

The Zoning Board controversy: part 5

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

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



Gadfly has called the structure of the new business discussion at the August 20 City Council meeting a widening gyre.

Let's begin to spiral up several levels from what Councilwoman Van Wirt asked of Nominee-1 in the phone event that triggered Councilman Callahan's "new business."

BC opened by saying that he was "very disappointed by the actions of Councilman Reynolds [JWR], Councilwoman Negron [ON], and Councilwoman Van Wirt [PVW] for their lack of support and the pulling of the name of the highly qualified and ethical candidate for the Zoning Board for no other reason than a couple of perfectly legal campaign donations for her Council race."

In his subsequent comments BC focused just on PVW and JWR.

BC thought the last hour of the meeting was a "great debate."

In truth, it was hardly a debate, much less a great one. There was no back-and-forth on content or policy issues.

Only JWR spoke at any length of time at all (and we'll get to what he talked about later) and not on content or policy issues.

In truth, it was a one-man show. BC's show. And there are those who thought it was a "circus."

Before we judge BC's performance, however, let's try to understand him. Let's see where he's coming from.

In fact, BC said enough about himself in bits and pieces here and there for Gadfly to paint a portrait. Let's sew those bits and pieces together before we go on.

BC comes from Kaywin, where people struggled economically, even for money for sneakers.

He joined a Union at 18, has been "Union all my entire life," and is "proud" to be a Union member. He believes that life in America was best for the common people when Unions were ascendant.

BC is a "middle-class guy," he's a small business owner, he works 7 days a week.

He's unabashedly pro-development because development brings Unions and Unions bring good paying jobs.

Unions give him money, and they do so to help him get elected, and their money he will always take, but they do not shape his views, he was pro-Union way before he was ever on Council.

"I am a straight shooter," says BC, and he expects others to be the same with him.

BC feels injustice, especially for the average worker (witness his concern over the recently fired Zoning officer), yet he can fawn over the rich (the 2 W. Market case) because of his views on development.

BC is committed to, almost obsessed by openness, which he feels is how the public wants to see Council conduct its business, unlike what is happening now.

He's "Irish" and grew up in a family of 4 brothers where if you didn't argue, you didn't eat.

Thus, by nature and nurture, he's a passionate kind of guy, and he feels that, unfortunately, his passion is often mistaken for anger, so he often apologizes for seeming to be in attack-mode.

So that's Bryan Callahan, pretty much in his own words.

Did Gadfly get him right? Any additions, qualifications, errors?

You have access to the same primary source he has. You can hear his voice, see his expression.

Now let's look at what he said and how he said it.

Gadfly told you that part of his mission is to help you "know" your elected officials better so that you are making informed choices.

Good example happening here, eh.