

Airbnb on Broad Street (7)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Airbnb, Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues October 25, 2018

(7th in a series of posts on Airbnb)

Now score one for the City and the neighbors of Brew and Williams, who turned out in good numbers to Judge Manwaring's nice but small and temporarily bathroom-less courtroom.

Nicole Radzievich, "Here's how a judge ruled on the first citations stemming from Bethlehem's home-sharing law." Morning Call, October 7, 2018.

"The first round of citations involving Bethlehem's new home-sharing law were upheld Friday. District Judge Roy Manwaring found that a trio of stately homes in a historic neighborhood violated the ordinance which requires inspections and a license to rent rooms or the whole home to overnight guests."

"In making his decision, Manwaring said the city 'narrowly satisfied' its burden for the convictions and suspected that the defendants will appeal the case to Northampton County Court."

"Leo DeVito, the defendant's attorney, declined to comment after the two-hour hearing."

Though DeVito declined to comment to the *Call*, Gadfly picked up these points from his concluding statement:

- The City failed to cite the proper party
- There was no evidence that the people in the properties were there for less than 30 days (a provision in the ordinance)
- a citation without an address was a "fatal defect" (he won that point from the Judge)

So that's where we stand now. The City/neighbors won in local court, but there seems to be expectation they will lose in County Court.

Here's a reminder what the stakes are in this issue:

- the homeowner's right to run a business
- the neighbors' rights to good quality of life
- the city's right to protect residents

- the city's right to collect taxes
- the hotels' rights to be spared unfair competition

It's a knotty issue.

And Gadfly's interest in the resolution of this issue over who has power in a neighborhood is especially spurred by our developing thread on neighborhoods, for instance, Northside 2027 and the West Side Rose Garden.

*(By the way, on Airbnb paying taxes, see ***"How much has Airbnb paid in taxes in Pennsylvania?"***)*