

A question for prospective city council members

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Climate Action Plan, Environment, Environmental Advisory Council, Serious Issues February 11, 2019

(The latest in a series of posts relating to the environment, Bethlehem's Climate Action Plan, Bethlehem's Environmental Advisory Council, and candidates for election)

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Gadfly:

Thank you for your continued interest in the issue of climate change. While we dilly-dally on the federal level on workable solutions, here in Bethlehem we should also be concentrating on making changes in our community and in local government zoning and planning because this is where we have the most control.

Even before the next election, I want to see the current city council and mayor to step up their game. Climate change is not only a world issue, it is a local issue.

I want to hear our six (so far) prospective city council members talk about their specific solutions to climate change on a city level.

Years ago I sent an e-mail to the council members and the mayor urging them to change the city ordinance/building codes to require more stringent energy efficiency rules than the 2009 Pennsylvania building code regulations. I never heard that the city made any changes.

Last year, Pennsylvania updated their building code regulations, and now the city must comply with the updated codes. However, the city still needs to increase the energy efficiency requirements on all new buildings and renovations to require some level of LEED certification. You do not need a

written Climate Action Plan to start changing our buildings codes and ordinances. The longer we wait, the direr the consequences will be.

As for the last fact presented by Jonah Goldberg in your blog post regarding the decrease in emissions in 2017, it fails to mention that in 2018 U.S. emissions increased 3.4% — “a jarring increase that comes as scientists say the world needs to be aggressively cutting its emissions to avoid the most devastating effects of climate change.”

See “[U.S. greenhouse gas emissions spiked in 2018 — and it couldn’t happen at a worse time](#),” by Chris Mooney and Brady Dennis.

So prospective city council members, what changes in the existing City of Bethlehem zoning, planning, building codes, etc. are you willing to propose and support to more effectively battle climate change on a local level, and how quickly will you do this once you are elected?

Kathy