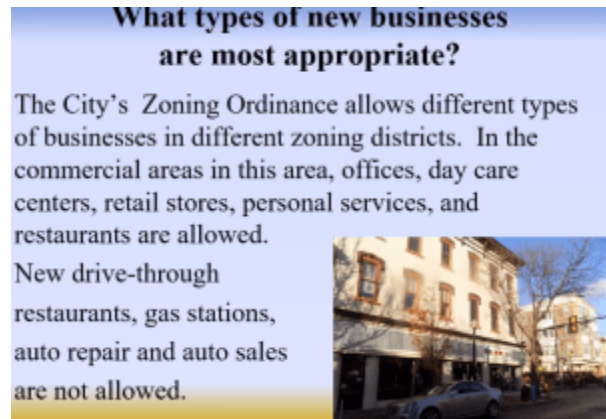


# Southside Voices (2): Esther and Anna

The Bethlehem Gadfly Southside November 20, 2020

 *The latest in a series of posts on the Southside* 



## Esther Lee (4 mins.)

Building heights are out of line. Makes plea for “the Southside Black strip.” Across from the Comfort Suites on Brodhead. Find a way to restore this section. The first Black folks who came to Bethlehem had businesses right there. Building heights are humpty-dumpty. Traffic is upside-down. Need to do something about homelessness, housing.

## Anna Smith (4 mins.)

Tracked vacancies in her former job and wherever there was new development, there was persistent vacancies long past construction. Simultaneously, we see storefronts like George’s Light-Lunch in persistent demand, never off the market — beautiful, historic facade. The demand is there on these streets. The issue is that business owners who live on Southside to serve Southside, the numbers just don’t work for them in new buildings. The historic buildings offer smaller, more

accessible storefronts more accessible to people who were unable to attain bank financing. Women, POC, immigrant entrepreneurs unlikely to receive financing. If want to support business that serve local community, if we want to serve the core of our community (Southside now 43% Latino, 10% Black), we need to offer affordable options. None of the new developers have been able to offer that. We need to think about what types of business owners are actually able to start businesses in our neighborhoods. Because it is those business owners who have made the Southside the kind of place that people want to invest and come to. Agrees with Esther Lee — Black strip — that's the way to go.

**The Bethlehem Gadfly**