for the Councilor's to formulate the one-paragraph prompt a meeting facilitator would give them to kick off their work.
- Gadfly would like to know more about the history of “community policing” in Bethlehem. Officer Dosedlo (now retired?) spoke of it fondly at the 2016 NAACP forum in the [newspaper article](#) posted a couple posts back. And resident Lisa Rosa has spoken of it nostalgically at several Council meetings. What exactly was community policing in Bethlehem, and why did community policing disappear in Bethlehem?

**The Bethlehem Gadfly**