

Kiera Wilhelm announces candidacy for Bethlehem City Council

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election February 16, 2021

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For Immediate Release

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BETHLEHEM, PA – Kiera Wilhelm has announced that she is seeking election to Bethlehem’s City Council in 2021.

For the past four years, Kiera has served as Director of Fig Bethlehem magazine, a print/digital publication whose mission is to support and promote local businesses and organizations in Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley. “In my role as Director of Fig, I am charged with representing our local small business community, and I do so proudly. Many of our small businesses have been devastated by the pandemic, and I am inspired every day—now more than ever—by their dedication and commitment, and I want to do more. Connecting with so many hard-working business owners, particularly in the past year, has fueled my desire to run for City Council.



Their needs are diverse, and diverse opportunities to help our small businesses exist—Council can and should serve as an accessible resource in getting them the help that they need.”

As a member of Council, Ms. Wilhelm will champion policies that serve the health and well-being of Bethlehem and all of its citizens, including those that:

- support diversity, inclusion, racial justice, and equality;
- promote sustainability, including more green spaces, improved public transportation, walkability, and the targets within Bethlehem’s Climate Action Plan;

- increase affordable housing options and strive to end housing insecurity and homelessness;
- actively support and sustain a vibrant small business community, both as it recovers from the economic downturn and beyond.

Additionally, Ms. Wilhelm says she will prioritize more frequent, more accessible communication with the citizens of Bethlehem—via an enhanced and easy-to-navigate digital hub, a more robust social media presence, and, when it is safe, in-person conversations in the neighborhoods where people live and work. “I believe that better, warmer communication between a government and its citizens can lead to increased civic participation—an engaged community of residents who, having been thoughtfully informed and actively invited to participate, do,” she said. “This can mean anything from increased voter participation, to more trees planted, to volunteering, community gardens, more public art, and so much more. Civic participation contributes to the health and well-being of individual citizens, and to the community as a whole.”

As Councilperson, Ms. Wilhelm will also support the administration’s ongoing goal of greater transparency and accessibility, both through systems, such as the Open Bethlehem portal, and direct actions: “I plan to be the type of City Council member I have admired—which is more or less the kind of human being I admire: somebody who listens, pays attention, seeks information and feedback, and responds with thought, care, and intention.”

A graduate of Moravian College, Kiera lived in Bethlehem from 1989-1994 before moving away to begin her career in teaching. In 2000, she received her Ed.M from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She remained in the Boston area, working in education and nonprofit arts administration, development, and fundraising before returning to Bethlehem in 2013. She has served as Director of Fig Bethlehem magazine since 2016.

She currently serves on the development/marketing committee for the YWCA Bethlehem, the marketing committee for the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, and the steering committee for the historic Charles A. Brown Ice House Tonight performance series. Kiera is a member of the

Bethlehem Food Co-Op. She was a member of the advisory group for the Lehigh Valley Creative Economy Project, and has served on committees and task forces for the Bethlehem Area Public Library, Touchstone Theatre, Godfrey Daniels, and Any Given Child Bethlehem. Kiera officiates weddings and other milestone life celebrations as part of the Lehigh Valley Celebrant team.