

The Zoning Board controversy: part 6

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, Serious Issues August 25, 2019

(The latest in a series of posts on City government)

Here are a few examples at the lower end of the ever-widening gyre of BC's earnest and laudably passionate attempt to call attention to what he perceived as a wrong done to a good person by members of Council who did not support her nomination to the Zoning Hearing Board.

1) BC claims that PVW and JWR believe that donations will cause Nominee-1 to hold, to take on a certain position she did not have, rather than ratifying a position already held. He uses himself as an example: he was pro-Union 30 years before he got to Council and Unions started giving him money. But there is no evidence PVW and JWR indeed hold that view. BC simply asserts it without basis. And, in fact, it makes no difference what view they hold about the purpose of the money. It's the fact that Nominee-1 is pro-development not how she got there that is the issue.

2) Another weak assertion BC makes is that PVW is trying to "pigeon-hole someone into not participating in something that [she is] not in favor of." But limiting Nominee-1's power to decide just in cases involving her few donors would have little impact on the wider community of developers. Nominee-1 would still rule in cases involving every other developer. If PVW were enacting an anti-development agenda, this would have minor impact.

3) BC suggests that JWR is playing politics, finding "preposterous" that JWR withholds support from Nominee-1 for such a small amount of money in campaign donations, when he took vastly larger sums from the same or same kind of people — floating but then quickly backwatering

the idea that JWR's lack of support is payback for Nominee-1 running against him. Yikes!

4) BC sees the fuss PVW made over cement particulates (a substance BC said he never heard of, as if she made it up) as an example of "fear-mongering" over the Martin Tower demolition and as part of her anti-development agenda. But the doctor who testified at the Nitschmann open hearing certainly knew of the long-term cancer et al risks from cement particulates. PVW's health concerns from the demolition were legitimate not "fear-mongering."

5) Asserting the legitimacy of non-recusal in the case of a donor on the basis of this exact practice by the current Zoning Board chair is not a good argument. Poor judgment does not a precedent make. The fact of the Board chair's practice makes a better case for an ordinance on the subject so that there are rules that apply to every one.

6) "Mr. Reynolds stabbed me in the back," claimed BC to impugn JWR's integrity. Maybe so, maybe so. But no details. Simply an unsubstantiated charge. Probably out of bounds Roberts-Rules-wise anyway. So this can have no influence over our thinking about the nomination.

Gadfly has been negative here about the quality of BC's argument, but, surprisingly, you will find him positive, though in an ironic way, as we move next time to the higher levels of his widening gyre image.