

Let's meaningfully remember George Floyd on the anniversary of his death

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [George Floyd anniversary](#), [George Floyd killing](#) April 23, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts in the wake of the George Floyd murder* 

Chauvin found guilty

“No one should be above the law, and today’s verdict sends that message. . . . But it’s not enough. It can’t stop here. In order to deliver real change and reform, we can and we must do more to reduce the likelihood that tragedies like this will ever happen again. . . . We can’t leave this moment or look away thinking our work is done. We have a chance to begin to change the trajectory in this country.”

President Biden

“We are at the beginning of the Ice Age, if you will, and unless policing is prepared to evolve, it will become extinct. Unless policing is prepared to move toward a more restorative, transformative justice model, it will be replaced. They have to be fully prepared to start walking back from what was the policing model of the 20th and the 19th century to a public safety model, and to move toward a holistic model, a more comprehensive public safety model that respects the sanctity of human life.”

Marq Claxton, Black Law Enforcement Alliance

Gadfly would like to make a modest proposal, a modest suggestion.

Gadfly would like to propose that the City mark the one-year anniversary of George Floyd’s death on May 25, 2020.

Such marking could take place at the City Council meeting on May 19 or June 2.

But better yet would be a special meeting devoted solely to marking Floyd’s death, such as, perhaps, a meeting of the Public Safety Committee on May 25.

We need a meeting where we have enough time and space to breathe.

Derek Chauvin is guilty in the death of George Floyd. Guilty three times over.

But we can't think of that verdict as the end to the GeorgeFloyd chapter of American racial history. We still have work to do.

George Floyd's death plunged the country into (yet another) national reckoning with race.

George Floyd's murder challenged us as individuals and institutions 1) to be anti-racist (a new term for many of us), and 2) to reimagine how we do public safety.

George Floyd's fate challenged us to work seriously on some of the most deeply rooted problems in our society.

May 25, 2021, will be a ceremonial day across the nation. People and entities are announcing gatherings of various sorts. We need to be among them.

We need to mark the GeorgeFloyd anniversary in two ways: 1) we need to take stock of how we have met those challenges, we need to gauge how productively we have spent the year in this regard, and we need to give ourselves a candid report card, and 2) we need to set some plans and goals for the future.

What do we have to show for the year?

Frankly, if Gadfly were to give a grade for how we have spent the year in this area, it would not be a good one.

He recognizes that there has been a transition in Police Department leadership. He is aware of the argument that there are good intentions in the police department and that we need to wait for the department to establish a new direction under a new leader. He understands that argument, has seen a reorganization plan, and recognizes through social media the department moving in positive directions. But Blacks have been waiting for justice for six centuries, have been waiting since Gomes

Eanes de Zurara inaugurated racial ideas in Western Culture in his 1453 defense of African slave-trading, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*.***

The waiting argument falls on deaf ears.

Women have been asked to wait — for the right to vote, for reproductive autonomy, for equal pay. How has that worked out for them?

Blacks, all people of color have been asked to wait. Be patient. The arc of the universe bends toward justice. We're working on it.

Sorry, we have to do better than that. We have to get our butts movin'.

Now during the past year there was for a while a pocket of political resistance to any change in policing. Gadfly wonders if that has had impact on our willingness to act, especially in an election year. He hopes not, for echoing the quote above by a Black law enforcement spokesman, Gadfly believes that those voices are more and more clearly on the wrong side of history.

Gadfly believes public safety is going to change substantially.

And he would like to see Bethlehem in the forefront of that change.

Let's use the Floyd anniversary to re-energize.

(Over the next few days, Gadfly will review local Floyd doings over the year.)

****Knowledge of the history of racism thanks to a powerful anti-racism program sponsored by the Bethlehem Area Public Library.*