

Council candidate Kiera Wilhelm at LV4ALL

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election February 24, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election* 

Candidate for City Council Kiera Wilhelm at the Lehigh Valley for All “Meet the Candidates” event February 17.



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Bethlehem has been in my heart for a long, long time. I went to Moravian College. I graduated in 1993, and I lived here for another year before I moved away to start my career in teaching. Which I did. I taught for five years in the Bucks County and Souderton school districts before I moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to get my Master’s Degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I ended up staying in Cambridge for almost 14 years working in Education and Arts Administration and non-profit administration and development fundraising. And was called back to Bethlehem in 2013, and it was really exciting to me to return to a city that I had loved for such a long time and to people that I loved. I loved Cambridge as well, but what I realized when I moved back to Bethlehem was that Bethlehem offered the things that I loved about Cambridge, arts and culture, a great food and drinks scene, wonderful education institutions, and so many of those wonderful things that I felt that Bethlehem invited you to become involved in in a more heartfelt way. You could get your hands dirty here, and, in fact, that has been exactly what has happened to me, in particular through my current role. I have served for 4 years plus as director of Fig Bethlehem magazine. I just happen to have a copy of Fig right here with me. You may have seen it. If you don’t know Fig, I’ll tell you that our mission is to lift up local

business. And that is a responsibility that I have taken very seriously and done so with great pride. And, in fact, I would say that it's my role at Fig that brought me closer to Bethlehem, and sort of wove me in to the fabric of the city a bit more through meeting wonderful business owners and community leaders and volunteers and non-profit managers and just members of this community at large. And, in fact, what has happened is the more that I got to know, the more I wanted to know, the more I wanted to know, the more I wanted to get involved. And ultimately that's why I'm here. I serve on Boards such as the YWCA Bethlehem, Touchstone Theatre, the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Any Given Child. I was on the advisory committee for the Lehigh Valley Creative Economy Project. Side note — I also officiate weddings as part of the Lehigh Valley Celebrant Team. I believe Bethlehem to be, and I want to help it continue to become a city that is vibrant and thriving and sustainable — a forward thinking city that honors its past and builds on that as well. And that looks after all of its citizens. And there are so many ways to accomplish that. Some very important ones to me personally. I'll start with helping small business because that's where I spend my day-to-day. And not just helping business through this devastation of the pandemic. but in the long term creating a galvanized business community that is actively supported by its community. A business friendly community. I am deeply invested in housing, housing insecurity, and homelessness. Grace, I know you started the affordable housing task force — that's so important. Sustainability is extremely important to me, a walkable, bikable city, streamline and normalize public transportation — all this speaks to vibrancy. And I feel very strongly about civic engagement, and I am proof of that pudding. I became involved because I knew more. And as a City Council person, I want to promote a Council that is inclusive and accessible and that communicates warmly with the people of the City and invites them in. Everybody should have a voice. As a City Council person, it's my responsibility to listen closely, and I would be honored to serve this City in a greater role as a Bethlehem City Council person.

There are 6 candidates running for 4 seats on City Council. The other candidates are Bryan Callahan, Grace Crampsie Smith, Hillary Kwiatek, Rachel Leon, Adam Waldron.