

Chewing on SBHS concerns (2): Gadfly proposes that CM Callahan answer the James letter

The Bethlehem Gadfly Neighborhoods, Serious Issues, Southside June 3, 2019

(the latest in a series of posts on Neighborhoods)

“The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”

William Faulkner

Gadfly can’t shake off [the letter Lou James delivered](#) to the Mayor and City Council May 22.

It hit him hard. A man, an organization, fighting for their neighborhood.

An all too pervasive theme in Bethlehem. (Don’t think this is simply a Southside issue.)

The letter portrays so well on a local level the truth of Faulkner’s famous quote.

We know on a national level some people are still fighting the racial issue that prompted Civil War.

Here the tension is between North and South Bethlehem.

Our Mason-Dixon line is the Lehigh River.

I have heard over the past 18 months Stephen Antalics chronicle at Council meetings bits and pieces of the troubled relations between our river communities rooted in the past. It appears, as Stephen recently tells us once again, even in the history of the Christmas lights. (We need a single coherent account of the North-South Bethlehem relationship. It would be required reading for Administration and Council.)

Over those 18 months, I have been more than bothered more than once by the way Stephen's attempt to keep our history in front of us has been flicked off – even visibly – by assembled City leaders.

I kind of get it. It's easy to think of Stephen as some dogged ancient prophet from the CAVE era who has somehow lived into the present to plague us with unpleasant reminders of nasty doings and portents of doom.

But he's right. Attention should be paid.

The truth is in James's letter.

It's the voice of a section of the City that feels it's being snuffed out in the name of progress.

Snuffed out by a City that purports to value history.

Gadfly gets it.

Gadfly believes in the absolute value and necessity of community.

Gadfly believes that “good conversation builds community.”

The James letter cries out to be a topic for good conversation.

Gadfly will be eager to hear if the letter is answered.

But by whom?

When it comes to Northside-Southside relations over the past 18 months that Gadfly has been watching the City, the interactions between Councilman Callahan and Councilman Negrón stand out.

Gadfly once described their views on the Southside as “[The Great Divide](#).”

CM Callahan has been an outspoken proponent of the beneficent progress on the Southside.

Gadfly proposes that CM Callahan answer the James letter.

And he offers the pages of the Gadfly blog as one of the vehicles for distributing it.

Gadfly looks forward to the good conversation that such a comparison of views would foster.

Gadfly has more chewing to do. This is a topic that should not be lost. But enough for now.