

# Mr. Callahan's Colloquy (49)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Parking, Serious Issues October 18, 2018

*(49th in a series of posts on parking)*

Nicole Radzievich, "Council postpones vote on whether to hike Bethlehem parking fines." *Morning Call*, October 16, 2018.

*"Councilman Bryan Callahan . . . said Tuesday the infrastructure the parking revenue would pay for is crucial. Another South Side garage would benefit several nonprofits, including the Northampton Community College. He said the prospect of a garage there has been on the city's radar for years."*

So have you been doing your homework? Are you keeping up? It's easy to forget that multi-million-dollar decisions with our money are on the table here. Don't fade out on Gadfly.

## [MemofrAWtoKLivingston-Parking-PSCmtfollowup2](#)

Did you read the memo from City Council to the Bethlehem Parking Authority with a series of questions to answer before Council would consider BPA's proposal to raise the parking fines? The questions should be answered by and the proposal considered at the Council meeting Wednesday, Nov. 7.

Let Gadfly expand a bit on Nicole's reference to Councilman Callahan's quarrel with Council President Waldron's action. Callahan's comments were vigorous.

Councilman Callahan, Council liaison to the BPA, objected to asking the BPA to do this:

- it seemed a delaying tactic
- this has been on the horizon since 2013
- should have been no surprise
- BPA was not trying to sneak something through
- dumping 14 questions on BPA the night before the vote was ridiculous
- Northampton Community College is now in a predicament
- some questions – walkability – have nothing to do with BPA
- parking garages are part of a walkable city
- lot of politics involved

The big new things that Gadfly learned from Councilman Callahan's vigorous comments were:

- the Polk St Garage is definite
- the identity of main users of the proposed Polk St. Garage: Northampton Community College (300 spaces), St. Luke's (50), Charter Arts (50), Factory (30)

- the leases are full-rate not discount as in the New St Garage
- “All of them are non-profits . . . paying full boat, they are not getting a discount rate . . . and willing to sign long-term leases”

Council President Waldron explained the rationale for the letter, and Councilman Reynolds, while agreeing with Councilman Callahan on such points as the inappropriateness of several questions, did so as well.

Councilman Reynolds (a bit compressed and edited, almost exact):

The situation is complicated. This isn't just about the fines. We need a fuller conversation about how the different parts come together. This is not just about the fines but the efficiency of our parking system and about how all of our parking facilities are going to work together. Ultimately, we do have to raise the fines . . . but that is only one piece of a much bigger equation . . . and having more information about where the BPA is going with some of its financing is important. Some of those questions are not for the BPA but getting answers to those questions is necessary. Some of those questions are vital to our decision. Getting more information early on about any bond guarantee down the road fits into this conversation.

With me? Still thinking?