

The road to “Crunch Time (3)” (46)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 2 W. Market St., Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues December 10, 2018

(46th in a series of posts about 2 W. Market St.)

Let's have some fun. That will also be serious business. Very serious business. Gadfly kind of business.

Let's take the next step in the full advantage to participate in our local government through the ample time afforded to reflect on and comment on the views of our Council persons.

Look to your right over on the Gadfly sidebar. You'll see a link to the Pa. Third Class City Code. (Gadfly tries to have links important to us there. If you have additional suggestions, please let Gadfly know.)

In the code you will find:

Section 1018.6. Reading of proposed ordinances; final enactment.

(a) Reading. — The title of every proposed ordinance shall be read at least twice, once when introduced and again before final enactment by council. Amendments or other changes to the proposed ordinance shall be read at length.

And in our Rules of Council also on the sidebar, you'll find 3.C:

The title of every bill shall be read when introduced and on final passage, except as to amendments or other changes which shall be read at length. A complete copy of every bill introduced shall be available for public inspection at the Clerk's Office during regular office hours. No bill shall be passed finally on the same day on which it was introduced. At least three days shall intervene between its introduction and its final passage. Upon final passage, Ordinances shall be numbered serially.

What a great thing! We actually have three not two opportunities to “read” 2 W. Market, and extended over several weeks: the Nov. 20 hearing, the Dec. 4 Council, and now the Dec. 18 Council.

Even if you haven't attended any of the meetings, Gadfly has tried to make sure that you have been filled in and have ready, permanent reference to everything going on, all sides.

The best part is that now that the first reading has occurred we have a window into our Councilpeople's minds.

That's where Gadfly wants to go. Into their minds!

Let's go one-by-one and analyze the positions they took to support their votes on first reading.

If you are in a mind-set to use the time-spacing to influence one or another's change of vote, I do believe that several Council follow Gadfly, but I'm not sure all do.

And, in any event, changing a vote is hard for a person to do, right? Might take some major re-thinking. We all tend to get locked in once we have made a decision. We defend. We justify.

But our democratic process offers the opportunity now to influence a change of vote if you are of a mind to try.

At the very least, though, Gadfly thinks the exercise of mind-looking will be illuminating. He said last time that one of the things he personally wanted to achieve was the ability to vote for candidates at election time in a more informed way. This will be a step in the right direction.

So – make no mistake — Gadfly is not talking about whack the pinata. Let's go one-by-one in the order of voting at first passage (which was so dramatic!) and describe the thinking processes we see. Judgment might come from that. But pre-judgment not allowed.

Ha! This might be the first time anything like this has happened in the history of Bethlehem (a future "Bethlehem Moment"?!), so we don't want to mess up. You can imagine how hard it is to sit in front of a packed fairly contentious and rambunctious crowd like that last week confronting a complex issue, and explain a vote. Would freeze my bowels. We could say that's what you get the big money for, IF there were big salaries!!! A tough job. "Fight the good fight" I always say to Council. Making decisions, especially that influence a whole city, ain't a stroll along the Monocacy.

So let's be respectful.

See you fairly soon on the next page. Gadfly will begin with CW Negrón.