

The Public Meeting on Parking Meter Fees Sept 20, 2018 (6)

Ed Gallagher, The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Parking, Serious Issues September 21, 2018

(6th in a series of posts on parking)

The Gadfly is new at this. Call me Gadfly cub reporter. Let me give a brief report on the meeting tonight. Staying pretty factual. Gadfly is a bit stressed for time tonight but will return tomorrow with more info and a “reaction.”

The Bethlehem Parking Authority hosted the meeting. Executive Director Kevin Livingston handed off to Tim Tracy of Desman Design, who did the parking study. The Mayor was also at the head table. Tim gave a 1/2 hr. or so presentation of the Desman final report (accepted by BPA at their May meeting at which Tim presented). The Desman report was accepted in May with the promise that individual parts would be discussed individually.

Apparently, the parking meter fee recommendation brought forth tonight was discussed at the July meeting (June and August were cancelled), but the minutes of that meeting will not be approved until next week at the September meeting, so at this point we don't know what exactly was discussed.

The Mayor is the key player here, lucky him. According to the City Code of Ordinances (Gadfly thinks he has that right), the Mayor is charged with responsibility over parking fees. In effect, then, the Desman final report and the presentation tonight was aimed at him.

No surprises in Tim's presentation. No changes from the draft Desman report dated February 2018 and presented at a public meeting April 12. Surprisingly, no copies of the final report are available yet. The draft report, however, is on the BPA web site under “News,” and I have a link to it several posts back in this thread (post 2, I think).

Three recommendations were presented, only the first of which – fees – was the direct focus of this meeting: raise parking meter fees from the present \$1/hr. to \$1.50/hr. The Desman plan calls for implementation of the new rates January 1, 2019.

There followed by Gadfly count 11 responses from the audience of 25 or so, heavily, heavily slanted toward taking issue with the report or presenting options. The meeting went long. Filled with Gadfly kind of talk. Gadfly has said time and again that he is in awe of the range, the imagination, the creativity, the passion, the power of our public responses. In fact, that's what got him into the blog business. It pained Gadfly to see these ideas, these words evaporate. Gadfly wants them to have a home here.

Ha! Which is the cue for some of those powerful voices to “follow” me and capsule their ideas and/or reactions here.

Gadfly is not sure where this process goes. It sounds like it is totally in the Mayor's lap. Literally that's where his note pad was! He certainly can say yes. He certainly could modify the \$1.50 recommendation. But Gadfly is not clear what happens if he says no. Start over?

The Mayor is “following” the Gadfly. He is here with us. That's incredibly gutsy. Gadfly thanks him. Many of Council are “here” too. Again, gutsy. They didn't have to join. So we're all in this together. Let's help the Mayor to a decision in a courteous, helpful way. (And not get hot under the collar like Gadfly did tonight! Bad Gadfly! Down boy!)

Gadfly will have more to say tomorrow.