

“Everything we have asked them to do . . . they have agreed to”

The Bethlehem Gadfly 548 N. New St., Neighborhoods, Northside, Serious Issues September 13, 2019

(3rd in a series of posts about 548 N. New St.)

Who’s in charge of beauty in Bethlehem?

Gadfly

After “working with the City for roughly a year,” Garrett and Brandon Benner made this 12-minute presentation on new construction at 548 N. New St. to the Planning Commission on August 26.

Gadfly bets that almost none of his followers have ever witnessed a Planning Commission hearing. The City is now in the process of videoing such hearings, and they will be available for viewing live as well as later.

But for now take a look at the Benner presentation through the roving unprofessional eye of an illegally loaned Sony held in Gadfly’s trembling senior’d hands: <https://youtu.be/ye45LP-y-bQ>

At the head table are three Planning Commission members (one recused himself for this hearing) and two City planning staffers.

Look at what most of the discussion is about:

- parking (there may be an unnoticed problem here, for early talk of the new Walnut Street garage calls for fewer spaces)
- traffic
- garbage
- pedestrian safety
- loading and unloading convenience
- signals

And the Benner plan receives the City blessing: “Everything we have asked them to do and contribute for they have agreed to.”

The Benners are cooperative.

But who’s in charge of beauty in Bethlehem?



One Planning Commission member — god bless ‘im — asked in a quiet voice what for Gadfly is the booming Ur-question, the question before all other questions:

“It’s a beautiful building to put between several brick buildings. Was there any thought given to the architectural design? To fit in to the rest of the neighborhood?”

Gadfly believes that it’s Brandon Benner who answers:

“Actually, yeah, there is. We understand that it is modern, but when modern design is actually done right we feel it not only enhances it, not only complements it, but also enhances the historic architecture. So I mean, we feel that, we understand that people may not like this in the historic downtown, but this is invigorating type design . . . people want to live downtown, be downtown, live free, and spend money downtown. We feel this is, this is the way things are headed. We love design, we love Bethlehem, and we want to invest in Bethlehem . . . continue enhancing the downtown.”

Chew on this.

to be continued . . .