

Get your questions ready (10)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, City government, Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues January 13, 2019

(10th in a series of posts on City Government)

We have to look beyond today's Eagles game.

It's election season.

So how can we get a handle on candidates who come forth for the seats on City Council?

4 seats up for grabs.

Remember that there is one new opening.

And that there are three incumbents running for re-election: Reynolds ('08), Colon ('16), Van Wirt ('18).



Can you identify the incumbents?

Could you recognize their voices?

Do you have some basis on which to judge their qualifications?

Though the other members of Council (Waldron, Negrón, Callahan) are not running, they might use their powerful incumbent positions to back candidates.



Can you identify the Council members not running?

Could you recognize their voices?

Do you have some basis on which to judge their recommendations?

This last question in each series, of course, is the most important. Gadfly has been trying to provide you with a basis for such judgments and will continue to do so.

Time to do our homework.

What do we want to know to help us make our judgments?

When CM Evans' seat opened up a year ago, each of the candidates for the unexpired term was asked to provide written answers to a series of 14 questions. Gadfly doesn't know who put those questions together, but he thought they were good, thought they were very helpful. Here they are (minus two that don't seem relevant now):

1. What uniquely qualifies you to serve on Bethlehem City Council?
2. List the top three (3) priorities of your campaign platform.

3. As several development projects are considered in the City, do you feel Bethlehem can honor its architectural history while simultaneously promoting economic growth and business?
4. Do you feel that transportation is an important issue for the City of Bethlehem, and if so, how do you envision the City better meeting its transportation needs in the future?
6. What is one issue you believe Bethlehem is currently not properly addressing and if on City Council how would you help in this area?
7. What do you think about the idea of a pedestrian bridge over the Lehigh River, and what are your thoughts for potential funding sources?
8. What can be done to encourage more constituent participation in local Government, particularly in the budget process?
10. What are your thoughts for the long term best solution for the pools in the City?
11. Within the next several years, the Parking Authority will need to replace the Walnut Street garage. How do you think the Authority and the City should plan for the financial and business impact of the construction of a new garage?
12. One of City Council's most important functions is to pass the yearly budget for Bethlehem. What ideas would you bring to City Council that involve the area of finances?
13. Making decisions on City Council often involves seeking compromises that balance the individual self-interests of multiple groups of people. How do you feel you can contribute to the culture of compromise that is necessary to a functioning legislative branch of government?
14. 2017 saw City Council create several new initiatives relating to municipal climate action, neighborhood investment, open data and efficient city government. How do you feel you can participate in and add to these initiatives?

Does this still look like a good list of questions that we'd like to see candidates tackle? What would we add, what drop off? What priority would we set in our list? Perhaps a good final question would riff on question 6: "what topic or topic would you like to address that we haven't asked you about?"

If we had such a list of questions in print or in mind, Gadfly could ask candidates to share their ideas here in the time leading up to the election.