

# Being civil does not negate healthy, open debate (13)

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, Serious Issues January 14, 2019

*(13th in a series of posts on City Government)*

*Peter Crownfield is officially retired but spends most of his time working with students in his role as internship coordinator for the Alliance for Sustainable Communities–Lehigh Valley.*

Gadfly:

I agree that

- Being civil does not negate healthy, open debate
- Roberts Rules is mostly about procedure & decorum
- Councilman Callahan was disrespectful and went beyond acceptable decorum when he said “If you think,... you don’t have a clue”

It’s also worth noting that RR can be used to censor content—

- by not placing some topics on the agenda or removing it to accommodate a particular point of view
- when a committee is allowed to sit on a bill for an extended period to avoid the topic

Most importantly, in recent memory, rushing through a vote when new information has been introduced without adequate time for public deliberation.

Peter