

Gadfly Forum highlight: candidate Crampsie Smith on city services

The Bethlehem Gadfly Forum, Gadfly Forum May 14, 2021

 Latest in a series of posts on the Gadfly Forum 

“In serving and responding to others within the community my golden rule will continue to be: ‘It doesn’t cost you anything to be nice to people.’”
Grace Crampsie Smith

The prompt:

So in this Forum I want you to think about basic city services. Residents will be telling you things, a lot good, we hope, but certainly some complaints about basic city services. It’s in the nature of your job to have your ear to the ground. Since you are now asking people for their vote, some no doubt are responding to you with a sort of “what will you do for me”? Or here’s what I want you to do. That is, here’s a problem we’d like you to do something about. Will you work on it if I vote for you?

If elected, you may not have a hand in the day-to-day managing of public services, but you will probably find it important to establish good rapport with the Mayor and department heads and so forth to be a channel for resident voices. If another level of persuasion is necessary, you have the power of the bully pulpit at Council meetings to call attention to a problem that you feel needs tending. And in the final analysis you might utilize the power of the budget to shape how City services are performed or delivered.

What are you hearing with your ear to the ground about those basic city services that have such a great impact on the day-to-day lives of the average resident?

Please share what you are hearing, what you are thinking about on this level.

For responses by other Council candidates to this prompt, click [here](#).

Grace Crampsie Smith

I was fortunate to be born into a family where service to others was paramount. I literally saw on a daily basis my father, as a Police Chief, constantly respond to the calls and needs of others. Community members knew if there was a problem/issue, they could go to “Jack” and he would deal with it. He emulated to me the importance of treating others with compassion, respect, objectivity, and going to whatever lengths to resolve conflicts. He was known for his motto “It doesn’t cost you anything to be nice to people,” and I try to live his legacy every day.



My mother was the epitome of compassion for others. As the eldest of 10, mother of 7, and a nurse, caring for others was her middle name. If someone was ill or had an unmet need, they knew they could reach out to my mom and she’d be there for them.

My 6 siblings were much older than me, so I also got to experience them as role models of service/response to others. Several went into public service, and my only sister became a Sister of Mercy, literally giving her life in service and mercy to others. I always joke that having been born in between 5 brothers she had enough of men and decided to be a nun.

It is no wonder that I choose a professional path of serving those with addictions, mental health diagnoses, and developmental disabilities, as well as counseling high school students for almost 40 years.

In my tenure as city councilperson, I frequently have constituents reach out to me re: concerns. Issues range from public works (streets), safety/police, health, etc. I have responded to every issue by first and foremost gathering the facts, then reaching out to the appropriate person(s) in city administration to address the issue. I always tell fellow community members that I am here to represent and serve them so they should not hesitate to reach out to me. I also advise them of our new

Service App, which is so much easier to navigate than the past one. However, I know that not everyone can or cares to access this app.

Over time, I've had several concerns within the Moravian College area re: typical college student behaviors that are disruptive to the neighborhood- parties, loud noises, safety of nearby residents due to Covid. I reached out to the College President, College Police, and City Police Dept. to address these concerns. Given my belief it is best to meet issues head on with all involved, I initiated the Moravian Block Watch. This allowed neighbors to sit at the table with city police, Moravian Police, and Moravian Representatives to discuss and resolve presenting issues. I think we were progressing and had success in resolving some issues, but, unfortunately, we had to discontinue meetings due to Covid.

I truly believe the skills I have honed as a counselor, as well as in various areas within the human services field has been a definite advantage in serving as a councilperson. In my career, I have to mediate and resolve conflict amongst individuals and entities on a daily basis. I've learned the importance of treating all sides with respect, allowing all sides to express their concerns, and try to guide others to meeting in middle. It is also important for different sides of issues to have their consciousness raised as to the obstacles the other side may face

I never hesitate to reach out to city staff or the mayor and will continue to do so no matter who the new mayor is. I believe those within the city and the mayor know that I will always strongly advocate for those in need, from micro issues such as a potholes to macro issues such as securing inclusionary housing options for multiple income levels. Recently, when we had to implement the new stormwater fee, I noted there needed to be a tier system or appeal process, and the appeal process was added. Being a student of free/reduced lunch, I know first-hand the monetary challenges some households may face, and I will continue to advocate for those less fortunate.

In the end, in serving and responding to others within the community my golden rule will continue to be: "It doesn't cost you anything to be nice to people."