



# Council folk speak up about the temporary closure of Packer Ave. (3)

The Bethlehem Gadfly | Lehigh University, Southside | February 24, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about Lehigh University and the Southside* 

## Councilman Reynolds (votes for the temporary closure)

<https://youtu.be/YoIzKeTolSo>

- You look at somebody with a private interest coming forward, of course . . . there are reasons that they want to do it.
- The key in the decision the governmental agency has to make is whether or not there's overlap between the private interest and the public good or the public interest.
- We've heard from some citizens, we need to hear from more citizens.
- We are very fortunate here, in that a lot of time we have to deal with hypothetical benefits or hypothetical negatives . . . that is not always the best way to make decisions.
- The best way to make decisions is when you have rational, qualitative data.
- That's what this is really about, giving the City and the public an opportunity to see whether or not there is a public interest in doing this.
- The real boundaries . . . are not physical.
- I really do give the Lehigh community a lot of credit for . . . directing more and more of their interest and energy toward how do we bring the Southside together in a way . . . how do we bring people up.
- How do we bring people together.
- What we're not as good at is bringing people together that have different identities . . . to interact in that way that creates community.
- If this is done well, it is another step in that direction.
- Those two goals especially have an overlap between the City of Bethlehem's public good and Lehigh University's self-interest.

- But that all has to be proved before anybody's able to take that next step.
- If this was just good for one group of people, it wouldn't make sense to do.
- It's really about how is this going to be done and whether or not the important questions are going to be done, some of which we don't even really understand yet.
- Often times the groups that are most affected, they're not here because they don't exist yet.
- We often talk about how we don't have more information to be able to make decisions, and this is an opportunity to gain information.
- The decision we make tonight is much smaller than the decision we are going to make, at the earliest, several months from now.
- It is people and institutions coming out to saying we see this or we don't see this as a good thing.
- I think that there is an opportunity with this to really kind of go about doing this the right way.
- For me it will come down to do I think this is a step in the right direction for bringing the Lehigh community together with the Southside community that has often been at odds.
- We're breaking down those kind of emotional and economic barriers one at a time, and that's going to be the big question for me at the end of the day.
- Is there a public good here that is worth us closing down or vacating the street, and does that interest work for both the institution that is before us as well as our community and the public good?