

More open mic commentary on the Community Engagement Initiative resolution from last night's City Council

The Bethlehem Gadfly Community Engagement Initiative, George Floyd killing July 8, 2020

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

City Council Meeting July 7 video mins. 3:15-41:45

More public comment on the Community Engagement Initiative resolution before City Council last night, this time by phone rather in person.

Gadfly loves resident voices, lives on resident voices, so he is pleased to memorialize them here.

Browse.

Hear your neighbors talk.

“Good conversation builds community.”

(Gadfly's old ears not too good, may have gotten some names wrong — sorry.)

Greg Zahm: Why weren't the minority members of Council consulted? Why not discussion with the public? Why in 2020 did Council have to ask the Police for copies of the use of force directives?

Audio Player not available in this archive

John Irons: The resolution does nothing to address systemic racism. We don't need more discussion with the police, etc., we need to immediately defund the police. I demand an apology for the historical patterns of abuse in policing. We need misconduct reports and more made public, a hiring freeze, end to administrative leaves and relationship with school district, end to qualified immunity, and many more concrete action steps.

Anthony Downing: We are missing the mark. Bring the people who are demanding justice in the streets into this conversation. That police account for 20% of the city budget is outrageous. We need misconduct records publicly available. Withhold pensions from officers accused of misconduct. We've had listening sessions. Wrong to let police make decisions.

Unknown 1: Accountability is missing. Need a community review board. If community review board recommendations are not accepted the Mayor and etc need to sign off on why.

Preston Parker: Police department dollars should be reviewed and recommendations made on how used. Data base for accountability.

Unknown 2: Resolution lacks commitment to reducing budget. Mandatory de-escalation training. Registry of officers fired. End to qualified immunity.

Anna Smith: text will be posted separately soon.

Jenna Keys: we're already engaged. We don't need the discussion. We don't need the police involved in what's going on already. Police need to apologize for historical abuses. Mandatory de-escalation training. Fired officer registry, etc.

Al Wurth: Optics look like same-old-same-old. Doesn't look like a real response to the young people marching. Looking for more than a resolution from two white Council members. Need something more. Use prof Ochs from Lehigh.

Gordon Nelson: Better ways to be spending the money during the pandemic than on the police. We don't need more conversation, we need real action. Money better spent on housing homeless. Housing insecurity in Lehigh Valley. Help fallout from pandemic.

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Unknown 3: Don't need this. Need to re-allocate funds. Invest in removing police from some situations. We've already had a lot of discussion.

Ed Gallagher: wishes for the Public Safety meeting to have had more discussion before a resolution. No teeth in this. Council like on dock waving to a boat leaving and hoping it will visit the destinations it has mentioned. Soft. Where's Council in all this? People want to talk about details in regard to police.