

Allentown Councilwoman Gerlach: “this needed to come up . . . we could not do nothing”

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police July 31, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

Allentown City Council meeting July 29, 2020, video

mins. 3:04:08 – 3:09:05

After a lengthy procedural discussion about the next step — looks like another special meeting August 12 — both Councilpeople Gerlach and Siegel made concluding statements — and things got more fiery.

We’ll take Councilwoman Gerlach first.

Gadfly always suggests that you go to the primary sources. Hear the voices for yourself.

Councilwoman Gerlach:

I just want to thank everyone. If there are still folks alive outside on both sides, Back the Blue people, the Black Lives Matter folks, I haven’t read anything, anything went down, so it’s great to see that two sides can come, do their thing, advocate, make your voice heard, and then go home and hopefully relax. And I would like to thank my fellow members of Council for entertaining this for discussing this, and thank the Chief, thank the Mayor, the Solicitor, thank everyone because we couldn’t be silenced. Even though this may have caused a lot of division, this needed to come up. We cannot during this time of national outrage, when buildings are burning, rubber bullets are flying, riot gear is in full force, we could not do nothing. So that’s why this came about. And what passes is what passes. But at least we’re having the conversation. And I’m hoping that at some point we can get beyond this divisive you’re either anti-cop if you want reform, or you are a hard-core KKK member if you

don't want reform. There's gotta be a way that we can start having these conversations in a civil way without pigeon-holing people. Calling people scumbags, saying that we need hoses placed on us. Ridiculous, ridiculous. That doesn't get us anywhere. We've got to be able to have comfortable, direct conversations about tough topics without resorting to disrespectful name-calling, threats, towards either Black Lives Matter, protestors, calling people thugs, that's a racist term, to call someone a thug. We've got to stop that, it breaks down conversations when you start using those terminologies. And I just hope that as we continue to dive into these bullet points, these issues, that we can do some internal soul-searching. I have biases, we all do, we have to start thinking how my world view, how I grew up, makes the skin I'm in, how it affects how I view these situations, because it is easy for some folks to say that it's not my problem but maybe someone with a different life-path, a different skin tone, a different sexuality, maybe for them it is. Thank you for having this tough conversation. It's going to get tougher when we actually have to pass things. But I needed to say that, and I don't know who is still out there at this point, but we gotta stop using racist language. There has been racist language used toward people of color in this town and towards me, and I'm sick of it. If you want to back the blue, back the blue, go all out, buy a big flag, do what you gotta do, but there is no room for racism. There is no room, not in Allentown, that crosses the line. So that's it. Thank you Never said that. . . . Well, I didn't make those remarks, so please don't accuse me of doing that.



Councilman Siegel's response next . . .