

Candidate Grubb critics don't respond to the facts

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Candidates for election](#), [Election](#), [Uncategorized](#) April 26, 2021

 Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election 

Breena Holland is an Associate Professor at Lehigh University in the Department of Political Science and the Environmental Initiative. She is a past and current director of Lehigh University's South Side Initiative.

ref: **Hardball**

Dear Gadfly,

Thanks for posting the responses of Willie Reynolds and other city councilmembers to Dana Grubb's mailer. It's interesting that none of them respond to the facts on the mailer but instead come close to making ad hominem attacks. Even the comment by the usually fair-minded Dr. Wirt is devoid of substantive content. She seems to be suggesting Mr. Grubb's proposals are somehow backward looking, but I'd certainly be willing to argue with her about the accuracy of that description. Mr. Grubb does tend to focus more on what can be done immediately, in contrast to Willie Reynolds' fantastical imagining of what our city can be at some far point in the future. It's good to know where you are going, but I trust Grubb's practical mindedness and capacity to listen to good ideas to get us there faster. Mr. Reynolds has often shown disdain for and a lack of follow through on many good ideas. After torpedoing the ethics ordinance that councilmembers Negron and Colon put forward, he never delivered on his publicly proclaimed intention to put through smaller substantive pieces of the ordinance; I would hardly call the ethics training and gifts ban that Councilmen Martell and Callahan put through substantive commitments to ethics. And that is just one instance where he did not deliver.** Many of us are hoping he's stopped taking such large donations from developers.*** It would seem politically stupid to continue accepting donations from developers after he voted in favor of the Martin Tower rezoning, despite citizens' requests for recusal based on the hefty donations he had already accepted from the property owners.

The most troubling response among those you posted is from Grace Crampsie Smith, who goes as far as to call Mr. Grubb malevolent for stating facts about Mr. Reynolds' record. By definition, this means she thinks Mr. Grubb wants to do evil to others. Well, she fits in perfectly with the kind of politics we have in Bethlehem. Those who disagree with the decisions of people in power – in this case, by simply stating facts about a public official's record – frequently get called “divisive” and “negative,” and now I guess those people are evil as well. It's a well-honed strategy to silence dissent and speaks volumes to precisely the kind of candidate that Mr. Reynolds is. Rather than defend his decisions, he proclaims himself the victim of negative campaigning, tries to say the presentation of facts about his record (some of which are relevant to decisions made before councilwomen Crampsie Smith and Van Wirt were even on Council) are an attack on all of Council, and does not bother to explain any single fact presented on the mailer. This is the go-to response of Mr. Reynolds: criticize those who disagree and mobilize your allies to help silence them. It saddens me that citizens have only two choices where his campaign is concerned. We can either agree that Mr. Reynolds' lofty hopes and dreams for Bethlehem are enough to make him our choice for mayor, or shut-up and go away. And for the record, I do agree with Mr. Reynolds' hopes and dreams—who wouldn't want the city he talks about? Unfortunately, after watching him operate for ten years, I just don't think he has either the capacity or commitment to get us there.

He is right about one thing, which is that nothing will change the “vision, passion, and enthusiasm” of his campaign. They are literally drowning in it. Those of us who are not, however, would like to see some concrete discussion of how he's going to achieve his vision in a way that involves something besides bringing people together and creating new positions at City Hall. For instance, there is the small matter of managing the day-to-day work of the City. But first, of course, all those people who think he is being victimized by his opponent delivering facts about his record need to send more money to his campaign. I guess the endorsements of the entire democratic establishment that controls Bethlehem politics are not enough? All the money he's stockpiled from developers over the years is not enough?*** No, now that someone is talking about his actual record, people need to send him more money. Or maybe he's already worried about raising money for his next political ambition?

Sincerely,

Breana

*** Candidates Reynolds and Grubb were asked a question about the ethics ordinance at the Lehigh Valley for All candidate event, and the interchange is in the Gadfly's queue for posting in the near future. Followers can see the substantial discussion of the ethics ordinance at the May 2, 2017, City Council meeting [here](#).*

**** The candidate Reynolds financial disclosure for this campaign will probably be posted [here](#) in the first week of May. Followers can see his past disclosures there as well. The candidates did have an exchange about campaign contributions that Gadfly can't put his finger on at the moment but will search for and post.*