

# Southside residents and environmental folks need your body in a seat!

The Bethlehem Gadfly 1st Terrace, Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods, Serious Issues, Southside, Uncategorized June 25, 2019

*(The latest in a series of posts on the Southside and Neighborhoods)*

*Kim Carrrell-Smith is a 31-year resident of Bethlehem's historic Southside, where she taught public history at Lehigh University for almost two decades. She is also an aspiring gadfly, buzzing in on issues of historic preservation, public education, city government, and other social justice issues. She tips her wings to the master gadflies who have served our community for so long!*

Greetings active citizens,

Sorry to be sending alerts two weeks in a row, but there is another local govt-related issue coming up, and Southside residents could use some significant support.

**Southside residents and environmental folks need your body in a seat**

**THIS WED NIGHT 6/26 at 6 pm**

**ZONING HEARING BOARD**

**TOWN HALL IN BETHLEHEM**

(You can bring a book, and there is free wifi available in town hall, too...)

Newspaper article links and specifics are at the bottom of this email, but here's the main info about a proposed 8 townhouse (40 student) development on First Terrace on South Mountain near Lehigh...

### **At issue are**

1. the stability and safety of a great neighborhood
2. the request for *significant variances*\* (*see below email*) to key environmental provisions in city ordinances, in particular steep slope and impervious coverage, among other requests.

**THIS MATTERS TO THE WHOLE CITY:** if one developer can bypass key ordinances in such a significant way, it sets a precedent for others to do the same.

### **Can we beat this?**

- City officials have told us “butts in the seats matter” to the Zoning Hearing Board. Please help us back up residents in the face of a powerful landlord with deep pockets.
- And we've also heard elsewhere that standing up behind residents who speak could matter to the ZHB, since these folks may not be aware that that the Southside neighborhoods are places many Bethlehem residents care about.

Happy to fill you in about any of the particulars on traffic, parking, quality of life, etc., connected to this case, if you need more info.

THANK YOU, and thanks for sharing this with sympathetic friends and colleagues,

Kim

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*\* The developer is asking to “increase the maximum impervious coverage in steep areas from 5% to 39%” and “decrease the minimum lot area from 10 acres to .7466 acres”*

*The ordinance states that if a parcel has any steep slopes above 35% grade within the construction area, the lot size must be a minimum of 10 acres and have a maximum impervious coverage of 5%.*

<https://www.lehighvalleylive.com/bethlehem/2019/06/this-developer-wants-to-raze-southside-houses-for-40-beds-of-student-housing-but-opposition-is-mounting.html>

<https://www.mcall.com/news/local/bethlehem/mc-nws-mayor-against-zoning-20190623-ytmfudjmkffbrfnrmkz7lvtuqa-story.html>