

All of us are rescuing historic district properties (30)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 2 W. Market St., Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues November 24, 2018

(30th in a series of posts on 2 W. Market St.)

Barbara Diamond enjoys retirement as Lehigh University Director of Foundation Relations by engaging in various activities and organizations hopefully for the betterment of the community. Her particular interests at the moment are preventing gun violence, local government ethics reform, and Bethlehem Democratic Committee work.

Gadfly:

Breena has made so many important points here, but a lot boils down to the ability of well-heeled people to bend people in power to their interests. You are correct that Attorney Preston has not answered the question of why this change would be beneficial to the community. (We understand the benefit to the property owners). The only thing presented is their claim that they are rescuing a historic district property, but we dispute that this is anything more than the rest of us who own these “money pits” do. What seems most at stake here is whether our public officials are willing to accede to the demands of a city benefactor that would impact the city & other property owners in unknown but potentially significant ways. The threat that the deliberative process that resulted in our current zoning regulations could be so easily undermined for political reasons has potentially negative consequences for trust in government. I understand that both sides believe they are standing for the preservation of the historic district. The opposition seems to feel it needs protection from apartment dwellers and has even heard threats of a drug rehab facility and even Section 8 housing. The side I support is more concerned about turning this residential neighborhood into a commercial zone. Diversity of residential offerings is more important to me in creating a healthy neighborhood than creating opportunities for businesses to cannibalize the residential neighborhoods.

Barbara