

Zest, the play: the dramatis personae (11)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 306 S. New St., Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues February 23, 2019

(11th in a series of posts on 306 S. New St.)

Zest was a hard case. Council members called their position “difficult,” “impossible,” “terrible.” And they weren’t exaggerating.

Gadfly agrees. And [he has said](#) that, in his opinion, realistically and pragmatically, the decision to deny the HCC ruling was the only possible conclusion at that time, though [you will find a strong dissenting view](#) in the series of posts.

But, especially now that the case is decently in the rear-view mirror, there may be still something we can learn. And Gadfly would like to make some observations and conclusions. And thus, in typical Gadfly fashion, he is being careful to lay the groundwork in plodding way so that you can make your own observations and conclusions.

Thus, here again, is the audio recording of the 306 S. New section of the December 4 Council meeting (50 mins.), but with it this time ([coming in the next post](#)) is a series of excerpts that will be pertinent to his observations and conclusions (you will find that [last time](#) Gadfly provided helpful summaries of each CP’s position).

Gadfly wants you to know your elected officials. Some are running for re-election right now. Some, no doubt, have their eyes on higher office. We need to be informed about them to cast the best possible vote we can. It’s the only way we get the best city government we can.

Perhaps you can identify the pictures of each Council person. Now let’s associate a voice and a style of thinking with each. Since Council meetings are now on television, all this “recognition” will be easier if you take advantage. But the Zest case presents them all on display in a valuably compressed way. This “hard case” brings some essential qualities to the fore.

After listening to the recording, how would you characterize each Council member here? Objectively as much as possible. Not slanted. Not critical. Join me. Let’s compare notes.

I'll start. CM Waldron acts as the investigator, as befits a Council president, drawing out information. He pushes back against the developer and a fellow Council person even, couching his vote as a respectful reversal of HCC. CM Reynolds is slow, and careful, and you can see him in logical fashion trying to make sure he understands everything in order to frame the situation, structure it, in as clean a way as possible to facilitate his decision. You can almost "see" him outlining the problem in the air. CW Van Wirt is fiery, passionate, worked up – she's got a burr under her saddle – she's full of "piss and vinegar" as they say. Illogic and lack of commonsense bother her greatly. CM Callahan champions a side that he seems personally involved in and sees this case as part of a bigger picture. His vote is an easy one. There is no hesitation. CM Colon, never one to talk overmuch, asks clear, respectful incisive questions and comes to a clear, untroubled conclusion. CW Negrón is exasperated, "history" weighs on her. She speaks on the soft side, you lean in to hear her as you would to a person in a sick bed. She's in pain. She speaks from the heart, a heart that's been stabbed many times before.

Gadfly looks on 306 with almost a director's eye. There's a rich diversity of characters here. They show important sides of themselves. We know a lot about them from how they respond to this "hard case."

Gadfly invites you to share your notes on the "characters" in this "play."

And then to move on to consider the series of excerpts on which he'd like us to focus.

